

I Am the Bread of Life

John 6:22-51; Exodus 16:2; Genesis 3:22-24

What We Found

The crowd tracked Jesus across the lake, and he read their hearts on arrival: you seek me because you ate your fill of the loaves. His counsel: labor not for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give. Future tense. We marked it and carried it all night. And the work of God, he said, is to believe in him whom he has sent: faith is the doorway to everything in this chapter.

They demanded a sign and proposed the manna as the benchmark, and Jesus corrected the record: not Moses, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven, and the bread of God is a person. "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." Then the crowd murmured, and we caught Scripture repeating itself: the same word, from the same story, that Israel's wilderness generation aimed at Moses and Aaron in their hunger, just before the manna fell (Exodus 16:2), four weeks ago in our own study.

And then verse 51. "If any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever": the exact food barred at the gate of Eden, guarded by cherubim and flame since the third chapter of the Bible, offered aloud in a synagogue in Capernaum. The way back to the tree of life walked into the room. And the sentence did not end there: "the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." We closed the book on that sentence, exactly where the crowd's question begins. Next week: bring your sealed guess.

Voices of the Church

St. Augustine of Hippo

Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.4, early 5th century

St. Augustine, preaching on "no one can come to me unless the Father draws him," insisted that the Father's drawing is not force but desire: give me a lover, he said, and he will feel what I am saying. The heart is drawn by delight the way sheep are drawn to green pasture, and the one who hungers for this bread is already being pulled toward it by the hand that baked it.

St. Catherine of Siena

The Dialogue, 14th century

St. Catherine wrote of the soul that has tasted God and discovered the strangest property of this food: the more it eats, the hungrier it grows, and the hunger itself becomes a kind of happiness, because it is hunger for the one thing that does not run out. Earthly food ends in fullness and then in emptiness again; this bread ends in desire that is itself delight.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (attributed)

Jesu Dulcis Memoria, hymn tradition, 12th century

The great hymn long attributed to St. Bernard sings to Christ: those who taste you hunger still, and those who drink you thirst for more. The tradition that treasured those lines understood John 6 from the inside: the bread of life does not end appetite the way a meal ends it, but converts appetite into love, so that satisfaction and longing finally become the same thing.

Live It This Week

- 1.** Each morning this week, before food, pray one sentence: Lord, I labor today for the food which endures. Then notice, once a day, what you are actually laboring for.
- 2.** Read John 6:22-51 once more on your own, slowly, and underline every I AM, every bread, and every future tense verb. Bring your marked-up text next week.
- 3.** Find your sealed My Guess sheet from week one and put it with your Bible now, tonight, so it cannot be forgotten. Next week we open them.

Scripture Memory Verse

"I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6:35

Before Next Session

Read John 6:52-71 once, without commentary or cross-references, just the text. Then find your sealed My Guess sheet from week one and put it with your Bible tonight. Bring it next session, still sealed. We open them together.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1094; 2835