

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6: 22- 71

Key verse 6: 35

“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.”

Thank God for teaching us last week how Jesus separated His 12 disciples from the crowd to train them as spiritual leaders through storm training. If we do not fight with our own strength in the storm of life, but listen to the word of Jesus, we can grow to become disciples of Jesus and achieve the victory of faith. In today's text, the people sought Jesus, who fed the 5000, to improve their conditions through him. Jesus clearly rebuked them not to seek for themselves food which is perishable, but which remains for eternity. He revealed Himself to them also as the bread of life. Jesus is the bread of life, because he alone can satisfy our hunger for life. By accepting his lordship over our lives, we can participate in his sufferings. Like the disciples, we may follow Jesus with clear decision and live our lives in a way that is for the establishment of determined disciples of Jesus on the campuses in Germany.

1. **Do not work for food that spoils (22-34)**

Let's look at verse 22: “The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone.” In verses 22-25, we see that the people had been watching closely, that Jesus, after feeding the 5000, did not go with his disciples to Capernaum. When they did not find him on "their side", they went to Capernaum and searched for him until they

found him. Then they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" They were chasing obsessed after him like paparazzi. By the feeding of the 5000 they should have recognized and assumed that only Jesus can satisfy their real hunger. But they wanted to make him their bread king, so that they would never have a bread problem again. They wanted to gain some kind of advantage through Jesus.

But Jesus spoke plainly to them. Let us read verses 26 and 27: “Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Jesus admonished them, because they were only looking for him because their human hunger had once been satisfied. He rebuked them clearly not to seek for improving their conditions, but to seek food that is not perishable and which remains for eternal life. Verse 28 says: “Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” The crowd thought very humanly that Jesus might be able to accommodate their wishes if they did something about it. But Jesus said clearly to them (29): “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” Jesus further admonished the hardened multitude that it was not their bread problem that needed to be solved, but that they should believe in Jesus as the Son of God. He knew that their basic problem was not their

condition problem, but their sin problem. He fought the hard battle of faith, so that they do not have to pay for the short-term improvement of their conditions and the bread but rather be interested in Jesus as the Son of God. The servant of God has fought this battle for our next generation in recent years, not to improve their conditions in the world, but to implant in them their spiritual identity as royal priests. In this way they could be encouraged to become spiritually alive in obedience to carry God's word.

The people stubbornly clung to their false motives. They questioned Jesus' work: "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" (30) God had given the manna training to the Israelites in the desert so that they would be trained to live as God's people and be dependent on him. But the people had interpreted this appropriately, arguing that God had given them manna to fill their stomachs. Jesus admonished them again in verses 32 and 33: "Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jesus told them it is clear that it is not man, but God who had given them the bread from heaven, so that they learned to honor God's word and to obey.

In this part we learn how to make food for ourselves that remains for eternal life. Let us read verse 27a again: "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life." Jesus admonishes us here that eternal life is the only thing that really matters. In the World is the short-term satisfaction of desire in capital letters. A holy life with discipline and in-depth Bible study at first glance seems to be exhausting and frail. One of my PhD students once told me, "When I'm dead, so be it." It seems wise to have in life a maximum of fun and to seek comfort and convenience." But in fact people

live on insecurities and fearing eternal damnation.

The worldly food will certainly pass away. But life with the word of God is a truly blessed life, that will last forever. We are allowed on this earth to make food that remains for eternal life by being able to live with a clear identity as royal priests, faithfully studying the Bible and obeying one word absolutely. Like Jesus, we must not allow young people whatever they want, but faithfully help the next generation, not to look for the improvement of conditions but to seek the imperishable food. It is a matter of gratitude that the next generation from their childhood on got the opportunity to get imperishable food. This they were allowed, above all, through the deep Bible study and spiritual training by learning to focus their lives on the Word of God. On the Young Leadership Camp we could see that through this they have grown up into mature spiritual leaders in their young years and could be used even as preachers. God will bless their decision for Jesus and use them as global spiritual leaders for this generation.

2. Jesus, the bread from heaven (35-71)

The people remained hardened and did not want to understand Jesus by saying, "Lord, give us such bread always." How did Jesus answer that? Let us read together Verse 35: "Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." We would like to reflect on what it means that Jesus is the bread of life.

1. Jesus truly satisfies the spiritual Hunger and thirst of the people (35)

If we look at verses 31-59, we see that the words "from heaven" should be repeated ten times. This shows us, that the bread of life does not serve to improve conditions, but above all the mental hunger and thirst of man after eternal life to breastfeed. The people

had come to Jesus to satisfy their physical hunger. They grumbled against his authority and saw him with human eyes as the son of Joseph and Mary. But Jesus testified to them that he was the Son of God. (38) He promised them that if they would come to him and believe in him, they would never hunger or thirst again.

When we think about what the bread means for the people, then it is on the one hand, physical nourishment. But this cannot satisfy our hunger... breastfeed. When we're very full and plump, we sometimes think I wouldn't have to eat for a week. But the fact is, after a few hours you'll get hungry again. On the other hand, bread is what gives us apparent safety or improvement of our conditions. People claw for example, to get the money with a perfect career or to the illusion of an ideal Love. Young people make many Thoughts about the best study place with the most appropriate compartment for them. But Money, love or career, all those things are ultimately transitory and cannot satisfy our true hunger for life.

Yesterday came the news that the shooting star in soccer André Schürrle has ended his meteoric rise from one to the other day with only 29 years. Humanly speaking, he had achieved everything, he was a skilled and celebrated player, his last transfer fee was 30 million Euro. In his interview he said that he felt very lonely and was simply not happy. It's amazing that this young man was not happy, even though he has apparently achieved everything and became very popular. But this shows us once again that the perishable bread cannot truly satisfy our hunger. According to Genesis 3:17 the life ...just spending time being taken for ephemeral is a cursed life. People have been working in the sweat of their face a lot and laboriously to improve their living conditions a little bit, but ultimately, we all have to die. According to verse 49. the Israelites who had eaten manna in the desert also all died.

That Jesus is the bread of life means that only he alone can completely satisfy the spiritual needs of a person. This hunger for

life and thirst for life can only be truly satisfied through his Word, because it gives us eternal life. Our soul can only be truly refreshed when we establish a deep spiritual love relationship with him through Bible study. Biblical truth says that people have God's Word and must live by it, as Matthew 4:4 says: Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Jesus does not want to improve our conditions or make us feel good about ourselves as human beings. He wants to give us true and eternal life. He does this by challenging us to come to him and believe in him. This means repenting of ones old life and acknowledging his rule over our lives. He wants us to study the Bible deeply and give Him the first priority in our lives. If we entrust our lives to Jesus in all matters and obey His will, we can have true peace and perfect happiness and gain eternal life. We can then also experience God's mission with fulfilling joy and gratitude.

In his youth the church father Augustinus strove for the transitory Bread. He led a very extravagant Life. He lived like a typical hedonist, by trying out the various false teachings of his time and having many relationships with different women. His mother shed many tears over him. But all this could not satisfy his spiritual hunger. In his confessions he writes that this life is very tired and he was miserable even though he appeared to be an intellectual and popular young man. In his misery, however, he was allowed to meet God through Romans 13,13.14: "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh." That made him realize that only Jesus could quench his hunger and thirst. In his new life he no longer sought the ephemeral. He repented and turned completely from sin, devoted himself to the word as a priest and took advantage of his good training to write writings against false teachings. Through this

change of rule he became one of the most important church fathers in history.

In my student days I was very blinded by the ephemeral things and hungry for people's recognition. I thought that I would be happy and content if I studied successfully, earned a lot of money and made a career. But I realized that when I had achieved something, there was always something more to achieve. I also had to experience the reality of how hard and tiring the struggle was to prove myself in our society. However, I am very thankful to God that through faithful Bible study with my parents I was able to meet Jesus, the Bread of Life. They prayed for me, not that my conditions would be improved by being a successful doctor, but that I would be used as a shepherd and Bible teacher like John the Baptist. I was allowed to receive Matthew 6:33 and make a clear change of leadership by repenting that I had loved the world and my career more than Jesus. I was allowed to make a decision not to seek the transitory recognition of people and to place my material, my future and my marriage in the hands of God. God thereby gave me true satisfaction and blessed my life abundantly. Like my parents, I may continue to keep my relationship with God with the highest priority and not through human career, but above all to strive for eternal life through Bible study and to give my life, whatever it takes, for the pioneering of the medical faculty.

2. The certainty of eternal life (36-47)

Let's look at verse 39. "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day." This verse says that Jesus came into the world, not to fulfil his own will, but to die on the cross for the sins of men and to find a way to eternal life for all, to open up people without even to lose a single person. Verse 40 says, "for my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." This is also repeated in verses 43 and 44. God's heart is world mission. His will is that every person believes

in the Son and thereby has eternal life. It is the most joyful news that when we accept Jesus as the bread of life, the certainty of eternal life will dwell in our heart. Do you have certainty of eternal life? With this Certainty we can be without fear and give ourself completely to God's work.

3. Eating Jesus' flesh and drinking Jesus' blood (48-59)

If we consider verses 48 to 58, we see once again more closely why Jesus is the bread of life. Let us read verse 51: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This verse says that if we have eaten much worldly bread without Jesus, we have to die. But because Jesus shed his blood for our sins and sacrificed his life completely to save us from the power of sin, we can have everlasting life.

Jesus said (55-57): "For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me." Jesus says here that as forgiven sinners we also eat his flesh and have to drink his blood. To eat Jesus' flesh and to drink his blood, means to accept his mercy for forgiveness of sins personally and to drink his blood again and again and to be washed clean by his blood. It is not enough that we only have physical food. We are allowed to pass through the Study of the Word of God, repent and renew our decision to surrender. To eat the flesh of Jesus and to drink his blood also means especially to trust in his suffering and his devotion to his work and to love his suffering. At present, in many churches is propagated the gospel of prosperity that Jesus has saved us, so that we can live a beautiful and humanly better life, and that we can only serve God as far as we can. Some Christians seek in the church the nice community feeling or an other advantage. But to eat the flesh of Jesus and

to drink his blood includes also to devote ourselves with clear consequence on the suffering of Jesus, and with a clear decision and dedication to the work of God, no matter what the cost.

Apostle Paul was once Saul, a Pharisee who persecuted Christians harshly. However God met him on the way to Damascus. After that encounter his life turned around and he was changed from a persecutor to the most eager witness and defender of Christ. As a consequence Paul was hated by many and persecuted, he had to experience many sufferings. But Paul had assumed that he had to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus in his new life. Because he had accepted this, he could dedicate his life completely to world mission.

Apostle Peter was actually considered the disciple who had denied Jesus three times. But he too was able to preach the gospel fearlessly before many people in the Book of Acts, so that several thousand people came to faith by the Spirit of God through him. He also died as a martyr and gave his life for Jesus. When we look at Jesus as the bread of life the consequence will be that we will face misunderstandings and persecution. But we must not allow this to lead us to discouragement. We can continue to do God's work with gratitude and joy in the sufferings of Jesus.

4. Truly acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and follow Him with determination

Let's look at verse 60: "On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Jesus had testified the truth that he is the Son of God, and that they would live for eternity only if they accepted him as the bread of life. But for some, these were harsh words, probably especially for those who followed Jesus because they hoped for an improvement in conditions through him. In verses 62-64a Jesus says: "Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I

have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus rebuked their false goal in life harshly. When they did not repent of their wrong aim in life they wouldn't even think about believing in Jesus when they saw him raising up to heaven. The words of God are Spirit and life. To despise God's words and grumble against them are sins to the Holy Spirit, who does not can be awarded. We must obey them absolutely and thus let God rule over our lives.

Let us read verse 66: "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." The consequence of Jesus' clear words was that many of the people turned away. They were not ready to entrust their whole lives to God. Ultimately, all left Jesus except the 12, one of whom was a traitor. It is the spiritual reality that people will turn away if they don't want to repent and if they don't like something. We may not be discouraged by it, but may accept God's sovereignty and continue to fight the good fight of faith. From Jesus we learn here that he did not a social work, but fought for true discipleship making. He did not speak to the people by mouth. He persecuted not the principle of not saying anything offensive, so that some undecided would stay with him. He demanded them clearly to repentance, even if he had to suffer the consequences. We thank God that he has blessed the shepherd's heart and the fight of faith of the Servant of God for the last 40 years. He also struggled with this spirit against humanism by giving the clear Word of God to the students and the next generation through Bible study. In this way God raised leaders among the German students and the Next generation, who clearly decided for Jesus despite persecution. This year we are allowed to come to God by Gratitude for the work of the past 40 years of the work of God. We celebrate the 50th anniversary and pray that God will set up three bases in the Muslim countries in the next time.

Jesus then asked the twelve whom he had called. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" (67) He also made clear to them a

choice between following Jesus or going away. It was certainly not easy for him to ask this question, but it was necessary to make their decision for Jesus clear. Let us read verse 68 together: "Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Peter was still not a perfect disciple, on the contrary we know that he had many weaknesses. But at the decisive moment, he stood on the side of the truth by witnessing Jesus as the Son of God. It is interesting to see the different groups with clearly different reactions to see the words of Jesus. In the end, they all left, and what remained were his 12 disciples who decided to follow him. What was the difference between them and the others? The difference was that the disciples had lived in close fellowship and regular Bible studies with Jesus. They had seen Jesus' life of faith and prayer, his shepherd heart, but also his uncompromising attitude. They had recently received training from Jesus on the lake, not to turn towards themselves trust, but to believe. They were ready to participate in the sufferings of Jesus. This discipleship and faith training gave them spiritual discernment and led them to active decision to follow Jesus, no matter what it takes.

A young man was confronted with many difficulties and persecutions in the last year. But when he thanked for this training of faith and God's sovereignty and continued on with a word from 5. Moses 6:5, God used him as a shepherd and blessing for the next generation and valuable for the GLEF 2020. Another young man got resistance when he wanted to form a prayer circle in his school. But through the faithful prayer and many years of Bible study with his parents he was spiritually trained and resilient, so that he sticks to Joshua 1:7, faithfully in the school so that the prayer circle could be formed. So he could clearly confess his faith as a courageous witness and shepherd for his classmates. I also know a shepherd who, despite of his working life every week, drives a long way to get to the students to pray at the Koblenz campus and to lead the Bible study with them. God blesses his faithfulness

to the Word and his confession to Jesus and uses his Family as a blessing to this campus.

God's work is the work of those who, in times of difficulties, decide to receive faith training and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. May God bless our next generation so that they can confess Jesus as their Lord through deep Bible study, spiritual training and fellowship and be used as global spiritual leaders for world mission.

In today's text we learn that Jesus is the bread of life. The bread of the world can't satisfy our hunger. Jesus wants to give us the bread of life, which alone can satisfy our hunger for life when we come to him with clear repentance and by faith in his word. Thereby we can see the true happiness and God's work in us and through us. We may also participate in his sufferings with gratitude. May God help us also to receive the spiritual training through Bible study and fellowship like the disciples and to make a clear decision to follow Jesus.