

People Jesus Met, part 15 -- The Five Thousand (Eating Fresh Manna Everyday)

The "Feeding of the Five Thousand" is the only miracle of Jesus ever performed that is mentioned in all four gospels.

"Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far side of the Sea of Galilee and went up on a mountainside and sat down with His disciples. But a great crowd of people followed Him because of the miracles He had performed on the sick." John 6:1

"When Jesus looked up and saw the great crowd coming toward Him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?'" John 6:5

"Jesus had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd." Mark 6:34

"Jesus asked Philip this to test him, for Jesus already knew what He was going to do." John 6:6

"Philip said, 'Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each person to have a bite'." John 6:7

"Another of His disciples, Andrew, said, 'Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish – but how far will this go among so many people?'" John 6:8, 9

"Then Jesus said, 'Have the people sit down.' Now there was plenty of grass in that place so everyone sat down – about 5000 of them." John 6:10

"Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish." John 6:11

"When everyone had enough to eat (literally: "gorged themselves"), Jesus said to the disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over.' So they gathered them and filled 12 baskets with the leftovers." John 6:12

"In the morning, when the crowd realized Jesus was not there, they went to Capernaum in search of Him." John 6:24

"Then Jesus said to them, 'You are looking for Me because you ate the loaves and had your fill.'" John 6:26

"Do not work for the food that spoils, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which I, the Son of Man, will give you." John 6:27a

"So they asked Jesus, 'What must we do to do the works that God requires?'" John 6:28

"How do we get this eternal-life food that You are offering?"

"Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.'" John 6:29

"Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:40

"The person who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:47

"He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies (here on earth)." John 11:25

The word "believe" is one of those easy-to-misunderstand-what-it-really-means words.

Jesus uses the miracle of the bread and fish from the day before to explain to the crowd precisely what He means by "believe."

"I am the bread of life . . . I am the living bread that came down from heaven." John 6:48

"If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51

"Then the Jews began to sharply argue among themselves and say, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?'" John 6:52

"Jesus said, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no eternal life in you.'" John 6:53

"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:54

*Whatever Jesus is talking about here in John 6 -- it's clear that His listeners could do it right then
But when Jesus spoke these words in John 6 -- Communion didn't exist yet!*

John 6:29/40/47 - "Believe in Me and you will have eternal life."

John 6:54 - "Eat My flesh and drink My blood and you will have eternal life."

Whatever "eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood" means -- in Jesus' mind -- it is synonymous with believing in Him properly for eternal life.

Jesus uses this phrase ("eat My flesh and drink My blood") to explain exactly what kind of "believing" we have to do -- in order to activate God's promise of eternal life.

So What?

The word "believe" is one of those easy-to-misunderstand-what-it-really-means words.

The most common mistake people make is that they limit the biblical word "believe" to just an intellectual, in-my-head belief.

"When God and I pass, we salute each other -- but we never speak." Voltaire

Jesus says (in John 6) this "in-my-head believing" is not the kind of believing that He grants eternal life to.

Jesus says that saving faith is like "eating."

When we "eat" food:

- We take it into every part of our being*
- We assimilate and digest and absorb it*

When we "eat" food, it becomes an inseparable and indistinguishable part of us.

Our relationship with food is not an "intellectual" one. It is an intensely "personal" one.

"I am not a theological theory to be debated in a classroom."

I am a personal Savior to be ingested and absorbed into every part of your being."

"You're 18 inches away from eternal life."

"I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate manna in the desert yet they died. But I am the bread that comes down from heaven which, if a person eats of, they will not die." John 6:48

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven . . . Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." John 6:51, 58

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out every day and gather enough for that day. And the people called this bread "manna."'" Exodus 16:4

"However, some of the people tried to store up jars of manna for the future. But when they opened it, it was full of maggots and it smelled." Exodus 16:20

"You can't live on yesterday's manna."

If we want to have the spiritual power we need to live biblically, then we need to eat "fresh manna" from God's word every day!

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

The evangelical church in America today is plagued by an abundance of people - - who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ - - but who live powerless, insipid, wimpy Christian lives.

It's because we have so many "NASCAR Christians" who are trying to run everyday "on fumes."

God serves up fresh "spiritual manna" every day in the written Word of God - - and we need to be "eating it fresh" every day!

"How is your daily time with the Lord?"

"Are you running on 'new manna' every day - - or are you trying to run on yesterday's manna/victories/power?"

God designed "abiding in Christ" to be a daily experience that demands daily refueling - and no one can live a powerful Christian life any other way!

CHRISTIANITY 101 - - New class begins Monday evening, June 15 -- Register at Ticket Central OR online
For more information visit the McLean University Booth OR contact Celia Spurzem 703.770.2977
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