

As you read...

Our reading today starts the day after Jesus does yet another incredible miracle for the crowds: the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-21). As we gather with the crowds, everyone has come to see Jesus for different reasons.

Some have come because they have heard about the miracles Jesus has done so far; some have even seen these miracles for themselves; both are wondering what might be next. He's turned water to wine (John 2), healed the official's son (John 4), healed the sick man by the pool called Bethesda (John 5), and fed the enormous crowd the day before. Everyone is thinking to themselves, "What incredible thing will He do for us now?"

Jesus' response is an interesting one. He knows they have come to see Him because the day before they ate their fill—but now they are hungry again. This time, however, Jesus shares with them about the bread that will never perish and will never cease to satisfy: the bread of *life*. Once again, He points the crowds to Himself.

As you read today, notice the promise that Jesus repeats as He speaks to the crowds: those who believe in Him have eternal *life*. He even takes it a step further today. Those who believe in Jesus, who eat from the bread of *life* will be raised up on the Last Day.

Notice too what happens towards the end of our reading today. Many in the crowd leave because what Jesus has to say is tough for them to hear. The disciples, however, stay. Why? Because Jesus has the words of eternal *life*. They believed. They found *life* in Him.

Read [John 6:22-71](#)

The Bread of Life

²² The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw there had been only one boat. They also saw that Jesus had not boarded the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone off alone. ²³ Some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

*²⁶ Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Don’t work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal **life**, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him.”*

²⁸ “What can we do to perform the works of God?” they asked.

²⁹ Jesus replied, “This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ “What sign, then, are you going to do so that we may see and believe you?” they asked. “What are you going to

perform? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: **He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**”

³² Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ Then they said, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ “I am the bread of **life**,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again. ³⁶ But as I told you, you’ve seen me, and yet you do not believe. ³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal **life**, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

⁴¹ Therefore the Jews started grumbling about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They were saying, “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Stop grumbling among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: **And they will all be taught by God.** Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to me— ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God. He has seen the Father.

⁴⁷ “Truly I tell you, anyone who believes has eternal **life**. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of **life**. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the **living** bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will **live** forever. The bread that I will give for the **life** of the world is my flesh.”

⁵² At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have **life** in yourselves. ⁵⁴ The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal **life**, and I will raise him up on the last day, ⁵⁵ because my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ 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. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down

*from heaven; it is not like the manna your ancestors ate—and they died. The one who eats this bread will **live** forever.”*

⁵⁹ He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰ Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

*⁶¹ Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ The Spirit is the one who gives **life**. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are **life**. ⁶⁴ But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”*

⁶⁶ From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?”

*⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal **life**. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”*

⁷⁰ Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.

Questions

1. Notice how often Jesus repeats the promise that those who believe in Him will be raised to life on the Last Day. Why do you think Jesus repeated that promise so frequently to the crowds that gathered?
2. Many disciples turn away in disbelief. Imagine you are one of those disciples in the crowd who have come to see another miracle. Why do you think so many turn away? What makes what Jesus says so hard to hear and take to heart?
3. The Twelve stay with Jesus. Look again at verses 66-69. What in your life has made it tempting to walk away from Jesus? What has challenged or distracted you from hearing and taking to heart His words of eternal life for you?

A moment to pray.

Jesus, this world throws so many distractions my way that cause me to turn from the words of life that You give to me. Thank You for the reminder You give me today in Your Word. Help me to have the courage to stay with You when those distractions come my way. Give me words today to give honor to You. In Your name. Amen.