



*“HD: JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE”

Biblical Text: [John 6:25-35](#)

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** We all need hope. The people all around us in this city need hope. We need hope. We do. We are, literally, dying for hope. And that’s what Jesus is, hope! He provides all the hope we need. But we don’t know it. Or we know it but have forgotten.

In John 6:35, he said, **“I am the bread of life.”*¹ He is the ultimate satisfaction for all people, more than daily bread or even manna in the wilderness could ever be.

* We live in an affluent nation, and by all accounts, have mercy, we are well fed. Yet, in the way that matters more, we are desperately hungry. And we are parched with thirst. As a culture, we yearn for something that matters, something to hold on to.

* People are hungering for hope and for meaning for their lives. That has not changed since Jesus’ time. And we’ll do almost anything to satisfy that inner hunger. When people party too hard, they are trying to satisfy it. When we look for love in the wrong places, that’s why. Those climbing the corporate ladder are looking for it. When we overschedule or overcommit, not wanting our kids to miss a single thing, we are trying to find it. And ultimately we come up empty.

I know I’m on dangerous ground telling a New England Patriots story in Kansas City, OK? But I’m going to do it anyway. * Their quarterback, Tom Brady, was interviewed on 60 Minutes at the height of his career ten years ago. He had three Superbowl titles, two MVPs, he was married to a supermodel, he was a multimillionaire.

But when pressed, here’s what he said, **“There’s got to be more than this. I mean, this isn’t it. This can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be.”* The interviewer asked, *“What’s the answer?”* And Tom Brady responded, *“I wish I knew.”*²

* That’s the point Jesus was after in our text in John 6:27, doesn’t it? **“Do not work for the things that perish, but for that which endures for eternal life.”* (John 6:27)³

* Our hunger for meaning and hope is God-given. I’m not here today to say it’s sinful or even harmful. Our problem is that we keep looking for life in all the wrong places. And even when we do find meaning, or get close to happiness, we live in fear.

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² CBS News, 60 minutes Interview in June 2005. Copyright © 2005 CBS. All rights reserved.

³ John 6:37, paraphrased by author.

*We are afraid of losing all that gives meaning to life. And that we'll find ourselves hungering and thirsting for a reason to hope once again.

It's what makes our human losses, like the ones we acknowledge on *All Saints Sunday today, so hard. Even the most loving of human relationships one day will come to an end. It's what makes our relentless pursuit of more money futile. One day it will not matter. Kids grow up and go, and they are supposed to. But if they are all that gives us hope and meaning, where will it come from when they do?

*What if we let go of our fears? **What if we chose hope?** What if we trusted Jesus, believing what He says about himself in our text? What if he truly is the way, the truth and the life? What if he is the source of bread which never runs out? What if he is the source of life in whom we need never be afraid or hopeless ever again?

*I believe firmly that all persons are in the process of searching for Jesus. Each person here today is in the process of coming to Jesus. You may think you are searching for meaning in life, or hope, or happiness. But I believe, at our core, we are all really searching for Jesus. There is a hunger in our hearts that only he can fill.

Back in the early years of my life, if you happened to be looking for, or even mildly interest in Jesus, there were four options for Protestant worship in the small town where my family moved from Kansas City when I was a freshman in High School: *

- The Baptist Church, where Leroy Davis' message every week was about *"being saved."*
- The Christian where elderly Rev. Biggs led a nice Church of nice small town people.
- The Assembly of God with red-haired Sister Glora Burns leading Pentecostal services.
- The Methodist Church, with stained glass, choir, and Holy Communion, where my family attended.

But I really didn't think much about it. That is until Roselyn Drake for some reason targeted me to ask, every time I saw her, *"Are you saved?"* And all I could say was *"We don't really talk about that much at our Church."* * I had no language to tell her about my own experience, the warming of my heart, that even then made me know there was something special about Jesus in my life. I had no words.

*In Barbara Brown Taylor's words, *"I may have been fooling around with religion, but Jesus wasn't."*⁴ And even when I moved away to college, and ran away from him, He was with me. And when my life fell apart, it was to Him I turned for help.

*I was in seminary before I learned it would have been ok to answer the question, *"Are you saved?"* with, *"Yes, by the grace of God."* So, if you are a follower of Jesus, if there is something special about him for you, you now have an answer you can use. You get that for free today. I'm just saying. But the words don't matter. He does.

⁴ "I Am Who I Am" from Barbara Brown Taylor's, *The Preaching Life*. Copyright © 1993, Josselyn Memorial Publications, Cowley Press.

Barbara Brown Taylor says that Jesus, like God, defies our attempts at definition. When we cannot define him and what he means to us in twenty-five words or less, it is not because our faith in him isn't real. It's because what he means to us is more significant than words can ever express.⁵

Jesus evidently knew that. *I think that's why there are seven "I am" metaphors in the Gospel of John, like the one in our text. You may have heard some of them. *"I am the bread of life; I am the good shepherd; I am the true vine; I am the light of the world; I am the way the truth, the life."* Like those, he is more than words can convey.

*So, in our text today, Jesus said, *"I am the bread of life."*⁶ He is what satisfies our inner hunger for meaning and hope. More than our daily bread, which is why the crowds were following him. More than the manna that God's people received in the wilderness, or whatever gets us out of our temporary needs in our time today.

*In John 4:14, he told the woman at the well, *"Whoever drinks of the water that I give will never thirst. It will become in them a fountain springing up into everlasting life."*⁷

The greatest need of your life is of great concern for God, whatever it is. If you trust in and believe in him, he will satisfy your spiritual needs. But he will provide even more. He will provide all that you need to live each day. Maybe not all you want – a distinction we often miss. And he will provide the meaning and hope we long for.

*That the message I came to share. He is the bread of the world. He is the source of hope. When you know him, you know the message we have to offer the world.

As you come to the table in a few minutes, open your heart to him. And remember Jesus' words, *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*⁸ Let us pray.

**Lord, we are so hungry and thirsty for hope that we try to find it wherever we can. We look to our work, relationships, possessions, or money to satisfy our hunger. But we come up empty. We know you made us for more. Help us see that our true needs are only fully met in a living relationship with you. Move us toward you today, Lord Jesus. Help us remember that you are the bread of life, that whoever comes to you will never hunger, and whoever believes in you will never thirst. Amen. **

⁵ Ibid. "I Am Who I Am" from Barbara Brown Taylor's, *The Preaching Life*.

⁶ Op. Cit. John 6:35, *New Revised Standard Version Bible*.

⁷ Op. Cit. John 4:14, paraphrased by the author.

⁸ John 6:35, paraphrased by the author.