

CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE  
John 6:48-59

Intro: I want to bring a message this morning dealing with the Lord's Supper which we are to observe this morning.

When the Lord established this Supper, He told His disciples that they were to continue to observe it in remembrance of Him. Therefore, this is a particularly sacred time in the fellowship of God's people because here in a very unique way our thoughts are to be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to remember Him.

For just a few minutes this morning I want you to consider just the bread, and how it can be a memorial of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During our recent trip to the East Coast we visited many memorials.

We saw the place where President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. A plaque has been set up describing the circumstances. It is a solemn atmosphere that surrounds that place as people are vividly reminded of that tragic event.

Later we visited his grave site in Washington (actually in Arlington Cemetery). Engraved in stones near his grave are some of President Kennedy's most familiar quotations. It was quite an experience to be there.

As you go through the East you re-live the days of the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. You see statues of George Washington, General Grant, General Lee, Benjamin Franklin. You see pictures of the great men and women of our history. You read documents that they wrote. You visit the places where they were born, where they lived, where they fought their battles, where they died, and where they are buried.

It is all very impressive, and it <sup>makes you</sup> realize how much you and I owe to those early Americans, and it makes you thankful to be an American.

We went through a wax museum in Philadelphia which was really a lesson in history. The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. is full of history. We saw life-size likenesses of all of the first ladies of the U. S. with the dress which they wore at the inauguration festivities.

Millions and millions of dollars have gone into memorials. I do not regret this. I feel that it is very valuable. The person who remembers the past will be a better person because

of it.

But now let me turn from these memorials to great Americans to a most amazing memorial which is before us this morning.

Some 2,000 year ago Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth. Among all of the men who ever lived on the earth, no one can compare with Him. He is greater than all.

But let me ask a question.

What kind of a memorial would you erect to His memory?

I have never been to Israel, but I know that millions have been spent in that land to memorialize the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I am sure that it is thrilling to visit all of those places. Some of you have had that privilege.

BUT . . . you take your Bible and you will not find one bit of evidence that our Lord ever authorized that any event in his life should be memorialized with a shrine!

I am not saying it is wrong IF it is kept within limits; I am saying that He did not authorize it.

Other have taken the paint brush of an artist or the chisel of a sculptor, and they have tried to give us pictures or statues of our Lord. And yet no one really knows what He looked like! None can possibly be authentic, and I for one believe that we would be better off without them. It is too easy for the images and pictures to become objects of worship.

The question is this: HOW DID JESUS CHRIST WANT US TO MEMORIALIZE HIM?

We have it here this morning. WITH A LOAF OF BREAD!

Is this not amazing? A LOAF OF BREAD.

This does not require millions of dollars. Even the poor people had their barley loaves; others, who could afford it, had loaves made from wheat flour.

But the point is that, when our Lord selected a memorial, this is one of the two things that He chose. WHY?

Let us look first at

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BREAD IN HIS DAY.

*These points taken from article in ISBE, I, 516, 517.*

A. First of all, it was the primary food of the day.

Often their meals consisted of little else. It was the main course, as meat is with us today. It was so nutritious that little else was needed. The father who had barley or wheat for the winter felt no anxiety about the physical needs of his family.

Bread was the staff of life.

This is apparent in the Bible.

Our text follows the account of the feeding of the 5,000. Notice how John refers to what was left over in John 6:13. He says nothing about the fish--just the loaves.

The first temptation that Satan presented to the Lord Jesus was, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3).

When the Lord taught His disciples to pray, the request for their physical needs was, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

Or take the Lord's parable on prayer where He spoke using these words:

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him" (Luke 11:5, 6).

A man might have more if he had bread, but if he had no bread, you could be sure he had nothing else.

Bread was the basic food for sustaining life. Nothing was more important an food. If you had bread, you really did not need anything else. Bread would keep you alive.

#### APPLICATION

Do you see how these people were like we are? Read John 6:26.

And note how the past generations were just like them. Read John 6:49.

Note how our Lord answered Satan during the temptation. Cf. Matt. 4:4.

What is the problem? It is simply this: MAN MAY GO THROUGH LIFE, THINKING HE ONLY HAS PHYSICAL NEEDS, NEVER REALIZING THAT THESE WILL NEVER SATISFY, AND THEY WILL NEVER CONQUER DEATH.

Now read John 6:51a and 35.

What are we to be reminded of as we take the bread this morning?

We are to remember that it is only because we by faith have taken Him as our Bread of life that we can be satisfied here and now, and through Him have the promise of eternal life.

One of the most significant statements made by our Lord along this line is found in Luke 12:15, where we read, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Somehow this truth go through to the twelve. Cf. John 6: 66-68.

Will you let the bread remind you this morning that you would have no eternal life with Christ, the Bread of Life, and that He, and He alone can satisfy?

But let me hurry on to my second point which has two parts. It is this: To both the Jew and the Arab bread was especially significant because

## II. BREAD WAS SACRED.

I mentioned that I had to points to make in this connection. Why was it sacred?

A. It was sacred, first of all, BECAUSE IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A GIFT FROM GOD.

Ill. My early preaching days in Texas, hearing the farmers pray for rain, or for good weather, or for physical strength, or about the bugs, etc. Why? Because they knew that they would not have good crops unless God gave the right conditions at the right time.

Do you remember of reading about the early and latter rains in the OT?

### APPLICATION

Do you see why the Lord Jesus wants us to remember that He is the Bread of Life?

Cf. John 6:32, 33.

No amount of work on our part could produce this life-giving Bread; He came as a gift from the Father.

But bread was considered to be sacred in the second place because

B. IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S FAVOR TOWARD HIS PEOPLE.

This, too, has its roots in OT times. God had promised to bless His people with the fruit of the earth if they walked in obedience to His will.

Now I cannot merit His grace anymore than I can produce the bread I need. BUT THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME AS THE BREAD OF LIFE IS EVIDENCE OF THE LOVE OF GOD FOR ME, just as God's provision of our daily bread is evidence of His goodness for which we should give Him thanks.

Concl: "This do in remembrance of me." This is the memorial which He has chosen. Let others have their monuments, their pictures, their statues, or anything else that they want. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAS CHOSEN A LOAF OF BREAD BECAUSE:

- (1) He wants us to know how much we need Him. There can be no eternal life apart from Him, no life that satisfies.
- (2) He wants us to know that He came as a gift from God, and that, as such
- (3) He is eternal proof that God's love and grace are ours.

Cf. "so loved" in John 3:16.