

The Lord's Message: Feeding on Jesus: Bread of Heaven

Date: August 29, 2021

Where: Tilghman United Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: John 6:51-58

We are continuing our sermon series this morning: Feeding on Jesus. Today, we are going to learn about Jesus being the Bread of Heaven. I need to warn you that the next two Sunday's message are tough messages. We are moving away from the miracle of Jesus feeding over five thousand people with a small boy's happy meal of five barley loaves and two small fish. We are moving past Jesus making the bold declaration, "I Am the Bread of Life". We are moving further, past Jesus declaring that He is the Living Bread, to Jesus declaring "I am the Living Bread that came down from Heaven". These next two Sundays are most likely going to make us squirm in our seats. That is a good thing.

Let us pray.

I have often heard people tell me that they hate to read the Old Testament because of all the hard passages. They often tell me that reading the New Testament about Jesus being so kind and caring is more to their liking. Their image of Jesus, as we have in our beautiful stained-glass window behind me, is as a Good Shepherd, so thoughtful and caring, leaving the 99 sheep behind and searching for the one lost sheep. Hold on to your pews. They are quick to overlook passages of scripture such as **Luke 14:26-33, Matthew 7:21, or Matthew 7:13-14.** Jesus in **Luke 14:26-33**, tells us that our relationship with Jesus should be above all other relationships. This relationship with Jesus is so important that we should be willing to surrender our lives. In **Matthew 7:21**, Jesus tells us that it is not enough to say that we are following Jesus, without having surrendered our will to Him, then we cannot get into the kingdom of Heaven. In **Matthew 7:13-14**, Jesus tells us that contrary to many people's thoughts, we are all not going to go to heaven. There is a place called Heaven and there is a place called Hell. Those that completely surrender their lives to God and do His will, are forgiven and enter into Heaven through the blood of the Lamb. Those that do not, end up in a place called Hell. That is the dividing line. You cannot dip your toe in the water of God's salvation. Do you understand what I mean by dipping your toe in the water? I learned this from my grandmother. If my grandmother were near a body of water, she would take off her socks and shoes and dip her toe in the water. It did not matter what the temperature of the water was, she would do this. I picked this up from my grandmother, but I usually have both feet in the water. These passages point out that we need not stick our toe or even our feet in the water, but we need to get fully immersed.

Let us find out how to get fully immersed. Jesus says in **John 6:53-57**. You must eat my flesh and drink my blood. Those who do not feed on me will not live. If we were like the crowd in **John 6:52** looking at this from a physical view, we would react the same way. Jesus is not talking about cannibalism. Jesus does not want them to kill Him, eat His flesh and drink His earthly blood. Some theologians have said that Jesus is attempting to move the thinking of this crowd and even His disciples past thinking physically, but thinking spiritually. It all comes back to what Jesus has said earlier in **John 6:26-27**. These people are, as Paul describes in **1 Corinthians 3:2-3**. Stop thinking about your physical needs and start to think about your spiritual needs. Every miracle that Jesus ever did was to take us to a deeper spiritual understanding of God.

If we are looking at this passage of scripture from our viewpoint, then we would quickly say that Jesus is talking about the Eucharist or Holy Communion. I would say that you are correct, but this Sunday I do not want to focus on that beautiful sacrament, next Sunday, we will do just that.

This Sunday, God wants us to focus on our relationship with His Son, Jesus. God just does not want us to dip our toe in, but to be fully immersed. God just does not want us to take a nibble on the crust of the Bread of Heaven, but God wants us to fully consume the whole loaf. God loves each one of us. We are the ones who have wandered away from the relationship that God had with us. We are the ones that have eaten the forbidden fruit. We are the ones that are too enamored by this world that we are not willing to fully commit to a relationship with God.

In order to be fully immersed in Jesus, our souls need to feed on Jesus, every day. Paul recognized that our minds are our gateway to our souls. So, Paul says in **Romans 12:2**, that we need not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

The number one way to renew our minds is by reading the word of God, the Bible, every day. We need not speed read through the Bible, but instead take time to mediate on the verses in scripture. Go back and reread them. In this Bible is everything we need to be fully immersed in Jesus. You may find a passage of scripture difficult to understand. If you do, use your smart phone or computer to look up commentaries by various theologians to help you better understand.

Along with reading the Bible are daily devotions for us to stay fully immersed in Jesus. I have several devotions that I use on my email. One is from my friend, who is a lay member of a Catholic church. His devotions usually have a practical suggestion for living my life. Another is from a pastor in the Pen-Del conference. His devotions often make me think and ponder. Certainly, the Upper Rooms and Our Daily Bread are great sources of daily devotions.

Prayer is essential for being fully immersed in Jesus. Prayer does not require us getting on our hands and knees before the Lord, but simply being aware of God. Prayer does not even require us to talk. It can be simply listening to God. God speaks to us all the time. Do we take time to listen?

Listening to Christian music is another way to be fully immersed in Jesus. Music can lift our spirits. Music can humble us. Music can cause us to think about God. When I am talking about Christian music, I am talking about hymns, gospels, Christian contemporary music and any other kind of music. In order for this to be Christian music, all must be passed through the filter of the Bible.

Connecting with Christian brothers and sisters is vital for us to be fully immersed in Jesus. To me the greatest need that I endured during this pandemic, has been not being able to connect with my family and friends, most importantly my Christian brothers and sisters. I need the Fellowship. I understand what Jesus meant when He said in **Matthew 18:20**.

There are many others ways to be fully immersed in Jesus. You just need for find the way or ways that is right for you. Jesus must be our number one relationship. Jesus is the Bread of Heaven.

Everything in this world will be destroyed. All your worldly goods gone. All the kingdoms, all the nations, and all the governments will come to a crashing end. God says in **Revelation 21:1-3**. So, let's feed on the Bread of Heaven by surrendering our lives and accepting the relationship that God offers to us. Feeding on Jesus: Bread of Heaven. Amen

Blue Hymnal no. 354, I Surrender All. This hymn was written by Rev. J. W. Van Venter. This man was a lay leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Sharon, Pennsylvania. He was a teacher of arts in public schools. Friends convinced him to go into the ministry. Actually, it took his friends 5 years to convince him. He finally left his teaching and became an evangelist. His ministry took him to various places in the United States, England and Scotland. The great Reverend Billy Graham said that he was inspired by Rev. Van Venter.

I do not want you to wait five years to surrender your will to Jesus. As the congregation stands and sings this song, if anyone would like to come to the altar and pray to commit their life or recommit their life to Jesus. The altar is open. If you would like, I will come and pray with and for you.