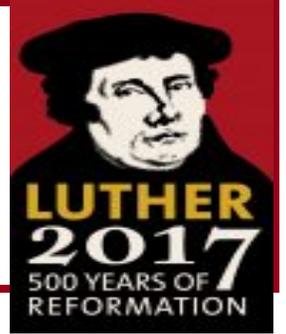


The Bread of Life

Exodus 16:1-15, 31-35 Luke 9:10-17

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Many of you have heard the story of God providing **Manna** for His people in the wilderness since your Sunday School days. Do you remember that story?

The Ten Plagues on Egypt have just ended. The Israelites have celebrated the Passover and have begun the Exodus out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. They have crossed through the Red Sea on dry ground, they watched as the Egyptian army that chased after them was drowned in the same Red Sea. God has already provided water from a Rock ^{1 Cor 10:4} for them to drink in the desert, and there is a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that leads, guards, and protects them in the wilderness.

But within **six weeks** of all this the Israelites are *grumbling and complaining*. They are not content nor are they satisfied. They thought slavery in Egypt was better than freedom with the Lord. They cry out to the Moses and the Lord, *grumbling and complaining*.

Thankfully, God is **patient**, and He is **kind**, and He **hears** their prayers and **answers** them! Through Moses, God provides quail for meat, and Manna for bread. **Moses fed God's People manna and quail on their journey to the Promised Land.**

NOW JUMP AHEAD 1,500 YEARS.

Jesus is teaching a huge crowd in the wilderness of northern Israel. Jesus is a "prophet like Moses" but yet *greater than* Moses. Jesus is the Messiah, God Himself, who has come into the world to save all people. Like Moses in the Old Testament, Jesus speaks the Word of God, and like Moses, Jesus too will feed God's people.

The Feeding of the 5,000 is a **Messianic miracle** that connects Jesus to the Old Testament prophecies **and** foreshadows the New Testament times.

When Jesus fed the 5,000, He was in the wilderness area north of the Sea of Galilee. The Bible says that Jesus fed 5,000 "men"; the number doesn't include their

families. The number could actually be three or four times higher. The miracle was an intentional connection back to Moses feeding the people manna and quail in the wilderness during the Exodus. **Jesus is the promised prophet “like Moses” who both speaks the very words of God, and He feeds people of God!**

The miracle of **food in the wilderness** connects Jesus to Moses; and is meant for people to **listen and believe** what He says.

The day after the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus preached about that miracle. In that sermon He said this:

[Jesus said,] For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world... Then Jesus declared, "I am the **BREAD OF LIFE**. He who comes to me will **never go hungry**, and he who believes in me will **never be thirsty**. John 6:33, 35

Jesus is the Bread of Life that we all need. The “Bread of Life” is an image of salvation! God feeds His people so that they will never go hungry and never be thirsty!

In this salvation metaphor of the “Bread of Life”, **SIN** is seen as **starving** to death. It’s not physically “starving to death” because of lack of food, but **spiritually starving to death** because of a **lack of righteousness** and a **broken relationship** with the one true God. **Life without Christ is a famine that will kill you.** There is no life apart from your Creator.

- † Sin leaves you without God;
- † Sin separates you from God’s Will and His Word;
- † Sin leads you to crave the “spoiled food” and “poisoned water” that the world has to offer.
- † In sin, you “starve” to death on a diet of pride, lust, anger, greed, coveting, idolatry, envy;
- † In sin, you die in false teachings, pagan theories, and worldly attitudes.
- † Like the Israelites, sin leads you to *grumble and complain* about God and His ways.

A life without Christ is figuratively “starving to death” and “dying of thirst”!

Jesus uses the image of hunger and food to teach us the Gospel. Jesus said that He is the **“Bread of Life”** that came down from Heaven and gives life to the world. **Whoever trusts in Him will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Him will never be thirsty.** Jesus is **“manna from God”** for all of us!

**God “feeds” you and provides for you
in His Son Jesus Christ!**

- † Only Christ's **perfect life** can give you **righteousness** in God's eyes.
- † Only Christ's **sacrificial death** can **reconcile** you with the one, true and only God.
- † Only Christ's **resurrection** can **save you from death and give you life**
- † Only Christ can **eternally satisfy** your body & soul, spirit & life.

Jesus is God's Manna for you!

Jesus is the "Bread of Life" who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Jesus the Bread of Life He took your place under the "starvation and thirst" of sin. He was "**starved to death**", if you will, when He suffered and died on the cross. All the *grumbling and complaining* of sin fell on Him and He died with our **lack of righteousness** and our **broken relationship** with God. But yet, His death paid for your sins once and for all! His crucifixion reconciles you to God the Father! In His resurrection from the dead, you are publically declared **righteous and reconciled** with God! Your sins are removed from you, and you are given eternal life! **Since Christ "starved to death" in sin, you are now "stuffed full" with God's grace, mercy, and compassion!**

Jesus is God's Manna for you!

Jesus is the "Bread of Life" who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

He assures you of salvation, He feeds you spiritually, He sustains your faith, and He gives you strength as you live each day as His disciple.

This image of **Jesus as the Bread of Life** points us back to the Israelites of the Old Testament. The manna God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness teaches us about Christ --- Jesus is God's Manna; He is "Bread from Heaven" for all people.

But Jesus as the "**Bread of Life**" also points us forward into the New Testament times, and specifically to Holy Communion. **In Holy Communion, Jesus the "Bread of Life" actually gives you Bread for life!**

Holy Communion is your Manna!

In Holy Communion, *Christ the Bread of Life* gives you of Himself in the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper. Jesus feeds His people food and drink on their way to Heaven!

We believe, teach and confess that "in, with, and under" the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper is the Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus clearly said,

Take and eat, **this is My body**”
Take and drink **this is My blood**”

The **cup** of blessing that we bless, is it not a *communion* in the **blood** of Christ?
The **bread** that we break, is it not a *communion* in the **body** of Christ?
1 CORINTHIANS 10:16

One way to think about Holy Communion is that of **Manna from Heaven**. This is the Manna that God provides for you in His Son Jesus.

- † This is the bread and the wine that your spirit needs to live!
- † This is where God refreshes and sustains your soul.
- † This is where you hear the words of mercy and grace as God forgives your sins.
- † This is where the Lord Jesus assures you that He is with you always, even to the ends of the age.

Just like Christ provided food for the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land, so too Christ provides food for you on your journey to the Promised Land of Heaven.

- † Holy Communion is Manna from God!
- † Jesus is the “Bread of Life”, who feeds you *Bread from Heaven* in Holy Communion!

Now, sustained by this **sacramental food**, this **“mysterious” food**, we live holy lives through faith in Christ. We faithfully love and worship the Lord our God; we consistently help and serve our neighbors. Our words and our actions bear witness that *Jesus is the “Bread of Life” who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*

In Holy Communion, Jesus provides Manna for you on your journey: His body and blood in the bread and the wine sustains you and gives you eternal life!

The manna of the Old Testament points us forward to Jesus, the true Bread from Heaven who satisfies our souls and gives life to the world!

AMEN!