

Series: I am

I am the Bread of Life

Sermon by Lead Pastor Paul Joslin

John 6:35, 6:48-51

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, March 9, 2025

Hi Waterstone. As Sarah mentioned, my name is Kay Szugyi, and I am the associate kids pastor here, and I am so excited to be here with you guys today. Today I will be reading from John 6:35 and 48 through 51: “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.’ ‘I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died, but here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that comes 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,’” the word of the Lord.

Thanks, Kay. All right, how is everyone today? Good. Kay mentioned that Ben and Macy were in the youth group here. It is really cool thing when you can be a pastor to students who then dedicate their children at church, but you also start to feel really old, a little bit. It is like, whoa, I remember them when they were twelve, and now they have kids, and so, I am so thankful for that moment.

Today we are continuing our series, the “I am,” statements of Jesus, and last week, when we kicked off this series, we asked this question to kick off and understand what it is Jesus is doing in the gospel of John as He makes these, “I am,” statements, and the question we started with is, “What is God like?” and when you think of our culture and how people talk about God, it is a little ambiguous. I mean we have professional athletes or celebrities or musicians or whoever, when they win an award, or they win the Super Bowl, and they thank God, which God are they talking about? If the Eagles win, is the God of the Chiefs also okay with what happened, or are they a little upset? Which God is a little vague, and you have things like a Grammy award-winning artist that thanks God when they get the award for song of the year, and then you listen to the song, and it sounds a little bit like they were singing about a one-night stand with someone, and you are not sure if God really was super excited about that song winning song of the year. We have these moments in our culture where God is just a fill-in. It is just a junk word where it can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. Is it a vague higher power, or is it the God of the Bible? Is it the God of a different religion? Is it a personal deity of their own making? So, as we dive into this series, and as we look at this idea that Jesus does not leave us guessing about who He is, but when He makes these statements, “I am,” He is telling us that He is God, and He is telling us what God is like.

So, today we have a beautiful statement from Jesus where He says, “I am the bread of life.” Last night, in our Saturday night service, I asked them, “When you hear the words, ‘bread of life,’ is that positive or negative?” I just asked, “What are some word associations? What are some mental images? What are some things that you associate with that statement, ‘bread of life’?” They came up with all sorts of different answers, like sustenance, or satisfying, or manna in the wilderness, or the source of life, and all of those are great answers. As we were talking through that, it just struck me this week, we have very positive associations with this statement, “bread of life.” It means something very good to us. It sounds like good. It sounds like Jesus is saying in Him we will find all of the satisfaction that we are looking for.

He is the bread of life, but what hung me up on this passage is that the people who hear Jesus in this teaching, they do not receive it as good news. In fact, they get really upset with Jesus when He says He is the bread of life. They do not take it as something where they are like, “Oh, yeah, we should rejoice. We finally have found the bread of life. We have found something that will satisfy the longing of our souls.” In fact, what we see in John is as Jesus goes through this teaching, the Jews there began to grumble about Him. Why? Because He said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They did not receive this declaration, “I am the bread of life,” as good news. In fact, it caused them to grumble, and so I have just been sitting with that this week. Why would this upset them? It sounds like good news. It sounds like something we all want. The bread of life sounds incredible, and yet what we see from the people is that they did not receive it as good news, and that is the mystery to this passage. That is the question behind the backdrop, and to understand what is going on in this story, we have to go back to the beginning of this chapter. It is a story that many of us are probably familiar with.

John chapter 6 opens with Jesus on a mountainside, teaching people about the kingdom of heaven, and He notices that they are hungry. He has compassion for them, and so He chooses to talk amongst his disciples, and He says, “What should we do for them?” They are hungry. They are in the middle of the wilderness. There is nowhere for them to go to eat. They do not have a Chipotle down the road where they can cater to everyone, and so He says to his disciples to test them, “What should we do?” and they do not really know what to do. They realize that the size of the crowd, about five-thousand men, is ten to fifteen thousand people, and one of them says it would take about a half a year’s wages just to feed the crowd, and another says, all we have really found is a little boy who has this lunch of a couple loaves of bread and a couple of fish, and maybe there is something you can do with that, and that is all Jesus needs. So, He takes that meal, and He begins to take this bread and these fish, and He looks toward heaven, and He blesses it, and then He begins dividing it, breaking the bread and splitting the fish, and He begins to feed this crowd, and John makes it very clear that as Jesus performs this sign, this miracle, everybody has their fill. They eat and are satisfied. They do not just get like a little snack. They eat, and they are completely satisfied. In fact, there is more than enough. It actually gets to the point where Jesus sends the twelve back out, they gather up all the leftovers, they don’t want to waste anything, and Jesus tells them to gather, and we find there are twelve baskets of leftovers after this whole crowd has been fed, and this is the response of the people who see Jesus perform this miracle. This is what they say: “After the people saw this sign performed, they began to say of Jesus, ‘This is the prophet who has come to the world,’” and they see something in Jesus that they have not seen in anyone else. They think, “Maybe this is the person who has come to liberate us and set us free. This is the person that we have been waiting for, the prophet who has come to the world,” but notice Jesus’ response: “Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make Him king by force, withdrew again into the mountain by Himself.”

The people experience this miracle. Their bellies are full. Then that ignites their hearts with possibilities that if this is someone who can feed us, maybe He is the one who will fight for us, and if He can do this kind of miracle and break bread for us, maybe He is the deliverer we have been waiting for, who will break the chains of Rome. They begin to play out this idea of this king, this provider, this person who will come and deliver them and provide freedom for them, and so this mob begins to swell. They are excited, they are enthusiastic, and they try to take Jesus away by force and make Him king, but Jesus does

not want to become king, and so He withdraws and goes to the mountain by Himself, and on the face of it, what we see playing out that will help us understand the story that is to come is it forces this question, “What is your motivation for following Jesus?” because these people who are seeing the miracles Jesus can perform, they begin to have this self-interest that maybe He is the one who can do something for them that they want to be done in the world, so the question for us is, do we follow Jesus for his presence, or for his provision? Are we pursuing Jesus for a transformed life or just some of the temporary blessings we think He can give us? Do we love Jesus because He is Jesus or because of what we think He can do for us? Do we want Jesus to be our king, or do we want to force Him to be king in the ways that we want?

That is the setup for the story, and then Jesus goes from there, and He sends his disciples across the sea, and He follows after them shortly later in the evening. What we are told is that the wind and the waves, it begins to be a tumultuous journey across the sea, and as the disciples are going across, the waves get rough, and then we are told this about Jesus trying to catch up with them. It says, “When they had rowed about three or four miles out,” and John is trying to make it so clear, Jesus is not just on the shore. They are out in the middle of this body of water, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water, and they were frightened. Notice, they are not frightened because the sea is tumultuous, because the waves are getting rough. They are frightened because they see a person walking on water, which is the correct response, right? If you saw someone walking on water, that would freak you out. That does not happen, but Jesus said to them, “It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Now I really honestly don’t like this translation, because this phrase, “It is I,” misses what is going on here a little bit, because what Jesus actually says is the Greek phrase, “Ego Ai,” which means, “I am,” and so Jesus, as He is walking across the water, says, “I am. Do not be afraid,” and if you remember from last week, we walked through the story of Exodus, where God comes to Moses, and He says, “I am that I am.” That is the name of God. God’s name is not just some generic name that does not have any meaning. It means, “I am,” and the way we unpacked that phrase last week is this idea that God is I am, is really translated to be something more akin to this, “I am and will continue to be what I am and will forever be,” that God is self-contained, that God defines Himself, that any characteristic of what God is, so God is loving, He will be and continue to be what He is and will forever be, which is loving. It is this promise that He will be with us, and Jesus makes that statement as He crosses the water. “I am. Do not be afraid,” and so they get across the sea, and they get to the other side, and we have to pause in the story, because there are some things that are happening in the undercurrents of the story that John is trying to point out to help us understand what is really going on beneath the surface, and so there are a few parallels that are happening here all the way back to the Old Testament in Exodus.

First of all, and we did not read this passage, but John begins by saying that this whole story begins at the festival of Passover. If you are not familiar with what Passover is, it is the meal God gave the people where they would eat bread and celebrate God’s deliverance of the people from Egypt, and not only was it a remembrance of what God had done, but it is looking forward to another deliverer that will come and one day deliver them as well, and so John is pulling and says this whole story is centered in this story of God delivering the people from Egypt. It is centered on this idea of the Exodus. Then you have other things that pull parallels, like bread from heaven. Jesus looks to heaven, breaks bread, and gives it to the people. It is a miraculous provision of bread in the wilderness. Does that sound familiar at all? Where the

people are wandering through the wilderness in Exodus, and God sends them bread from heaven, manna in the wilderness, where they experience God's provision for them, and beyond that, we have this idea of the crossing of water, where in the Exodus story, as Pharaoh pursues the Israelites to kill them, God separates the sea, and they walk through the sea as if it were dry ground, and here, we see Jesus, walking across the sea, not parting the sea, walking across the sea as if it were dry ground.

John is pulling on all of these different threads, these different themes from Exodus and saying this is happening again, and if it weren't clear enough from all of that, then Jesus actually uses the phrase "I am," which is deeply rooted in the story of the Exodus, and beyond that, John uses this very particular word. He says that the people, when they hear Jesus, teaching about the bread of life, what do they begin to do? We just read it at the beginning, they grumble. I heard it over here. We're going to run with it. They grumble, and do you remember in the story in Exodus, what happens when God provides bread from heaven for the people? You can do better than that. They grumble, and when God provides shade for the people in the wilderness so they don't die from the heat, what do they do? They grumble. We are getting the theme here, all right. We are working on it.

John is trying to say that what is happening in this story where Jesus declares He is the bread of life is a repeat of the story of Exodus, and I know that can be dense, no pun intended, as we're talking about bread today, but it is this idea that what is happening here is not just some isolated incident. Jesus is trying to reenact a story to tell us what God is like, and so He also crosses a body of water. He provides bread for people. He is doing all of the stuff that Moses did, but in a little bit of a different twist, and so the people, they go across the sea, and they find Jesus, who has run away from them, because they want to force him to be king. He knows their expectations, and so He walks across the water, they come and chase after Him, and then in verses 26 and 27 we have this interaction. They find Him. They say, "Jesus, why did you leave? Where did you go? What are you trying to get away from us for?" and Jesus says this: "Very truly I tell you, you were looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." What is Jesus saying?

He is saying, "You do not actually want me for who I am and who I have said I am. You just simply like what I am doing for you. You just simply like that I was able to feed you and provide a lunch for you that satisfied and filled your stomach," and then He transitions, and He says, "Do not work for food that spoils." He says there is food that perishes. The food that we eat does not last, "but 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," so Jesus begins by setting up this dichotomy. There is food that will perish and food that leads to eternal life, and you are longing for the stuff that spoils, the stuff that does not last, and the stuff that cannot satisfy, and I am offering you a different alternative."

Here is a question for you. We are talking a lot about bread today. Do I have any celiac or gluten intolerant people in the room? You can go ahead and raise your hand. We got one back there. It's okay. You don't have to be embarrassed. We are not going to make fun of you, I promise. My wife is celiac, and so I am not making fun. Sometimes when I talk about celiac or gluten intolerance, what I hear from people, especially some older people, and I am not trying to call anybody out, but "We did not have that back in my day. People just ate bread and did not have any problem," that kind of stance. So, here is the thing, Steffi a few years ago, she was almost diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at twenty-three years old. They

could not figure out what was going on, and what they found over a course of studies was that she really had celiac disease, and it was causing all of this inflammation in her body, and you have to know this about me. I love to eat bread. My staples and my diet are bread, butter and honey, I was like, what do we do? I don't know. Do you leave me? Do I leave you? No, I'm just kidding. We did not go there, but it is a staple in our life, and it was this whole adjustment that we had to figure out, and I started doing research. She was doing research about what is going on, and really, so there is celiac, and then there is gluten intolerance, and you did not know when you came to church today that you were going to get a lesson in what celiac and gluten intolerance is, but it will make a point, I promise. Hopefully. We'll see.

All right, and so this is the deal. For people like my wife who have celiac disease, they cannot digest the gluten that is in bread. For people who are gluten intolerant, there is a huge spike, a huge rise in people who have an inflammatory response to gluten and bread, and really what they have found is the reason why people can no longer process bread like they used to be able to, and there actually is a rise in that disease, is because of the way we process bread now, that everything is mass produced, and it is highly processed, and nothing is actually produced the way it was intended to, so our bodies cannot actually digest the food that we are feeding it, and if that is not like a perfect illustration for what is going on in our culture, I do not know what is, that so much of our culture is highly processed and mass produced, and it is all about quantity over quality, and it is all the things that we are told if we go after them, they will sustain and satisfy and fill us up, and really they leave us inflamed and sick and dying, and there are so many different places we could look to in our culture to see that.

I mean, you could just even look at the way we have exchanged personal relationships with friends and community for social media, the ways that we have adopted as a culture, to go to porn for intimacy rather than sex, the ways that we have looked for entertainment instead of purpose, busyness, and money-making instead of pursuing a calling. Hookups have replaced commitment. Constantly pursuing new and more is taking the place of contentment. We go to things like drugs and alcohol to try to find healing. We read self-help books instead of finding true transformation. We turn to things like religion rather than relationship with God, and all of those things promise to satisfy your soul, but they are like cheap gluten. It is highly processed, and it does not actually satisfy, and in fact it is like a sweet poison. It might taste good, but it is slowly killing you. Jesus says there are things in this world, there is food in this world that perishes, that we chase after. We all long for something to fill us, and He is putting a question before them, and before you today, what do you look to in order to fulfill you?

I think many of us are hoping to eat at a Michelin star restaurant, and we settle for McDonald's, and McDonald's is fine, and not really though, right? It is not actually good. It will maybe fill you up in the moment, but it is not going to satisfy you. You will be hungry two hours later. That is why Jesus says in verse 35, and not just said, but He declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Jesus points out that He is a bread. He is something that will bring true fulfillment, not just in the moment, but lasting, soul-satisfying joy and life, and when He calls Himself the bread of life, He offers something that fills us completely, that sustains us eternally, and that nourishes every part of our being. His presence in our lives is not just temporary. It is a lasting and transformative source of life, rooted in a deep relationship with Him.

When Stephanie and I were in college, we had this professor. Her name was Dr. Holly Allen, and she was about five feet nothing, and she taught early childhood development, and the only way I can really describe her to you is if you had a professor that was Mrs. Calm. I mean, she was just like the sweetest person in the world, and also had this little bit of spunk to her that like you definitely did not want to cross Dr. Holly Allen, but every spring, if you had her in class, around the time of Passover, she would bake this homemade honey wheat bread that was like the best bread I have ever had. I have already told you bread is my thing, and I dream about this bread. I would love to have it. I wish I could give this bread to you, that it was just baked perfectly. The outside was crispy and crunchy, but not the kind that will break your teeth when you eat into it. I mean, it was soft. It was thin. It was just so good, and I do not know about you, but have you ever had Wonder Bread? Do you remember that stuff? It is basically like you are eating a sponge that dissolves in your mouth when you bite into it. Like it is okay on a hike, maybe, if you're in a pinch, and it will fill the gaps for you, but there is no substance to it, right? There is no crust. It is just like you are literally eating paper that has been spread and stretched. It is disgusting, right, and sorry if I am offending Wonder Bread fans in there. I don't know. Like, get a better kind of bread, or go gluten free. I don't know, but there is just no substance to it, and what Jesus is saying is that He is like the former, not the latter, that He is a bread that provides sustenance in life, and that it is something we long for, that it will actually fulfill our desires.

There is this misnomer about Christianity, and it is from within Christianity and from outside of Christianity, that Jesus really is like this ultimate cosmic killjoy, that the whole purpose of following Jesus is to get nothing you ever want, to never have any pleasure, to never enjoy life, and you have to cut all of that stuff out of your life in order to follow Him, and that if you really follow Jesus, you will get to this place where you will not chase success. You will not enjoy pleasure. You do not have any ambition. You do not seek love, and you do not indulge in anything that makes life exciting. You have to become the most boring person in the world and never find fulfillment in life, but that is not true. Jesus did not come to suppress your desires. He came to satisfy them in Himself, and what He is saying in this teaching is that He is the true bread of life, that He satisfies us in the way the world cannot. He nourishes us in a way that goes from surface to the deepest parts of our souls, that there is something in Him that we find abundance and goodness and life in a way we cannot find it in this world. It doesn't mean the things of this world are bad. God created them. He said that they were good in their proper place. Jesus says in verses 48 through 51, "I am the bread of life, and your ancestors, they ate manna in the wilderness, yet they died, but here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven," and notice the change there, "Here is the bread." "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, and whoever eats of this bread will live forever."

Let's be honest for a moment. This all sounds really good, like bread that will give life, and if we eat it, we will have the things that we are looking for and the satisfaction, and then Jesus does what He sometimes does, which we do not really understand why, but He gets a little bit weird, because He says right here, this bread that will satisfy you, this bread that will lead to life is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world, and He starts talking in this passage to these people about how if they really want to experience the life He is offering, then they need to eat his flesh and drink his blood, which is weird, right? If you hear someone say that to you in any kind of normal context, that feels really foreign and confusing,

much less in a Jewish context, where blood was something that they did not touch, they did not indulge, they did not do worshipping with blood in that sort of way, and so this was highly, highly offensive.

We can look back on the story now, and we know in some sense that Jesus is alluding to his death on the cross, that there is something about his body that is going to be broken on the cross that is going to be provisioned not just for people, but for the entire world, and that He fed the five-thousand with a meal of fish and bread, but his broken body will be a meal that is eternal, and that is enough for the entire world. He is alluding to the idea that Jesus through the cross will provide something for us that will last for life and eternity, and so He is using this analogy, but in the moment, people have no idea what He is talking about, because Jesus has not died yet. It sounds like weird cannibalism stuff or something, and so they are highly offended, and this is what it says in verses 60 and 66: “On hearing it, many of his disciples,” now Jesus has been interacting with the crowd. They have been very hostile towards Him. They have not liked what He has had to say, but now it comes to his disciples, his followers, and not just the twelve, but the extended group of disciples, which I think was somewhere between like 72 to 150, “and when those disciples heard this, they said, ‘this is a hard teaching,’” and again it softens the blow, because what it really says is “this is highly offensive,” like we can’t accept it. This is too offensive for us, “and so from this time on, many disciples turned back and no longer followed Jesus.”

This message was so offensive that people literally stopped following Him. They renounced Him as their rabbi. They were so disappointed with Jesus, so angry about what He said and what He was trying to communicate that they walked away, and this is something that has been bothering me all week, because if Jesus says, and all the weird cannibalism stuff aside, if Jesus says He is the bread of life, and what He tells them in this story is if you want this bread, if you want this life, all you have to do is believe in me, which sounds an awful lot like the good news, doesn’t it? If you just believe in Jesus, then He will provide you with the life you are looking for. He will satisfy the deepest longings of your soul. What is offensive about that? What is so highly offensive about that?

It got me thinking, because this whole context of this whole story, starting in John 6, where Jesus feeds the five thousand, He walks across water, and then He comes and says, “I am the bread of life,” there is this narrative arc that is happening within the story where the people see Jesus perform a sign, and they want Him to become king, they want to force Him to become king. They do not want Him on his terms. They want to make Him king on their terms, and Jesus rejects that offer. He says, “That is not how I am going to become king,” and so when they get across the lake, there is already this tension, that they want something from Jesus that He is not willing to give, even as He teaches and says that I am the bread of life that will satisfy your souls. What Jesus is saying is He is exposing their heart. He is saying “there are things that you want from me that I am not willing to give you. Your faith is based on self-interest, not surrender to me,” that you have a faith that does not trust, but that is looking to take. They just wanted Jesus for what He would give to them, and so when He says, “I am the bread of life, you have to believe in me. I am not going to be defined by your desires,” it is offensive, and if this offended them, then it should probably offend us too. If you think about it, we can say Jesus is the bread of life, and in many ways that is comforting. That is what we want. That is the desire of our souls, and what we find in Jesus is the longing of our souls and our hearts and the life that we are looking for. Jesus says that if that is true,

essentially what He is saying is that all of the other places that we go to try to find life, all the other places we try to find bread that we think will satisfy, will not, and that actually is offensive.

I want you to think about this for a moment. Let's say we go to get coffee together, and you are talking to me about your career, and you say, "I really do not like my job right now. I feel really frustrated at work. I feel like it is not going how I want it to. I do not like my boss. I do not like what I do, and I just really do not know what to do, and I am really angry at God, because I do not feel like He has given me the job that I want in life, and it has not turned out the way I want," and as we're sitting over coffee, I hear this from you, and my response is to you, "Wow. Yeah. You know what? It looks like you're trying to find your satisfaction in your work, not in Jesus, and it sounds like you are hoping that that will fulfill you in a way that only Jesus was meant to fulfill you, and you need to cut it out." Are you going to be like, "Wow, thanks Paul. I really appreciate that. Like man, I feel so encouraged. Like yes." No, that is going to be offensive, right?

Let's go deeper a layer, right? So we are talking over coffee, and you come to me, and it is really clear you are dating this person, and you are really excited about them, and she is everything you have ever wanted in a person, and I see this and the way that you are putting your hopes on this person, and I say, "I think actually you might be trying to find your satisfaction in this person, and you may be putting too much pressure on them and looking to them to fulfill you in a way that they actually cannot. You need to turn back to Jesus." Is that offensive or welcome?

Let's go in deeper. Marriage, and you come to me, and let's say it is really a rough week, and so we go out for drinks, not just coffee, and you are telling me about your wife and how she does not satisfy you and where she does not make you happy. You do not know what happened to your marriage, and all the love you felt for her at the beginning of the relationship has fallen away. You are like ready to get out, but you do not know what to do, and I say, "Listen, your wife was never meant to satisfy you. She is not there for your happiness. You need to get over it and love her like Christ loves the church." Offensive or welcome? We could go layer and layer deeper with this teaching about the bread of life and the places we look to for satisfaction.

Let's go to kids. Let's say that I see you at your kid's soccer game, and the way you are cheering and shouting and yelling for them, and you have all these hopes and dreams that they are going to be something someday that you never got to be when you were a kid, and you place all this pressure on them to be that thing, and I call you out on that, and I say, "You are putting too much pressure on them. They are going to end up in therapy because of the pressure you are putting on them, and only Jesus is supposed to satisfy the longing of your heart in that way." You are going to be offended.

If I come to you, and we are having a conversation, and I can tell from the conversation the way that you are talking about politics and the way that all you can talk about is politics and the way it feels like everything that you say is about what is going on in the political world, and I say, "You know what? It sounds like to me that you are spending way too much time on social media and on news, like cable news network television, and not enough time in scripture and prayer, and you care way too much about what is going on in the political world. To me it sounds like your emotions are more stirred by the wins or losses of your political party than the spiritual movement of the Holy Spirit." Are you going to welcome that, or are you going to be offended?

This idea that Jesus is the bread of life, if I have not struck a chord with you yet, this will. Jesus is saying that all of these places that we look to find satisfaction, that we think will fulfill us, that we hope will give us the sustenance we are looking for, He says are food that perishes. What so many of us want to do is we want Jesus plus our dreams, and we think if we follow Jesus, we will have success, or if we follow Jesus well enough, He will give us the comfort we are looking for. If we follow Jesus, then He will give us the relationships we desire. If we follow Jesus, then we will get the American dream, and we just add Jesus to our life, thinking that that will be enough, because we do not think that He is enough to satisfy us on his own, and so we put all these additives into the bread of life, hoping that it will give us what we want, and Jesus says, “That is not how it works. I am the bread of life, and it is only in me that you will find the satisfaction and desire of your souls,” and that is offensive, because what He is inherently saying is in the bread of life, that He will not satisfy your desires the way you want or the way you expect or the way that you always hope He will, and sometimes He will not turn out to be the king that you want Him to be, even though He is king.

So that is the irony of this story. They want to force Jesus to become king, but they want to force Him to be king on their terms. Jesus is already king. He does not need them to force Him to be king. He is the king, but He is not the king we always expect, and He does not fulfill our desires the way we necessarily hope He will. What I think this teaching and what this passage, this idea that Jesus is the bread of life, what it pulls us to is a place where we have to recognize and repent of our divided hearts, the places that we hope for Jesus to fulfill our lives in ways that He never told us He would, the ways that we have a divided heart, where we expect Jesus plus this other stuff to satisfy our souls.

So, I would ask you to ask these questions. Have you been following Jesus only when it benefits you, that like when your will and his will come into conflict, it is not even a contest? You are going to go with what you want. Do you get angry or disappointed with God when He does not give you what you want? Do you treat Jesus as a part of your life rather than the center of your life? Are there places within you that you have been looking for false sources of satisfaction more than Jesus? What happened to the disciples was they did not like the teaching, so they walked away, and I think what this story invites us to do is to repent and turn back to Jesus as the source of life and the bread of life, to repent of the ways that we have turned away from Him, looking for other things to satisfy us, other things that we have added to the story to try to fulfill us and say, “Only in you, Jesus.”

I think communion is a perfect picture of this kind of repentance, because Jesus says that I am the bread of life, and whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall not thirst. That is not hopeful, wishful thinking. It is a promise, and He is calling us to find our deepest satisfaction in Him alone, and when we come to the Lord’s table, we are physically acting out this story. We come to the table empty, and we receive only Christ, because He is enough, and the bread of life is all we will ever need.

37:37 minutes