



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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Bread of Life

John 6:22-52

Related Topics: Jesus - The Truth Teller; Jesus – Knowing Hearts; Jesus - Bread From Heaven; Jesus – Living Bread; Heaven; Faith; Eternal Life; Moses; Manna; Sought By God; Drawn By The Father; Works Or Faith; The Work of God

INTRODUCTION

The **first 14 verses** of **John 6** gave the account of the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels — the feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children.

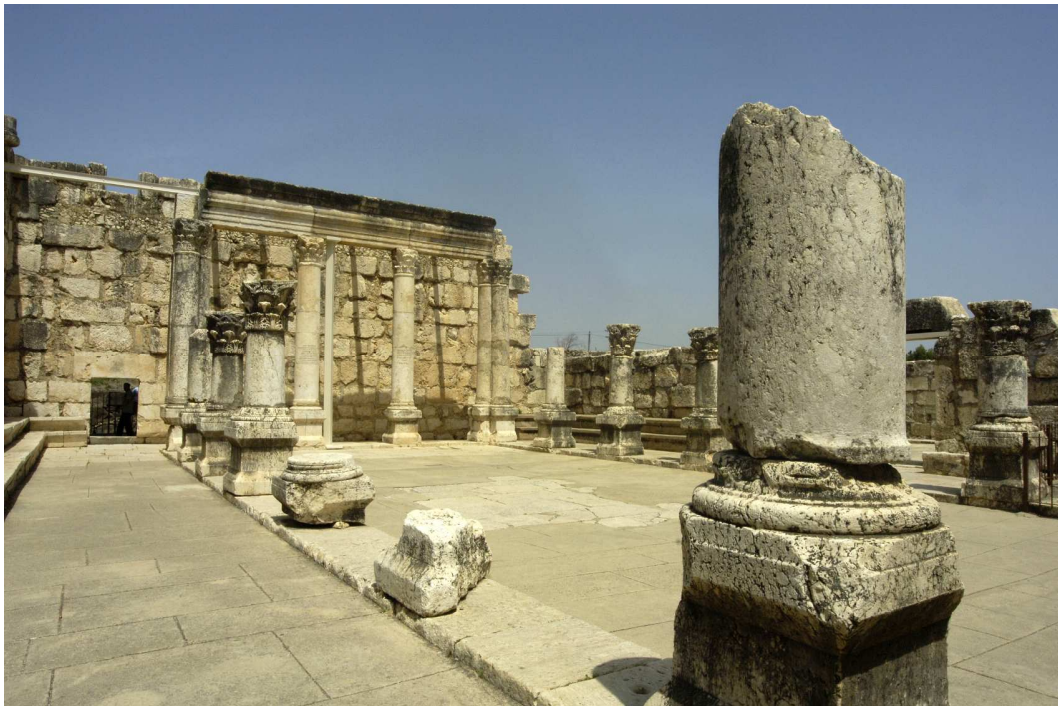
In **verses 15-21 John alone** gives to us **the response of the multitude** to the miracle of the loaves and fish. They saw Jesus as their Bread King — the One who would take care of their physical needs. They wanted to take Jesus and force Him to be king. Jesus wanted nothing to do with being just another Bread King in the kingdom of man. He is King of kings and Lord of Lords and His Kingdom is nothing like the kingdoms of man. So, he retreats to a place where he can be alone with the Father.

Mark's Gospel tells us that Jesus *constrained* — *made* — His disciples get into their boat and travel to the other side of the lake, knowing that He was sending them into a storm! Jesus went into a high place and there he PRAYED and WATCHED them. And then in the fourth watch Jesus came to them **walking on water**. **Matthew** and **Mark** also recorded that miraculous moment.

As we pick up in **John 6:22** we come to a moment in the life of Jesus that is **unique** to John's Gospel.

Verse 59 tells us that where it takes place

⁵⁹Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.



It is in this synagogue in Capernaum where Jesus says

- *Verse 35 - I am the bread of life.*
- *Verse 48 - I am that bread of life.*
- *Verse 51 - I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*

Three times in this chapter Jesus claims to be ***THE BREAD OF LIFE***.

Let's walk through it.

²²On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

We don't know how large the crowd is. My guess is that the crowd has grown beyond 20,000-25,000 people. Because if you feed 20,000 - 25,000 people, you know what is going to happen the next day? Everyone that got the free lunch the day before is going to tell his or her friends! We're looking at a crowd that could fill a stadium converging on Capernaum.

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

It's the ice-breaker question — polite conversation. But, Jesus knows exactly where all of this is going. He knows that they are there hoping that lunch will be served shortly. (Like me showing up at Valerie's parent's house at dinner time!)

²⁶Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you,

We are hearing these words come from the mouth of Jesus time and again! Jesus is the Truth-Teller in a world of lies. Jesus is willing to tell us the truth about ourselves!

He challenges the world on the subject of truth! He says that we should believe what He says over any other philosopher or religious teacher!

you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Here's the truth about you! You are here to free load off of me. You are no different from the Roman government that you hate — you want BREAD and a CIRCUS.

²⁷Do not labor 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.”

²⁷*Do not labor* is literally “stop laboring”. The inference is that they were up to that very moment laboring and that they were laboring for things temporal.

²⁷*Do not labor for the food that perishes* — The tense of the verb is that it is already perishing and they were already hungry again. Jesus says, “*Don't spend your life laboring for that which is today perishing.*”

These people had been LABORING to get to Jesus chasing Him around the northern shoreline of the Sea of Galilee for a free meal, for food that was already in the process of rotting and they were still at that moment hungry!

Jesus IS saying that rather than exhausting themselves for their next free lunch they should have exhausted themselves for the ONE THING that can satisfy, Jesus, Himself. That is why He is going to refer to Himself THREE TIMES as *the bread of life*.

HUGE POINT — Jesus IS NOT saying, “*Don't work for a living.*” The New Testament speaks against laziness and commands us to work hard for the glory of God. Jesus IS NOT saying, “*Food is evil*”, or “*It's wrong to have hunger.*”

- Hunger is a good thing — it needs to be satisfied.
- Thirst is a good thing — it needs to be satisfied.

- Sexual desire is a good thing — it needs to be satisfied within the framework of a marriage (a heterosexual, monogamous, life-long relationship).

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *Our Lord, we may be sure, did not mean to encourage idleness..... Labor is honorable in all men. No one need be ashamed of belonging to "the working classes." Our Lord himself worked in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Paul wrought as a tent-maker with his own hands. What our Lord did mean to rebuke was, that excessive attention to labor for the body, while the soul is neglected, which prevails everywhere in the world. What He reprobated was, the common habit of laboring only for the things of time, and letting alone the things of eternity--of minding only the life that now is, and disregarding the life to come. Against this habit He delivers a solemn warning.*

Listen to what John would write in his first epistle

*1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world **is passing away** along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

THAT was MY life before meeting Jesus. THAT is life for the world outside of Jesus. Time, physical energy , mental energy, and emotional energy exerted on how we are going to get more and better food to eat; how are we going to attain more possessions, how will we take care of our lives and have a good time. ALL of that is at this very moment **PASSING AWAY**. ALL of that is at this very moment **PERISHING**, and we are still HUNGRY.

²⁷labor for.... the food that endures to eternal life

Having satisfied the basic needs of life we **should be** spending our time, physical energy, mental energy, and emotional energy on the issues of **eternal life**.

eternal life is one of the major themes of the passage

Thayer's Greek Dictionary defines **eternal** as *without beginning and end*,

that which always has been and always will be.

This is a life that has no beginning. Right away we know that *eternal life* is a life that we cannot manufacture because we have a beginning. We can't work FOR that life. It is life that we receive from Jesus — ²⁷ *....which the Son of Man will give to you.*

Once again we are tethered to the Prologue.

John 1:1; 4a In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... 4In him was life,

We are not to exert ourselves in jumping through religious hoops to attain to this life that has no beginning or end. We are to exert ourselves in the pursuit of and relationship with Jesus, who is by nature eternal, who is the origin of life, and who can give His life to us.

HUGE QUESTION — TO WHAT or to WHOM are you giving yourself today? If it isn't Jesus, you are giving yourself to something that is already perishing and leaving you hungry for more.

²⁷ **..... For on him God the Father has set his seal."**

Jesus tells these descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their God has given to Him His stamp of approval that their God validates and certifies what Jesus does. When Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and there was a voice from heaven declaring, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" The authority of His teaching and the signs/miracles that Jesus performed were also the means by which the Father validated Jesus. Remember Nicodemus —

John 3:2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

Jesus has set them straight about their value system, that the eternal trumps the temporal. Here is their response:

²⁸**Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"** ²

How do we obtain this eternal life? What is our responsibility?

Here's what they are thinking, there must be something that God wants from us. There is some sort of reciprocal exchange where if we **do** certain things, God will give us good stuff in exchange. That is essentially the world of Karma, NOT the world of grace.

Karma says:

- *If I do the good thing, the right thing, then I get a good thing.*
- *If I don't do the good thing, or do a bad thing, then I get a bad thing.*

Grace says:

- *The only thing you can truly earn from God is judgment, but God in His kindness will give to you what you could never earn or deserve.*

They totally misunderstand grace. They still think that salvation is about them and their attempts and their efforts to obtain their own relationship with God and their own forgiveness of sin.

I love what Jesus has to tell them. He was very direct.

29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

HUGE CONCEPT — How does **salvation** come? How does *eternal life* come? Through Jesus.

How do we obtain that? **Faith.**

FAITH is believing, trusting in, clinging to, relying upon, the **person** and **the work** of Jesus, the one whom God the Father has sent.

FAITH says:

- *I didn't do anything to merit God's love.*
- *I didn't do anything to merit God's grace and forgiveness and mercy.*
- *I didn't merit anything.*
- *I could NEVER bring to God the righteousness that He demands.*

But the Gospel declares that God has provided for me the righteousness that He demands in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ! We can do nothing

to satisfy the Father, but we are forgiven and entered into a relationship with the Father by believing in Jesus and what He did on our behalf, in our place, as a substitute.

Jesus says — *Here's the deal* — **believe!** Jesus will repeat this refrain on a number of occasions throughout John's Gospel. He says it **three times** in **John 6** — **believe** and you will **receive eternal life**.

HUGE CONCEPT — The one thing that God seeks from His people is faith. Trusting Him. Believing Him. Throwing their life into Him without a Plan B. That's really the essence of faith.

³⁰So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?”

You have to love these guys! They are an incredibly accurate representation of you and me! Countless people, maybe a number in this room, have said, *“Well, if God just did this one thing for me, performed this one miracle, then I would have faith, I would believe in Him.”* No, you wouldn't! These people are saying, *“Walking on the water, turning a couple of sardines and five English muffins into enough food for 20,000, is that the best You've got? You don't really expect us to BELIEVE in You because of that, do You? Give us something to make us believe!”*

DON'T MISS THIS — They said, ***What work do you perform?*** They want God to work for them. They are wanting God to prove Himself to them. They are actually putting themselves on the throne, putting themselves in God's place saying, *“If you like us, then You have to earn our trust; You must prove to us that You are worthy of our worship and our trust!”* This is the audacity and arrogance of lost man!

They have something particular in mind that Jesus should do to earn their trust.

³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

In other words — *You had one good day, but you're no Moses. I mean, who do you think you are? God?! If you'd like us to worship you, here are the terms!*

Moses gave our ancestors bread for 40 years in the wilderness. If You can top that, then we'll all love you.

³²Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you,

Once again — Jesus the Truth-Teller. *You say that Moses gave you that bread — WRONG.*

DON'T MISS THIS — Jesus fed them on that hillside knowing that they didn't understand. He said, “*you came not because you perceived who I am, but because you got free food.*” **And Jesus fed them anyway.** He was setting the stage for **THIS** teaching. He was setting the stage so that He could **use the imagery of bread** to get deeper into their hearts. Think back on all of the times that the Lord met us in certain circumstances, did something wonderful for us, and we totally missed the point of who He is; and yet He blessed us anyway, so that He could use it as a point of reference at some future time in order to show us something deeper about Himself.

³²Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven,

Moses didn't part the Red Sea. Moses didn't send any plagues. Moses didn't make Manna. Moses woke up every day and there was bread on the ground. He didn't have anything to do with that heavenly provision. God gave the Israelites that *bread from heaven*.

but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

DON'T MISS THIS — *Coming down from heaven* is mentioned SEVEN times in this chapter (33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). This chapter speaks of *eternal life* NINE times (40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 57, 58 and 68).

HUGE POINT — Jesus is telling us that HE has *come down from heaven* to provide *eternal life*. Jesus tells them that He is God come down from heaven to earth. And, He gives life to the world.

³⁴They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

This is so reminiscent of the Woman at the well in **John 4**. Jesus said, “*If you drink of the water that I give you’ll never thirst again.*” She said, “*Sir, give me this water, so I won’t ever have to come to this stupid well and draw anymore.*” Jesus was talking about spiritual thirst and she was thinking of physical thirst.

Here this crowd says, “*All right, we’ll take some of this bread.*”

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

AGAIN — Jesus was willing to feed them **BREAD** the day before because it was a way to speak to their hearts about who He is! Bread was the staple of their diet (and for much of the world). The bulk of mankind depends upon **BREAD** to **SUSTAIN** and **PROVIDE** life. Bread is found on the table of the rich and on the table of the poor man. Bread is found on the table of the king and the table of the peasant.

HUGE — Jesus likens **HIMSELF** to the thing that **SUSTAINS** and **PROVIDES LIFE**. If Jesus were speaking to a crowd in Asia He would have said, “I am the *Rice* of Life.” In Mexico, He would have said, “I am the *Tortilla* of Life.” In India, He would have said, “I am the *Chapatti* or the *Naan* of Life”

For this audience this issue of bread was clear, it nourishes you and it gives you life, so you have to eat it.

Jesus tells them that **HE** is the ***bread of life, come down from heaven.*** Like bread is **essential** for physical life, Jesus says that He is essential for spiritual life. He preserves your life and causes you to have not just life, but eternal life. A quality of life that you can enjoy here and now and continues after the cessation of physical life into eternity without an end. You have eternal life and it comes from him.

HUGE OBSERVATION — Out to the end of the chapter Jesus **compares Himself** with this bread that came from heaven that sustained the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness.

⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

To get the richness of what Jesus is saying we need to look at it this thing called MANNA because Jesus says that HE is the real manna, the real BREAD that CAME DOWN from heaven.

- *That's WHO He is*
- *That's HOW He came*
- *That's WHAT He does.*

MANNA: WHAT IS IT? We first read of Manna in **Exodus 16**.

Manna literally means **WHAT IS IT!** When they saw it on the ground they looked at it and said **what is it?**

***Exodus 16:14-16; 31**¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "**What is it?**" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat..... ³¹Now the house of Israel called its name manna.*

The fact that they didn't understand what it was didn't stop them from partaking of it for 40 years!

APPLICATION: They are many things I don't understand about Jesus. I am still *growing in grace and the knowledge* of who Jesus is.

Ephesians 3:14-19** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father.....¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.... that you....¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that **surpasses knowledge

God's love for you and me in Christ Jesus is beyond the capacity of the human intellect. That doesn't mean I don't partake. I don't understand

everything about electricity. It doesn't mean I don't use it. It doesn't mean I don't enjoy all of the benefits it affords.

The manna was mysterious. What is it? But, they partook and it sustained them. Though I do not comprehend Jesus in His fullness I NEED Jesus for life!

MANNA: SMALL AND ROUND

Exodus 16:31 Now the house of Israel called its name manna. ³¹Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed

Corriander seed is small. The fruit is 3–5 mm diameter. It is a great picture of Jesus Christ — God Incarnate. Jesus is the God of the universe. Metaphorically He measures the universe with the span of his hand. And, we see him laying in a manger in Bethlehem. Small!

QUOTE: *Infinite One, come as an infant. Maker of everything fashioned as man. Holder of heaven now held by His mother. See this is God with us.*

Corriander seed is round. The circle speaks of eternity. It has no beginning and no end. Jesus is eternal. You know, Jesus is not just immortal. Immortal means you never die, you have no ending. Eternal means you have no beginning and you have no ending. Jesus is eternal. Again, we are tethered to the Prologue. When Jesus says that He came down from heaven He is inferring that He was pre-existent —He is eternal.

MANNA: SWEET —

Exodus 16:31 and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

AMAZING — God's heavenly provision to sustain them in the wilderness did not taste like brussel sprouts or tofu. It tasted like HONEY! How did Israel respond to that?

In **Exodus 17:13** we are told that they murmured about the Manna. In **Numbers 11** we are told that they were murmuring about this sweet heavenly provision — *Manna in the morning, manna in the evening, manna at suppertime, we're tired of manna! Manna cotti. Man-nana splits. We're tired of manna.*

The problem was not with the Manna, the problem was with their appetite. They still had an appetite for Egypt. *“All we get out here is manna. Oh for the good old days in Egypt! Why Egypt was like Club Med.* The INSANITY of a selective memory! They weren’t remembering the task-master’s whip, the life of being slaves. They weren’t remembering what it was like to have their male infants thrown into the Nile river. Instead all they could remember about Egypt was *the garlic, the onions, and all the meat they could eat!*

As Christians we can do that. *Life was so much easier was easier before I was saved. Life was so spicy before I got saved.* That’s stupid. It was not. That’s why you got saved. *Drugs — drinking — STDs — empty life — oh how I long for those days.* That’s stupid. But, that’s what we do, isn’t it?

What a warning that is to the Church today. Church-goers today have little taste for the sweetness of Jesus. Primarily because the Church has created an appetite for Egypt. If you create an appetite for the carnal, you have to feed it. If you strive to get it going, you have to strive to keep it going and the maintenance will kill you.

One Christian, writing 100 years ago said, *“Pastors need to make up their minds, do they want to entertain goats or feed sheep?”* You would think that guy wrote that this week!

We don’t need to improve on Jesus! We don’t need to improve on the Living word or the Written word. Where are we getting our recipes? Is the mixed multitude telling us what we need to do to be slick and to be savvy? Jesus is pure and powerful. He is alive and because of that He is life changing and He’s coming again.

MANNA: COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN —

Unlike mankind — Jesus came down from heaven. He pre-existed His humanity. He inhabited a physical frame. When Jesus, *the bread of life*, came into this world, He was born in Bethlehem which means the house of bread.

MANNA: CAME AT NIGHT —

The manna came at night, every night. In the morning they found it like dew on the ground. When Jesus came into the world He came at night while the Shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks.

MANNA: GIVEN TO A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE —

Manna, that sweet heavenly provision, came down from heaven to the complaining, grumbling children of Israel for 40 years. God was faithful to feed them. In the same way Jesus came to a rebellious people.

John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

MANNA: PRESENT - AVAILABLE – ABUNDANT

Every morning in the wilderness the Manna was PRESENT, AVAILABLE, and ABUNDANT. As much as you could eat for the day. Jesus is *Emmanuel, God with us*. He's with us and available every day in every circumstance. He's not distant where we can't get to Him. In the Gospels we see Jesus with mankind at a wedding feast / funeral / hunger / pain / sickness. Day by day, He is limitless in what we can know and experience with Him.

He is AVAILABLE to any and all who would partake of Him.

EXAMPLE: We have a dear friend named Frank, who lives in Philadelphia. Frank was involved in prison ministry through Calvary Chapel Philadelphia. Frank had sent a Bible to a prison in New York. CC Philly received a letter from David Berkowitz, known as the Son of Sam, the infamous serial killer who whose crimes terrorized New York City from July 1976 until his arrest in August 1977, killed six people and wounded seven others. Berkowitz said, *"Thanks for the Bible, I didn't remember asking, don't know how you got our address."* He said, *"It was great to see that it was from Calvary Chapel Philadelphia, we all listen to Pastor Joe's Bible studies up here every day."* He talked about what was going on in his life spiritually. Jesus is the Bread of Life, available for sinners, even the Son of Sam. Berkowitz is serving a 360 year sentence. Jesus received him, Jesus washed him, Jesus cleansed him. There are no doubt, people that are offended at that. But, Paul the apostle was a murderer. Jesus, the Bread of Life, was available to a man who was a violent persecutor of Christians. Jesus became to Saul of Tarsus *the bread of life*.

CONTRASTS

In the Old Testament the manna came to a living people to keep them from dying. Jesus comes to a dead people to give them life.

Manna fed Israel — Jesus feeds the world.

It says here that they fed on it and they died. Jesus says that whoever partakes of me will live forever.

⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

The manna in the wilderness was received over and over and over.

Jesus is only received once but fed on daily.

CONCLUSION

JESUS SAYS: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE — What are we supposed to do in regards to all of this? What are you supposed to do if you're not a believer?

JESUS SAYS: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE — If we partake of Him, if we look to Him, and come to Him to receive life and sustain life, we will have eternal life.

HUGE — You can know about Jesus and not partake of Jesus. You can read about Jesus and not partake of Jesus. You can be a member of a church and not partake of Jesus. You can graduate from a seminary and not partake of Jesus. You can receive communion and not partake of Jesus.

JESUS SAYS: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE — I can hold a loaf of bread here in front of you this morning. You can know that it's a loaf of bread and yet be sitting, dying of malnutrition right where you are. You could know what's in the loaf of bread. You could understand the value of its

nourishment. You can even believe that if you ate it, you would live. And yet believing all of that, you can sit there and die of starvation if you don't partake of it. You can't say to your wife, "*Honey go up there and eat that for me.*" If your wife or husband; boyfriend or girlfriend; or parent(s) becomes a Christian, that doesn't mean that you're going to live forever. You don't do that with your physical food. You don't say, "*I'm starving honey, order a steak sandwich for yourself and eat it, then I'll feel better.*"

IT'S NOT ENOUGH to merely say that you believe, you have to partake. He's the bread of life. He beckons us and says that unless you partake as an individual, you have no life.

He alone is the bread of life. That is His claim. Have you taken Him at His Word?