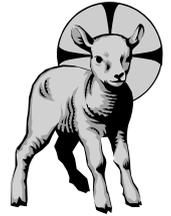




# Enjoying God: Life in All its Fullness

(passages from John's Gospel)

Summer 2017



## John 6:25-40 Satisfaction

(sermons: June 11)

### Introduction

*In John 6:35 Jesus says 'I am the bread of life': to understand more of what he means, we need to see verses 25 to 40 in the context of the whole of chapter 6, including its echoes of the Old Testament.*

*In verses 1 to 15 Jesus goes up a mountain, like Moses, and feeds a crowd of over 5,000, just as God fed his Old Testament people with manna in the wilderness.*

*In verses 16 to 24 Jesus walks on water across the lake, as the Israelites crossed the sea after the Passover.*

*In verses 41 to 70, which follow today's passage, Jesus explains more about what it means to 'feed' on him, in words that divide the crowd. Some of his hearers don't understand him, or angrily reject his teaching, and leave him, but the Twelve stay with Jesus.*

### John 6: 25-34 Following Jesus

v.25 *When they found him on the other side of the lake – after feeding the crowd, Jesus went away from them up the mountainside above Galilee, then walked across the lake to rejoin his disciples who had sailed across towards Capernaum; the crowd later followed them to look for Jesus.*

v.26 *miraculous signs – here and in reply to their demand in v.30 Jesus draws a distinction between wanting to see miraculous actions (or enjoy food or healing) and being able to see what they pointed to (as signs) about who Jesus really was and what he was offering them.*

v.27 *eternal life – literally 'life of the (new) age', which lasts for ever*

v.29 *to believe in the one he has sent – not only to believe that God has sent him but to commit themselves to him: to 'believe into him' as this phrase could be translated (as in John 3:16).*

v.31 *manna – the story is in Exodus 16. Some Jews expected the Messiah to repeat the manna miracle. They expected another prophet like Moses (see v.14 and the promise in Deuteronomy 18:15,18) Jesus says he is doing something even greater: he is not just the Giver but the Gift.*

v.33 *the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven – or 'that which comes down from heaven'; the word here for 'bread' is masculine in Greek so the 'he' could be a person, or a thing like bread. It is only in v.35 that Jesus makes it absolutely clear that he is speaking about himself, rather than about some new 'bread' or 'manna'.*

1. (see verses 26-27) Is there ever a danger that we follow Jesus for the wrong reasons?  
What might we be wrongly expecting to get out of following him?  
Can we mislead people in the way that we describe what it means to be a Christian, so that they may have a false picture of Jesus, of what he offers, or of what he expects from us?
2. What does Jesus say is 'the work of God' (v.29)? Does this surprise you? How does it link to the gift Jesus offers in v.27? Can we too pray 'from now on give us this bread' (v.34)?

## **John 6: 35-40 The Bread of Life**

*In verses 35 to 59 Jesus uses the picture of eating and drinking, especially eating bread, to illustrate his teaching about the need for us to have the closest possible relationship of faith to him (compare v.40 and v.54). Some people writing about this passage say that Jesus is teaching about Holy Communion, even though this is before the Last Supper; these commentators tend to be either Catholics who emphasize the sacraments, or others who think that the gospel-writer adapted Jesus' words to show their relevance to the church at the time he was writing. I think that it is more helpful to see both this passage and the Communion service as bringing out the meaning of Jesus' incarnation and his death for us on the Cross, which we must 'make our own' by taking him into the very centre of our being. In this passage Jesus makes claims about who he is and looks forward to his death, as the means by which we can receive a new quality of life that lasts for ever; in Communion we look back to his death and are encouraged to, 'Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.'*

*v.35 I am the bread of life – the word 'I' is emphasized so the 'I am' echoes the special Name for God in Exodus 3:14. This is also true of other Jesus's other 'I am' sayings in John's Gospel (eg John 8:12).*

*v.35 he who comes to me will never go hungry – compare God's invitation in Isaiah 55:1,2*

*v.37 I will never drive away – literally 'never throw out'; Jesus is not so much emphasizing his welcome as promising that we will be secure when we have come to him (as in v.39)*

*v.39 raise them up at the last day – the day when Jesus returns, the day of judgement, the day when those who have died with faith in Jesus will be raised to life in his new kingdom.*

3. What did Jesus mean by describing himself as 'the true bread from heaven' (v.33) and 'the bread of life' (v.35)? What sort of satisfaction does he offer?

Is it true to experience that we are never spiritually hungry or thirsty as Christians?

Or do we hold back in our 'coming' to Jesus and in our 'believing' in him?

4. In v.37 and v.44 Jesus emphasizes God's role in our coming to faith. In John 3:16,18; 5:24,40 he teaches about our responsibility for our response. There is no attempt to 'reconcile' these two sides of the truth: God's sovereignty and our human responsibility.

It may be more helpful to ask why Jesus is emphasizing God's role *here*: to reassure us of our eternal security when we face opposition and pressure (vv 39-40)?

Do we ever need to be reminded of this side of the truth?

5. Can we find one phrase, or one claim of Jesus, or one promise in this passage, that particularly speaks to us today?

Or is there something that Jesus says here that particularly speaks to the society in which we live, to the people we meet every day, and what they are looking for in their lives?