

PENTECOST 11 (2021)

John 6

John 6:35–51 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever 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 one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.*”

In the Name of Jesus.

‘Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!’ John 1.

How does the Lamb of God take away the sins of the world? Well, in John 6, by calling Himself a loaf of bread. By directing our minds to Albertson's, whence this loaf came.

He is trying...working...giving... From the cross He cried out 'It is accomplished!' The work the Father gave Him to do: to lose not one of those the Father gave to Him.

I need y'all to slow down your minds to the slow lane in which your poor pastor drives. On the way to the cross and then the empty tomb, then to Our Father and His Father, Our God and His God—Jesus Christ takes the time—one whole chapter out of 21 in this Gospel!—to repeat, 'I'm a loaf of Bread. I'm a loaf of Bread.'

That settles it! He could not be more earnest about what He is doing.

In a world of Gentiles—without sense, callous, almost NO heart for the next man, and none at ALL for the true God—Bread is it!

It makes me smile to remember the most delightful young French girl who stayed with us one summer. Waiting for her return flight, she kept asking about Americans and I kept asking about the French; then I decided to ask about us Americans too. 'What are you going to take back to France about us? What have you learned?' And among the many things she revealed about us, the one that stands out is, 'I learned, in American, you don't need to HUNGRY in order to EAT!'

Now, let's do a bit of cultural translation here. In America, those of us who are still a few ounces away from beach-form can gain the title fat. But such a fellow in France gets the lofty title of 'gourmand!' People who live in glass houses....

Doesn't matter, to Heaven, what Gentile land produces you. Europe or America, Africa or Asia, we're all the same: What can I get? How soon can I get it? And then, what's next for me to get?

I hope this isn't too airy-fairy language for y'all. I've been trying it out for some time now. I'm sure I'm on the right track.

Heaven can ONLY wiggle in front of us by disguising Himself in sin. That must be what our Jesus means by saying that His FLESH is the Bread, the Food, that makes us alive for good. By 'Flesh,' the Lord means that He has come as Just Another Man, Whom the Law accuses and condemns, without waiting to see if He behaves nice or naughty; whether or not He's ever naughty at all. The LAW—Moses!—was NEVER trumpeted from that terrifying mountain of death in order to excuse ANY...MAN! Or to life ANY man over against the other.

So, Jesus the Man tells us: 'Y'all are idolators, worshipers of food, gourmands one and all, insatiable to talk trash about my Father in Heaven; taking into y'all's mouths the next man, your family members, your fellow redeemed: to devour; to chew up and maybe even just spit out.'

Today, He saves us with this: ‘Your ONLY HOPE, is that you do the same with ME! Speak ill of ME! Chew up ME! Kill ME—along with all the others you murder, daily and much.’

I know full well, my dear ones, that I am NOT telling you the biz about Jesus the way almost everybody else does. That is not just because I am wired all messy. It is because everybody in the world turns Jesus into Moses, the Giver into the taker, the Gospel and forgiveness into Law and despair.

‘Get on the side of the right guy!—WEEEE sez that’s Jesus! Whom we have never seen; whose life we cannot model; who placed NO trust in OUR trust—get on the right side of the right guy, or, boy-o-boy!, there’s gonna be trouble.’

Yuck.

Saint Paul is in complete harmony with Saint John. Hear again, I beg you, the apostle’s preaching. He says, ‘You want to be religious, be on the side of God, even Jesus Christ? Then, throw yourselves into THIS.’

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.** But that is not the way

you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you **speak the truth with his neighbor,** for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him **labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.** Let **no corrupting talk** come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may **give grace to those who hear.** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.**

But see where the apostle ends up!:

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ah! Jesus IS a loaf of bread! But—praise the Lord!—a loaf that is slice after slice of repentance and faith and good deeds and the trampling of our callousness, the breaking of the tyranny of death and our self-centeredness!

Not enough hours in the day to exhaust these words!

Tired of work? Worn out by demands? ‘Well, this extra work piled on me will gain me something **FOR THE SAKE OF OTHER PEOPLE! MAYBE** even those who **DON’T** work all that hard, those who always have their **HANDS OUT!**’

That’s how you and I comfort ourselves during the heat of the day, right?

Eyes open for the next great deal, sale? Because our constant vigilance is centered on the wants and needs of **OTHERS**—glad to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, Who gave Himself to be chewed up and spit out by the likes of **US!** Who teaches us, ‘Without this agony of mine, produced by **YOU**, **YOU** have no hope. But you do have hope! I am that Bread, that you’re going to chew up, daily and much, no matter what! So chew away! And **LIVE!**’

We sing, on Jesus’ Birthday, of this weary world, sad and lowly plains. Yet, there are the angels! ‘And ever o’er its Babel sounds, the blessed angels sing!’

The ‘Babel sounds,’ my dear ones, is the single-voice, the utter unity of the Gentiles that says the same, tired, sad and lonely message that makes our God’s great creation so weary: ‘**YOU** must look after **YOURSELF!** That means this life **AND** any future life, if there is one! So, practice makes perfect! Spot—quick like a bunny!—when your neighbor slips, with his feet of clay. Take note! And join the Babel sounds—get on social media!—and strike, wound, kill.’

It's horrible enough when we foolishly read this in the newspaper, which I have been warning you to ignore.

But it is the end of any hope, when we do this with our religion, our faith, our life.

Such as: 'Well, I know where I AM going! Whatever happens to the REST of this world! Whatever happens to YOU, we'll just see!'

Chew on this, my dear ones. Eat this—His loaf never runs out! Consume this, Him, and laugh at sin, guilt, death and despair.

'I am CERTAIN that I am alive in such a way that even death is just a speed-bump! For I offend my heavenly Father and the Holy King He has given to all, daily, and much. Far WORSE than the nations, Babel, that has never HEARD of the Gospel, much less the Holy Law! I should KNOW better! But that does NOT change the best thing since sliced bread! The Bread from heaven!'

He gave His life, came to be condemned—gave His flesh, for the Life of the WORLD! And THAT...INCLUDES...EVEN...ME!'

And if ME, then you for certain!

I cannot live up to that, my friends. I hope I'm not alone in that confession. Let me put words in your mouth. You say it too: 'I cannot live up to what Jesus gives, the pattern He set, that Life.'

But then add, ‘But HE lives up to it! And always will!’

This is for each one of you to eat and be satisfied and never die in the Name of Jesus.