

## God's Work Makes Us Believe

✠ **Eat the Bread of Life.** (vv.22-40)

✠ **Live in Him forever.** (vv.41-58)

✠ **Believe in the Holy One of God.** (vv.59-71)

In the Name of Jesus, God's Bread of Life from heaven, dearly redeemed disciples of our Lord:

One of my favorite features of *Forward in Christ* is written by teenagers. It's called: *teentalk*. February's *teentalk* was contributed by Ashley Dyrssen, a sophomore at California Lutheran High School. Title: "Let your light shine." Subtitle: It should not matter to us how popular or unpopular we are. All that should matter is that we do not hide our faith." Listen to the wisdom God gave this teenager:

*We may not want to live our faith because other people may think it is not cool. We skip church because we think that other people will judge us for going, but that should not matter.*

*Just because we think going to church may not be the cool thing to do, it still is the right thing to do. What friends think about our church attendance does not matter. What matters is what God says, and he tells us not to stop meeting together.* <sup>2</sup>

True for pastors too? Or should we tailor our message and ministry for today's crowds? John 6 begins at the height of Jesus' popularity and ends as the bottom drops out. Let's listen to what Jesus said and see what happened between the height and depth. Learn: **God's Work Makes Us Believe.**

✠ **Eat the Bread of Life.** (vv.22-40)

*People had different expectations for [Jesus]. Some just wanted him there to be their earthly king and free them from the Roman reign. Others just wanted him to take care of their physical needs and do miracles. Jesus had to overlook all those incorrect expectations and do the right thing. He obeyed his heavenly Father and died for the sins of the world.*

Following Jesus has always been a real test of nerves. Imagine the disciples' frustration when He suggested they should feed nearly 15,000 people in a remote place. They must have been excited at twelve baskets of leftovers from Jesus' miraculous meal of a boy's lunch! Nerves frayed as water sprayed them straining at the oars all night. Terror gripped them as Jesus walked on the water like a ghost. He stilled the storm. They landed in a moment at their destination. Jesus Messiah, the Son of God!

But what's He doing now? The crowds catch up to them in Capernaum, and Jesus uses that strange expression again: "***Amen, Amen, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Don't keep working for the food that spoils, but for the food that remains to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.***" Jesus, can't you just let it be? You're popular!

They're asking, "***What should we do to work the works of God?***" Jesus answers: "***This is God's work that you believe in the one he sent.***" They want manna like the 40-year miracle in the desert; Jesus says again, "***Amen, Amen, I tell you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you real bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and***

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

<sup>2</sup> "Let your light shine," *Teentalk – Forward in Christ*, February 2014, p.18. More quotes follow. (Order: 1-800-662-6022)

*gives life to the world.” That bread they want! “I AM the bread of life,” Jesus tells them. “Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty again. But as I told you, you have seen me, and yet you do not believe. Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose none of those he has given me, but raise them up on the Last Day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him, may have eternal life. And I will raise him up on the Last Day.” Jesus equates eating the Bread of Life with believing in Him. The value of believing:*

### ✠ Live in Him forever. (vv.41-58)

Eternal life is not something to wait for in heaven. As soon as you believe, your eternal life has already begun. *“Amen, Amen,”* Jesus says, *“the one who believes has eternal life. I AM the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat it and not die. I AM the living bread that came down out of heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”* See why the focus of our worship always needs to be on Jesus? If you only tell your friends how much you like your church, where is Jesus in that? If you compliment or complain about the pastor, are you putting up a barrier instead of sharing what a wonderful Bread of Life our Savior is?

Jesus pictures believing as eating and drinking: *“Amen, Amen, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the Last Day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.”*

### ✠ Believe in the Holy One of God. (vv.59-71)

It’s too much for the Jews at the old synagogue in Capernaum: *“This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?”* Jesus asks if the truth is tripping up their faith. So He gives more truth: *“What if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh does not help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”* People don’t realize Jesus is reading their mind and heart. John shows Jesus is God because He *“knew from the beginning those who would not believe and the one who would betray him.”* In mercy Jesus still pressed on to bring them to faith on His way to the cross. **Believe in the Holy One of God.**

Leo Tolstoy was right: *“Many people have ideas on how others should change; few people have ideas on how they should change.”* (quoted by Michael Klatt, TLHA) John says most of Jesus’ disciples *“went back to their old way of life and did not go with him anymore.”* Jesus asked the Twelve who remained one of the saddest questions in the Bible: *“You don’t want to go away too, do you?”* Peter’s answer shows **God’s Work** in him: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know by experience that you are the Holy One of God.”* Such great faith in the man who would soon deny even knowing the Lord. And Judas His betrayer, *“Is a devil!”* Jesus said.

Epitaph: Jesus cursed Capernaum with Korazin and Bethsaida because they did not repent and believe in Him. (Matthew 11:20–24) He wanted them to benefit from the full and free forgiveness of sins he would win for us all. Today Capernaum has only ruins of a spectacular synagogue built on top ruins of the old one. Korazin has disappeared into a national park on the hills overlooking Galilee. Bethsaida – we’re not even sure where it was! Dear friends, this is our moment in time to eat, drink, believe in Jesus!

Ashley is so right in *teentalk*: *“Even though it might not always be the popular choice, we are forgiven and can follow God’s will. Don’t be afraid to let your light shine and be uncool.”* Amen!

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