

CHRIST, THE LIVING BREAD

John 6:35-40

For approximately a year Christ had continued His ministry in Galilee with growing popularity and increasing fame. He gave Himself in unstinted service, which resulted in great number following Him; some out of sheer curiosity, others with a view to being healed of their physical maladies, and still others for the loaves and fishes. Wanting something for nothing, the latter group thought that if they would stay near Him they would have plenty of food without cost whenever they needed it.

Near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, the Lord Jesus preached to the people. It was about the time of the Passover, and many pilgrims were on their way to the city of Jerusalem. Many of them turned aside to hear the matchless Preacher. As the day was drawing to a close, the Saviour was moved to satisfy the hunger of the great throng, so He performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand men and numerous women and children from the lad's lunch, which consisted of five barley loaves and two fishes. That miracle had a profound effect upon those who observed it. The people were simply amazed at that achievement. They had never witnessed anything like that. The wisdom of His words and the beauty of His deeds had not impressed them greatly, but the miracle by which food was supplied met their wants precisely.

Gratified and excited by Christ's miracle, which had met their wants precisely, and thinking that their problem of food supply was solved perfectly and permanently, the people became wild with enthusiasm and quickly decided to proclaim Christ as their King. They wanted a king who could give them bread to eat when they were hungry. Their enthusiastic desire and intention were so unwelcome to Christ, who was trying His best to impress them with the fact that food for the soul was vastly more important than nourishment for the body, that He determined to thwart their purpose by withdrawing from their midst.

On the following day those who had seen Him perform the miracle flocked into His presence, actually hoping that He would perform some new and extra-ordinary miracle whereby they might be fed again. Knowing that they had misconstrued the nature of His mission, Christ taught that materialistic crowd that He was anxious for them to receive and to enjoy spiritual food. He wanted them to understand that He was not merely an earthly king to supply the appetites and needs of their bodies only, but that He was a spiritual king.

Bread, which has ever been and continues to be the staff of life, speaks of satisfaction, health and strength. The bread of earth, which those people were seeking, only met their needs temporarily, but the bread of heaven, or Christ, Whom they needed sorely, could meet their needs eternally.

The people thought that if Christ would only continue His miraculous feeding that would put Him in a class with Moses, which was the very thing that He refused to permit. Unique and supernatural, Christ cannot be placed in a class with anybody else.

Christ stated frankly that He is the true bread which God sent down from heaven. He said, "I am the bread of life." How significant that our Lord declared Himself to be the bread of life! It is noteworthy that He never presented Himself under the figure of some delicacy which only a certain class could afford. Rather, He likened Himself to bread, a necessity of life. Just as bread is a staple food, one which is necessary for the body and of which a person never tires, even so is Christ to the soul. While hunger returns to those who partake of natural bread, the one who partakes of Christ shall never hunger. He is the living bread for the sustenance of man. Just as the body assimilates the food properties derived from the bread when it is eaten, so the reception of Christ by faith results in our assimilation of His life and strength.

Christ told that crowd that God was present with them to feed them with the bread from heaven. That bread was sent in order that all who might partake thereof would become the recipients of real, satisfying and eternal life. In order to be a recipient of eternal life, there must be a personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus by faith. Furthermore, spiritual sustenance must be appropriated by faith. As believers in Christ, we feed on Him, the bread of life. He is adequate for the need of every believer. Christ here gives us the blessed assurance that there is one thing which He will never do, namely, cast out any soul who comes to Him in simple trust or dependence. But, only those who receive Christ will become recipients of everlasting life.

In the last three verses of this passage Christ places great emphasis on the will of God. The Scriptures tell us repeatedly that God has a will. God's will determines His actions. God exercises His will in connection with man. To make His will known and to get it accomplished has always been God's greatest undertaking.

To do the will of God was the biggest business of Christ while He was here on earth. He lived in accordance with God's will in every respect. He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." He wanted to do the will of the father regardless of what it was. He was subservient and obedient to God's will in everything, and that in spite of the fact that Satan offered Him pay and power to substitute sense, sentiment, sensation or something in the place of it. Christ demonstrated what it is to live solely for the purpose of doing God's will. He regarded His life's work as something which had been chosen for Him by the will of God. Even so, in the will of God is a plan for your life and mind, and we shall reach our highest happiness and greatest usefulness only as we discover His plan and live in accordance with His will. Be submissive to His will always, because it is ever right, safe and best.