

REVIEW

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss last Sunday's sermon entitled "The Dawn of Fullness"
2. What connections if any did you pick up between "the bread of life" and Advent?

INTRO TO THE TEXT

John 6 is the chapter that begins with the familiar story of Jesus feeding the five thousand (vv. 1-15). The chapter continues with a bit of a travelogue as the Disciples take a boat and cross the lake headed for Capernaum. They encounter Jesus walking on the water and He joins them. Then, the next day, the people whom Jesus had fed get into boats and cross over to Capernaum, as the text says, "in search of Jesus" (vv. 16-24). When they find Jesus, they begin to question Him about a number of things. This week's primary text is part of that dialogue.

READ John 6:29-40; Psalm 107:1-9

ANALYZE THE TEXT

1. The word "bread" appears in John Chapter 6 (NIV) a total of 18 times. Only a very few of these occurrences refer to the literal food staple, although Jesus' audience did not always understand that. Expressions such as "bread of life," "bread that gives life to the world," and "bread from heaven" are obviously metaphors, but for what?
2. In Psalm 107:9 (NIV), the psalmist says the Lord "fills the hungry with good things." This line is actually quoted by Mary in the Magnificat (see Luke 1:53.) The NAS Bible translates this "and the hungry soul He has filled with what is good." This is obviously not a reference to full stomachs. What is the psalmist referring to, and why does Mary quote it?
3. If you read John 6 all the way through, it is clear that Jesus' audience doesn't fully understand what He is talking about (bread of life, eating flesh, drinking blood, etc.) This doesn't seem to concern Him and indeed throughout the NT He speaks in metaphorical language that His audience

and even His closest disciples don't always understand. Why do you think he does this?

A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER

It is helpful to bear in mind that John 6:29-40 is not a private discussion between Jesus and his Disciples. The pronoun "they" in v. 25 ("they asked him...") refers to "the crowd" mentioned in the previous verse. Jesus is addressing the people whom He had miraculously fed the previous day on the other side of the lake. He has performed this miracle before their eyes, and they follow him across the lake to Capernaum.

Using the "bread of life" metaphor, Jesus tells them that everything they really need is available to them, and all they have to do to receive it is to "look to the Son and believe in Him" (v. 40.) Sadly, we see later in the chapter that His audience, and indeed even "many of His disciples" (v. 60), still don't understand what He is telling them.

APPLY: If your group is willing, break up into men and women for the application. Be as open and transparent with each other as you can.

1. Often – for some of us at every meal – we thank God for the physical food that He gives us to sustain our earthly lives. Psalm 107 is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the *spiritual* food with which God fills us. Some commentators say that this is actually a metaphor for our redemption. How often and in what ways do you express gratitude to God for the "bread of life"? How could you do more to thank Him?
2. Look again at John 6:40. There are two things required of us – to "*look to the Son*" and to "believe in Him." In v. 35 Jesus says, "Whoever *comes to me* will never go hungry." The verbs in these verses suggest that more is required of us than mere intellectual assent as to who Jesus is. What else is needed in order for us to experience the true fullness of Christ? How is that reflected in your life?

MEMORIZE: John 6:35

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."