

Much More Than Bread (John 6:24-35)

Sunday 5th October 2025 – 8:00am Holy Communion

When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took sail, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The traditional Christian practice for the Sabbath Day is to fast, until you have received the Holy Communion. For you 8 o'clockers – effectively that means no breakfast until you get home! I'm sure you could manage that. It's what I do myself. But for the 10 o'clockers – it means no breakfast at all! That is when you need no watch, because your rumbling hungry tummy will tell you what time it is! As it was for Jesus and the crowd that day.

Our passage from John 6 is set in the middle part of a day in which Jesus has just provided bread to at least 5,000 very hungry people in the wilderness. It must have taken ages to get all those people fed and everything tidied-away because we read that finally the sun comes down, and that is when the disciples withdraw in darkness across Lake Galilee to the town of Capernaum. At the same time, Jesus who is obviously tired himself, has gone up a mountain to pray. Later, he will catch up with the disciples, not in Capernaum but halfway across the lake as he walks on water.

There are several clues as to what is going on with the big crowd at this point. We have a desert scene, a great expanse of water, and no more food. I'm sure it won't be lost on you that this something like a re-run of that time when Moses teamed up with God to provide manna in the desert to what was probably an even bigger assembly. Greater still, was that Moses had the same arrangement going on for 40-odd years! **Yet this action of Jesus was but a single sitting, and now the crowd want more.** They know that Jesus lives in Capernaum, so off they go walking the long way around the lake to find him, which they eventually do, with a hope for the next meal. Jesus knows exactly what their intentions are:

And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

So, the question arises, as much to us as the crowd around Jesus, *why are you here? What do you come for? Are your needs being met?*

Jesus is sure he does not want to become a point of dependence for all the wrong reasons. What he provides is going to be so much more than bread alone, but that is far less clear to the crowd.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

No, it's not about the bread this time, he appeals to them! See beyond the bread, greater things are available to you. But they don't quite get it. They hear his claim of having a greater bread to offer them, but to them it still just sounds like something more to eat, and they are still hungry. So, they ask him what work they must do to get some of this even better bread.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, **that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.** They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Now Jesus is being sightly mocked here. They seem to be saying: *'ok what work do we have to do get this better bread? Oh, and by the way Jesus, you have some work to do as well – Moses provided a lot more than you have, and several times a day, so whatever amazing thing you*

are going to do to provide more bread, you had better get on and do it now! Time is ticking on, and we are famished!’

But still Jesus tries to make his point: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

‘Yeah, yeah yeah, we understand, this heavenly bread sounds great, can you give us this bread always, and can we have it now please?’

So finally, Jesus has to say it. **I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

I’m sure that just confused them even more, and they were still hungry all the same. Jesus was not coming up to scratch. **What they wanted and what they needed were two different things.** When they heard the words of Jesus, many would have just melted away disappointed. Don’t be surprised when I tell you that the rest of chapter six then descends into a whole load of dissatisfied grumbling. You can read it for yourself.

Why do we come to worship? Why do we come to Holy Communion? Why do we come to any of the different services we offer? I’m sure it’s not because you are hungry! **But seriously, it’s worth considering why you come to worship because that is asking ‘how do I need Christ in my life?’ And to ensure that nothing gets in the way.**

All faith requires shape; I’ve always found it to be so. A real living faith is a thing which needs structure on which to express itself. It might be a habit of peaceful mornings to pray or meditate, it could be daily reading of scripture, a love of church music, or the rituals or

worship. It could be bells in the tower, or looking after the fabric of the church. It could be making tea and coffee, or helping to serve in families ministry or the pastoral team. Some love the fine arts side of church, others the history found in ancient buildings. **Again, I could go on, but it is universally true that we all have some structure to our faith, in which we can find God. This is what we mean when we speak of the works of God, or discipleship. Faith leads to action.**

Well that is all good, but what happens if these structures become the point, rather than the means? I have seen it many times where material things and human habits, which are there to help us to find God, actually end up taking the place of God altogether. That always leads to disappointment when things in the church change or stop.

All things change in time, we know this is true, so be careful not to become dependent upon them alone for your faith and your sole reason for being here.

Many of the crowd around Jesus sought bread from him only for one thing - as bread alone for its food value. Yet to them that day it was intended by Christ as a carrier of something greater – a way to receive a greater blessing from God, to come closer to Him.

Jesus said: [I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.](#)

Consider inside yourself this week and look to find that *all you have is what God has set before you as a means to reach him*. Consider also this week what is your greatest need, your bread, and just be sure it leads you to Christ and does not get in his way.

Amen