

J.J.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35

John 6: 35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (ESV)

INTRODUCTION :

I remember when I was growing up and my eldest brother was in the middle of the “hippie” days in the 70s. They will have their own slang.

For example : Even in church nowadays, we have our own slang. During summer camp, one of the youth from our church, asked me, “Pastor, what time is the Devo?” I asked, “Devo?” (the only Devo I knew was a new wave band in the 80s). And then he said, “Devo, Devotion.

So my eldest brother was talking hippie slang with my mom? Imagine the age gap. My kuya one time said to my mom, “Hi Nanay, Give me five!” with his palm out. My Nanay replied, “What will you do with five pesos?”

And then one time, my eldest brother who was about to go to school asked my mom for “bread”, “Where’s my bread?” My Nanay would say, “Your baon, (snack) is rice and not bread.” But my kuya meant for bread was “money”.

Today, we’ll talk about Jesus declaring “I am the bread of life.”

As you well know, when it comes sermons, we don’t think of a topic and then slap a verse into it.

THE MESSAGE MUST COME FROM THE WORD.

So you also know that before we can apply the Word of God, we need to interpret it correctly. And what’s the first rule in “hermeneutics”? (That’s the fancy word for Bible interpretation)... CONTEXT! CONTEXT! CONTEXT!

The verse for today is part of a looonggg chapter! If we need to preach this, again, it will take several Sundays to preach on John Chapter 6. That’s why I go for expository preaching, so people are trained to look into the Word deeply by God’s grace.

Today by God’s grace, we will study this verse, IN RELATION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN JOHN CHAPTER 6.

Side note : Whenever someone asks me where they should start when they want to read the Bible, I always advise them to start with the Gospel of John.

Let's begin : THE CONTEXT

- The Gospel of John was written by the Apostle and his main purpose of writing the Gospel is to show to both Greek and Jews that Jesus is the Son of God and very God Himself.

Right from the start, he aimed to establish that.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And at the end of the Gospel, he reiterated again the purpose of why he wrote it.

John 20: 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Remember these THESE TWO things for me please.

First, you now know that the purpose of John was to establish that Jesus is the Son of God, the very God Himself who became man to die on the cross IN ORDER TO GIVE US LIFE.

Second, in verse 30 it says that there are MANY SIGNS! But in this Gospel, **John CHOSE only 7 signs**. What's the purpose, to point out again, that JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, THE VERY GOD HIMSELF!

THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WHEN IT COMES TO INTERPRETING WHAT JESUS SAID, "*I am THE BREAD OF LIFE.*"

**Now let's park that and we'll go the second context,
What's the story behind why Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life.*?"**

For the purpose of time, I will tell you the story of what happened and we will break it down with this outline by God's grace.

The people were looking to be fed :

MOTIVATION, SATISFACTION AND INVITATION

I. What is behind the people's MOTIVATION?

- Jesus was already gaining popularity at that time because people have seen and heard that He turned water into wine and he was healing the sick.

Note : During that time, all the people that approached Jesus when it comes to their sickness were healed miraculously.

So that's the reason in the first two verses of John 6

John 6: 1 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.

Note : In modern church today, people think that's the main criteria that the church is successful...YOU HAVE A LARGE CROWD.

Question : But is having a large crowd a sign of success? Is it?

NOW, this is where the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Men) begins.

- We already know what happened, Passover was about to begin, Jesus tested Philip and asked him where should they buy bread to feed all of these people. Philip, who must be the accountant said,

7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."

In short, almost a year's salary would barely feed all of them – one denarii is equal to one day's salary,

- Andrew then said to Jesus that there's a boy with five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus got them, thanked the Father in heaven and distributed the bread. IT JUST KEPT ON COMING!

Remember, these were five thousand men. The women and children weren't counted yet. The minimum could be 10 people up to 20,000 people. You are feeding 20,000 people and then

12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." 13 So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.

Side note : Remember, there were 12 disciples and what was left were twelve baskets. Those who serve Christ will always be provided for.

NOW TAKE NOTE : there were thousands of people and seeing that Jesus can feed them just like that what did they want to do?

14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

15 Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Note : They only see Jesus as a “prophet”, one WHO IS SENT BY GOD... I’ll show you later on the difference.

Second : They wanted a king of their own liking....A KING THAT WOULD ANSWER TO THEIR NEEDS.

Is this how we look at God?

Illustration : I remember Oprah Winfrey. She abandoned her Biblical view of God because she cannot believe that God is a jealous God. “*The Lord whose very name is jealous*”
Exodus 34:14 She mentioned that it contradicts idea that God is love.

This is the danger of the church also. We want to hear the WORDS OF THE KING that would pander to our itching ears.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears, they shall heap to themselves teachers in accordance with their own lusts.

As Leonard Ravenhill said :

“We live in a day of itching ears, but I have no commission from God to scratch them.”

(For LINC)

I say this with love. This is the danger of inviting different preachers. It’s because there might come a time that you would only invite preachers that will ANSWER TO YOUR NEEDS instead of a preacher that preaches the WORD OF GOD.

So Jesus left them and withdrew by Himself.

And then we all know that Jesus walked on water in the middle of the night. The following day, the crowd saw the Jesus wasn’t there and what did they do?

24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

Yes, a lot of people were seeking Jesus. Here in church, a lot of us can say, “Why are we here?” People can say, “Because of Jesus.” But the real question is, “Why?”

Illustration : I remember someone who was attending church before, he listened carefully but I was always wondering why he was there. He attended church simply because he was eye-ing a girl in church. And when the girl turned him down, we did not see him again.

So why are you here in church right now? What's your motivation?

Let's see what Jesus said :

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” 26 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Again, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES? So that people will believe THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND HERE THEY ARE THEY CALL HIM “RABBI”, He is more than a “rabbi” HE IS LORD!!!

Biblical Illustration : THIS IS WONDERFUL INSIGHT by one of the preachers I heard. Do you know that in the story when Jesus said to his disciples, that one of them will betray them, look at what the Bible says,

Matthew 26: 21 And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” 23 He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”

But look at how Judas asked,

25 Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

Application : Remember, JESUS ALREADY KNOWS WHAT'S IN THE HEART OF THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, HE ALREADY KNOWS WHAT'S INSIDE THE HEART OF JUDAS.
My question is this : WHY ARE YOU HERE TODAY IN CHURCH?

Questions :

Are we here OUT OF DUTY?

Are we here BECAUSE IT'S A SUNDAY?

Are we here BECAUSE OF A PERSON?

Are we here because of WHAT YOU CAN GET OUT OF THE LORD?

IMPORTANT : BELOVED, THE REASON WHY WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE IS BECAUSE JESUS IS LORD!!! AND WE WANT TO WORSHIP HIM, TO SERVE HIM AND WE WANT TO HEAR FROM HIM THROUGH HIS WORD!!!

There's still a lot in the story that they are SEEKING JESUS not because of WHO HE IS... BUT BECAUSE WHAT HE CAN GIVE THEM.

And there will be people even in church, who are here not because of WHO HE IS but because of WHAT JESUS CAN GIVE THEM.

They want the blessing BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE BLESSER.

AND IF JESUS DOESN'T GIVE THEM WHAT THEY ARE ASKING FOR, Look at what happens.

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Illustration : I have seen many so-called Christians, who walked away from the Lord simply because SEEMINGLY JESUS DID NOT ANSWER THEIR PRAYERS.

Businesswoman : I believe I have told several times that businesswoman who was invited to church. She was diligent to attend church and even on Bible studies. We went to her office and I told her that those Chinese lucky charms like the octagon, the frog and the cat are not from the Lord. She threw them away. But after a few months, we did not see her every Sunday, and in the Bible studies. So my wife and I visited her and she was re-arranging her furniture in the office and we asked her "why?" and she said for good "feng-shui". I also noticed all the lucky charms are back and then I asked her why she isn't attending church anymore, and she answered, "Ever since I became "born-again, born-again", my business went down."

Again brothers and sisters, we are here in church, we follow Christ BECAUSE HE IS LORD! AND WE WANT TO HEAR FROM HIM...look at what the other disciples (the twelve) said, who did not leave Jesus.

67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.

Is Jesus your Lord? Is Jesus your God? Then we need to put Him first. Then we need to obey Him.

Now we will have to go faster for lack of time.

II. Jesus is the source of true SATISFACTION

After Jesus confronted them about their motivation, He said this to them.

27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

Jesus was saying to them, you are concerned about all these material things!!! When we should be concerned about ETERNITY!!! ALL OF THIS IS TEMPORARY!

That's why I've always mentioned that the greatest competition of Jesus is not the devil BUT MONEY.

Matthew 6: 19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

And then He said :

24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Now look at the crowd's answer

28 Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” 30 So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” 32 Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Long story short, since I have no time to explain this but what the crowd was still thinking is GUARANTEE OF FOOD! The PHYSICAL

Look, they were even trying to manipulate Jesus by asking him to do another sign, miracle, so that they will believe Him.

Sign??? What is the sign that they still need to see. They saw Him heal hundreds miraculously from sickness... They witnessed how He multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed around 20,000 people... **WHAT IS THE SIGN THAT THEY ARE ASKING FOR?**

In short, they were saying to Jesus, WE WILL BELIEVE JUST AS LONG AS YOU CAN PROMISE AS THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS PROVIDE FOR US.

They are more concerned about their stomachs, their cars, their vacations, their houses, their houses, their jobs, their retirement, RATHER THAN THE FEEDING OF THEIR SOULS... RATHER THAN FOLLOWING GOD WHO PROVIDED FOR ALL OF THESE TO THEM!

Application : Jesus was saying to them, all of these material things... it cannot satisfy you. Why? Because these things are temporary... these things can be taken away... because it's physical..

MEN ARE INSATIABLE CREATURES.

- Men already has a beautiful wife and yet they still want others
- Women already has 10 handbags, she wants more than 10 handbags.

Why? It's because we want more and more....

- Man already has a nice car but he wants more nice cars.

Illustration : I remember when I got interviewed in my first job in the Philippines. When my boss told me that I got the job, I went home immediately and my boss called me and said to me, “You did not even ask me, how much your salary is.” Then she told me it’s 2500 pesos... I was already saw happy to get a job. But once I was there, I wanted more than 2500, so I got another job who doubled my salary. And I said, “Yes, I’m already ok with this.” But after a few months, I wanted more...because the law of economics states, “Expanded means, expanded desires”

The Lord is saying, NOTHING ON THIS EARTH CAN SATISFY US EVEN IF YOU HAVE IT ALREADY.

And that's the time He said,

35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Let's put this into context first :

Jesus used the word, “I am”. That's the word used for God in the Old Testament. When God showed Himself to Moses through the Burning Bush, Moses asked, What should he tell the people who is the God that sent Him. And God answered.

Exodus 3: 13 Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14 God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” (Tetragrammaton)

Remember again, the purpose of John when he wrote the Gospel? To show that Jesus is the Son of God, the very God Himself.

There are seven “I am” in John.

Now in order to understand

“I am the bread of life;

Bread : That's the staple of the Hebrews during that time.

We will better understand this if he was talking to the Filipinos.

“I am the Kanin of life”

Illustration : We were visiting my sister-in-law who lives in Sweden and they were always serving us potatoes (that's their staple instead of rice). When one time, we said, we wanted rice. It doesn't seem complete without rice.

Why? It's because rice is our staple. Adobo is not complete without rice. Sinigang na baboy is not complete without rice. That's why to those who have diabetes, they switch to “brown” rice in order to eat Filipino food.

LIFE IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT JESUS! People think if they have all the money in the world, they won't need anything else.

Illustration: Celebrities are a perfect example. They have all the fame and the money. And yet most of them are miserable.

Quote : “I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it's not the answer.” - Jim Carrey

Another kanin : I also remember, the time I was talking with one person who was struggling with their finances at that time and he mentioned, “Just as long as there is rice, we're good.”

JUST AS LONG AS WE HAVE JESUS, WE'RE GOOD.

So Jesus is saying to the Hebrews at that time. I was the one who provided for you. And all of these material things, cannot satisfy you... cannot make your life complete. It's only me, Jesus who is God that can satisfy you.

Nothing on this earth can satisfy us...only Jesus can.

That's why Augustine wrote this :

Quote : “Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” – Augustine

Now what is the “life” that Jesus is talking about?

Etymology : life, in Greek, there are two words for “Life”

- Bios – Biological life – it's degrading life... where we get the word “biology” the physical body
- Psuche - mental or emotional life.
- Zoe – Eternal life, spiritual life... a life with God.

Note : When people think about eternal life, they think it's a life after we die...NO ETERNAL LIFE MEANS A LIFE WITH GOD!!!

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

So what our Lord is saying is this WHEN HE SAYS, "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"

"I am what you need in order to have a life with God."

And what is a life with God. IT'S A LIFE THAT MAKES YOU FEEL COMPLETE.

APPLICATION : That's why, walking with God, walking with the Spirit who is God, what does it give us?

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

And what did our Lord promise?

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY, WHAT OUR LORD IS SAYING TO THE PEOPLE IS THIS?

You think that all these physical things like food and etc is the one that will satisfy you... WE THINK THAT HAVING ALL THE MONEY IN THIS WORLD, THE NICE CARS, THE NICE HOUSES IS THE ONE THAT WILL GIVE US LOVE, JOY, PEACE, IN OUR LIVES...

JESUS IS SAYING... IT IS ONLY THROUGH ME THAT YOU WILL HAVE A LIFE WITH GOD! A LIFE THAT IS FULL OF LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL.

And this is the

III. INVITATION

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

He expounded this in the next verses but we have no time for it.

But Jesus is saying... DO YOU WANT A LIFE WITH GOD... A LIFE FULL OF LOVE AND JOY AND PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

He says to come to Him and to believe in Him.

We all know the meaning of "believe"... meaning to put our trust in Him.

It means, Lord, I ENTRUST MY LIFE TO YOU AND I BELIEVE IN WHO YOU ARE... THAT YOU ARE GOD, THE SON OF GOD, WHO GAVE HIS LIFE TO ME TO SAVE ME FROM MY SINS.

BUT What does it mean to come to Jesus

Etymology : erchomai "to go from one place to another"

It's saying to Jesus, "Lord, I'm in this spot right now BUT I WANT TO BE WHERE YOU ARE."

That's why Don Moen sang :

*I just want to be where you are, dwelling daily in Your presence.
I don't want to worship from afar, draw me near to where you are.*

And that's the invitation of Jesus... you want a life with God... A LIFE FULL OF LOVE, JOY, PEACE... COME TO JESUS.

Are you tired of life? Are you tired of sin? Are you tired?

HIS INVITATION...

Matthew 11: 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Let me end this with a recent sample and a verse :

My wife and my daughter visited my sister-in-law in Sweden. I drove to see grandkid in Montreal last Thursday night and came back yesterday afternoon. My son asked me, "How are you dad without mom?" First, I haven't been eating well...but second, I said, "I'm tired." And he asked, "Why?" I said, "I'm not getting enough sleep. I sleep every day at 2 a.m even up to 3 a.m. and then wake up early at 6:30 a.m." It's because it's different when your mom is not there with me."

Married life is not married life without your partner... It's the same with Eternal life.. We think eternal life is all about the gold street in heaven... ETERNAL LIFE IS A LIFE WITH GOD AND WHEN WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST... YOU CAN HAVE IT TODAY....

A LIFE OVERFLOWING WITH LOVE, JOY, PEACE IN YOUR HEART BECAUSE WE ARE WITH JESUS.

THIS IS REASON we go to church. This is the reason we walk with Jesus because we know it's only through Him that we will find satisfaction in this life. We will experience LIFE, LIFE TO THE FULL...AND WE WILL NEVER GO HUNGRY AND THIRSTY AGAIN.

Again, that's what true followers of Christ know :

67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.

That's why He invites once again.

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S.G.D.