



RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

THE WEEKLY BRICK

August 2, 2009.

As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE: Believe! John 6: 22-35

Each of us has a gnawing hunger within for both the physical and the spiritual. We hunger for both food and material things and for God and spiritual things, things such as love and joy and peace. Therefore, most of our time and energy are spent in seeking to satisfy our hunger. This passage deals with the four answers to our great hunger...

1. ANSWER 1: KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A GREAT HUNGER, A GREAT NEED (v.22-25).

2. ANSWER 2: ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR MOTIVE IS CORRUPT (v.26-27).

We seek a Messiah (Savior), but not to worship and serve Him. We seek a Messiah for what we can get out of Him.

We seek food that perishes. We simply misplace our work. We center and focus our thoughts, energies, and efforts upon the moment, that is, upon our years on earth.

3. ANSWER 3: WORK FOR FOOD THAT ENDURES AND GIVES ETERNAL LIFE (v.27).

What do you want?

- an abundant life, a life that is complete and fulfilled, full of love, joy, peace and all the good things of life
- an eternal life, a life that survives, that is not taken away, but goes on forever and ever.

How do you get it?

1. Jesus said that the Son of Man is the One who can give food that lasts forever, the One who can give life that is both abundant and eternal.
2. Jesus said that the Son of Man is sealed, that is, guaranteed by God. God guarantees...
 - that Christ is the Messiah.
 - that Christ is the One who can give food that is abundant and lasts forever.

4:ANSWER: DO THE WORK OF GOD—BELIEVE (v.28-29).

Jesus corrected the people's thoughts, their concept of salvation by works. They did not secure the favor of God and were not acceptable to God because of works (plural). They received God's favor and acceptance because of a work, one work (singular). The work of God is only one: believe in Him whom He has sent."

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Monday, August 3rd Read John 6:22-59, John 2:23

I'd like to start with what I did not get to say yesterday. And, it's all about the importance of belief. We talk about this alot, I know. But, my goal is to help you understand what faith is to help you move away (with God's help) from passive Christianity to active participatory faith in the person and work of Christ. It's an important job! So, what is *saving faith*, what is *genuine faith* —the kind of faith that really saves a person?

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived

upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who and what He is*, that He is the *Savior* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is you casting yourself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

3. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of your total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is your commitment of all you are and have to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of your life. You trust Jesus to take care of your past (sins), present (welfare), and future (destiny). You entrust your whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. You lay yourself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about your daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. You follow Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving your welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of your whole being, all you are and have to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith.

1. There is the step of *seeing* ([John 2:23](#)) or *hearing* ([Romans 10:16](#)). You must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

2. There is the step of *mental assent*. You must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Lots of people know that something is true, but they don't change their behavior to match their knowledge. For example, you know that eating too much harms your body, but you may continue to eat too much. You agree to the truth and know the truth, but you do nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This person still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. You hear the truth and agree that it is true and does something about it. You commit and yield your life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of your very being, a part of your behavior and life.

Now, do you believe in the promises of Jesus? If so you have faith. Next step: put it in gear!

Tuesday, August 4 *Read John 6:22-29*

1. In the Gospel listed above, the people noted Jesus' absence. There had been only one boat docked at shore, and the disciples had taken it to cross the lake. However, Jesus had not accompanied them; He had stayed behind. The people thought He was over in another section of the crowd or else off somewhere by Himself. The fact that He was not close by did not dawn upon them until the next day. The point is filled with lessons: the people, knowing they had need, wanted their need met. Jesus had proclaimed that He could meet their need, but He was gone; therefore, their need was going to go unmet unless they could find Him

We have a great need for God's Messiah.

1) We must acknowledge his need.

2) We must observe to see if Christ is present. If Christ is absent, then we still have needs.

2. The people sought Jesus. Believing that Jesus was the answer to their need, they did what they should have done: they sought Him. Other boats had drawn up to shore during the night, probably seeking refuge from the storm. Therefore, the people immediately took passage on these boats to cross over to Capernaum, hoping to find Jesus. Note how diligent they were in seeking Him. We should search diligently to respond to the Christ who has sought us out. We should seek and seek until the Lord is found. This is really a daily attitude about life!

3. The people questioned Jesus' absence. In their minds the Messiah was to give manna from heaven to meet the needs of the people just as Moses had done, only more so. They could not understand why Jesus would leave them, especially if He was the true Messiah.

This point is crucial. People of every generation do wonder and question the fact: If Jesus is really the Messiah, why does He so often seem absent and far away, especially in times of trouble? Another way to word the same thought is: If there is a God and if Christ really is the Son of God, why is the world in so much trouble and why are so many people suffering? Why would Christ not place Himself right in the midst of the world and its problems? Why would He not go ahead and solve the problems, meeting man's needs immediately? The answer, of course, is what this passage is all about.

Wednesday, August 5 *Read John 6:26-27*

The answer to our great need is acknowledging that our motives are corrupt. This point is critical to see. Jesus stressed it with a solemn *attention getter*, "verily, verily" or "I tell you the truth." Our motive in seeking the Messiah—in seeking the answer to his problems—is often corrupt. In the case of these people it was, and tragically, it is with so many in every generation.

1. We seek a Messiah (Savior), but not to worship and serve Him. We seek a Messiah for what we can get out of Him.

- a. We are interested in getting our needs met, whether by someone human or divine. We are interested in OURSELVES, not in acknowledging and honoring Jesus to be Lord, and not in serving Him and making Him known to a lost world. The thoughts of the crowd were focused on how wonderful it was to be saved from hunger and to have their needs met. Here was a Savior (Messiah) who could meet all their needs, who could satisfy and give them a complete and full life. He could provide all things for them and deliver them from all their enslavements and enemies. He could bring Utopia (the Kingdom of God) to earth. Every need could be filled and satisfied. Note that our thoughts are focused...
 - on the earth.
 - on material things and personal possessions.
 - on the flesh and its satisfaction.
 - on the human and the carnal only.
- b. We *should be* interested in the Messiah for who He is and not for what we can get out of Him. Very simply, as with any person, the Lord wants to be sought and loved for who He is and not for what He can do for a person. The Lord (Messiah) is not a tool to be used; He is a Person to be sought and loved. The crowd should have seen that such a miracle could have been done *only by the Son of God* Himself. Therefore, seeing and standing before the Son of God, they should have fallen down before Him in all humility. They should have humbled themselves...
 - to recognize and acknowledge Him to be the Son of God.
 - to worship and praise Him for who He is.
 - to offer their lives to Him, all they were and had.
 - to see that all things belonged to Him and were due Him.
 - to see that He was not the One who should be giving to them, but they were the ones who should be giving to Him. He was the One who should be receiving, not them.

2. We seek food that perishes. We misplace our labor. We center and focus our thoughts, energies, and efforts upon the moment, that is, upon our time here on earth. We seek to feed our soul on...

- feelings and pleasures.
- comfort and ease.
- plenty and more.
- recognition and honor.
- position and power.
- fame and self.

Such self-seeking is foolish, for all things pass away, even ourselves. A day is not guaranteed, much less a year. Even if you have years left to live, they pass ever so rapidly, as any middle age or older adult knows. You desperately need to heed two eternal truths.

a. The earth and its things with all their pleasures and feelings do not satisfy (Isaiah 55:2). They still leave you empty, incomplete, unfulfilled, hungry, dissatisfied, seeking more and more.

James 4:2-4 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

Revelation 18:14 "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.'

1 Corinthians 6:13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"--but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

Ecclesiastes 6:7 All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.

b. The earth and its things with all their pleasures and feelings pass away.

Thursday, August 6 Read John 6:27, 10:10

The third answer to our great need is to labor for food that endures, that gives or lasts "unto eternal life" (eis zoen aionion). **The basic hunger within us is for...**

- **an abundant life, a life that is complete and fulfilled, full of love, joy, peace and all the good things of life**

Read 10:10 again. Life is one of the great words of the Scriptures. The word "life" (*zoe*) and the verb "to live" or "to have life" (*zen*) have a depth of meaning. So, what is life?

1. Life is the energy, the force, the power of being.
2. Life is the opposite of perishing. It is deliverance from condemnation and death. It is the stopping or cessation of deterioration, decay, and corruption (John 3:16; John 5:24, 29; John 10:28).
3. Life is eternal (*aionios*). It is forever. It is the very life of God Himself (John 17:3). However, eternal life does not refer

just to duration. Living forever would be a curse for some persons. The idea of eternal life is also quality, a certain kind of life, a life that consistently knows love, joy, peace, power, and responsibility (John 10:10).

4. Life is satisfaction (John 6:35).
5. Life is security and enjoyment (John 10:10).
6. Life is found only in God. God is the source and author of life, and it is God who has appointed Jesus Christ to bring life to man. Jesus Christ gives the very life of God Himself (John 5:26; John 6:27, 40; John 10:28; John 17:23).
7. Life has now been revealed. It has been unveiled and is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shows man what life is (John 1:4-5; John 5:26; 1 John 1:2).
8. Life only comes to us by believing in Jesus Christ. A person outside Jesus Christ only exists. S/he merely has the existence of an animal. Real life is found only in God. This is to be expected and it is logically true, for God is the creator of life. As the creator of life, He alone knows what life really is and what it is supposed to be (John 3:36; John 5:24; John 6:47). This is the reason He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world: to show what life is.

The basic hunger within us is for...

- **an eternal life, a life that survives, that is not snatched away, but goes on forever and ever.**
 1. Jesus said that the Son of Man is the One who can give food that lasts forever, the One who can give life that is both abundant and eternal.
 2. Jesus said that the Son of Man is sealed, that is, guaranteed by God. God guarantees...
 - that Christ is the Messiah.
 - that Christ is the One who can give food that is abundant and lasts forever.

Friday, August 7 Read John 6:28-29, John 2: 24

The fourth answer to our great need is to do ***the work*** of God—believe. Note two crucial facts.

1. The people thought in terms of works (plural). They thought that by *doing good works* they could win the approval and acceptance of God. If they did enough good and lived a life that was moral and just, God would save them and give them the food that satisfied, the food and life that was both abundant and eternal. There are those who see people in three categories.

- 1) There are *good people*, people who do plenty of good works. They live good, moral, and just lives; therefore, they are acceptable to God.
- 2) There are *bad people*, people who do mostly bad works. They live immoral and unjust lives; therefore, they are not acceptable to God. They are not saved.
- 3) There are *compromising people*, people who do both good and bad. They live both moral and immoral, just and unjust lives. They are close to securing God's approval, not quite, but close. By doing just a few more *good works* and living just a little more morally, God will accept them.

2. Jesus corrected the people's thoughts, their concept of salvation by works. They did not secure the favor of God and were not acceptable to God because of works (plural). They received God's favor and acceptance because of a work, one work (singular). The work of God is only one: believe—"believe on Him whom God hath sent" In John 2:24 the word "commit" (*episteuen*) is the very same word "believe" (*episteusan*) (cp. John 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

a. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

b. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, who and what He is, that He is the Savior and Lord of life. It is you giving and turning your life over to Jesus. It is you throwing yourself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

c. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of your total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a commitment of all *you are and have* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of your life. You trust Jesus to take care of past (sins), present (welfare), and future (destiny). You entrust your whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. You lay himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about your daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. You follow Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving your welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of your whole being, all you are have, to Jesus. But, it's not simple!

