

Sunday morning August 13th 2017 at CBC
Sermon outline: John 6 (The feeding of the 5000)

The gospel of John is famous for a number of features:

- Its difference from the other three gospels
- Its beginning
- Its ending
- Its announced purpose: *John 20:30-31*
- Its most well-known verse: *John 3:16*
- Its record of conversations (Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman ...)
- Its 7 (or 8) 'I am' statements made by Jesus
- Its 7 (or 8) signs given by Jesus

On Sunday mornings, we are looking on the last item on this list.

What does the feeding of the 5000 sign show us?

[1] THE POWER OF JESUS

In this respect, it does the same thing as the previous three signs (water/wine; healing of the official's son; healing of the paralysed man) and as the following three – it shows the astonishing, unique power of God. This is miraculous power, beyond the ability of any ordinary (merely) human being.

[2] THE MISSION OF JESUS

This sign points to the mission of Jesus – and we know that because of the conversation that John reports which arose from the miracle.

[a] Jesus did not come to feed people

The crowds were following Jesus because of the signs he was doing, and on this occasion (6.26) because he had fed them. They had found that elusive thing – the free lunch! And they wanted more. Jesus was a king, and he had come to feed people, but he was not the kind of king people thought he was, and he had not come to bring the kind of food some people thought he had come to bring.

[b] Jesus did come to feed people (!)

Jesus refers to working for '*food that endures to eternal life*' which he (the Son of Man) can give with God's approval (27). So the discussion then moves on to what this means and Jesus explains it by using the imagery of physical eating (and later, drinking) to describe spiritual truths. Let's examine what Jesus says.

Jesus's establishes an absolute priority: '*the work of God is this, to believe in the One he has sent.*' Some of the crowd knew their national history; they knew that in the time of the great deliverer of the nation, Moses who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, supernatural food from heaven (called 'manna' = 'what is it?') was provided. Would Jesus be doing the same thing, they wondered?

Jesus connects one of his signs with one of his 'I am' statements:

John 6:35-36: Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. NIV

To believe in the One whom God has sent is to believe that Jesus is the true bread from heaven, providing spiritual food

that is always satisfying and which will never leave someone hungry or thirsty.

So how does one feed on the bread from heaven, which is Jesus himself?

Trust the value of what is being offered

See John 6:35 and John 6:58-59

Our world seeks satisfaction (spiritual, psychological food and drink) in many ways. Amazing to think that in the 60's many people were singing along with the Rolling Stones about not having found satisfaction in life.

Jesus offers spiritual food that satisfies, that removes the frustrations of an empty and pointless life.

Shelter under the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross

See John 6:53-57

The language here may seem a bit extreme to us (as it did to Jesus's hearers) but his point is that faith in him means faith in the purpose of his death on the cross.

Anticipate your safety on the last day

See John 6:39-40 and John 6:44-45

We who read the Bible and believe God's word know where the world is headed. It is the last day, the final judgement, the day when the Lord Jesus judges the world as God's appointed judge. Those who have been feeding on the bread of life need have no fears about that day because Jesus himself will raise them up!

Expect eternal life beyond death

See John 6:39-40, 47-5, 58-59

Jesus comes to a fallen world where people inevitably die in the end, and he promises that all who feed on him as the living bread from heaven will be raised on the last day to eternal life – life without the fall, without sin, in the presence of God, a life lived in full and unembarrassed fellowship with God and with his Son where we can fulfill all the potential that the fall has affected and often ruined.

Trust in the secure mysteries of God's purposes

See John 6:37-40 and 44-45

[1] The Father has given people (those who will become Christians) to the Son.

[2] Whoever comes to Jesus will never be driven away

CONCLUSION

But if I put my trust in Jesus Christ, how will I continue?

Well, not only has Jesus promised not to drive away those who turn to him, but he also assures us that he will not lose any of those he has been given (39). Only on the last day will we fully know all those whom the Father has given to the Son, but we can be sure that on that day, there will be no-one missing whom the Father gave to the Son and for whom the Son gave his life.

So Jesus's sign points to him as being the true bread from heaven who has come to give his life as, in his own words, a ransom for many. May the Lord enable all of us to feed on Him in our hearts with thanksgiving!