

March 18, 2023

Spring College Retreat, Ashland Woods Fellowship Center

Message 2: Jesus is the Bread of Life

[00:00]

**Rex:** Well, it's really good to be here with everyone. Mark said His name, so I'll say my name. My name is Rex. I'm also known as Anna's dad. So, I know a lot of you. I don't know, also, a lot of you, but I'd love to sit down and drink coffee with you sometime this weekend. I really love coffee—and I also would like to talk to you—but more excuses to just be together. But I'm really glad we can have this short weekend. It's kind of like a punctuation mark. This weekend is kind of like a punctuation mark; your life is full of words, and then sometimes you need a period, or an exclamation mark, or a comma. And that's what this weekend is like. I can stop and just be with the Lord. And what a great opportunity this is. And so, the message today is really simple. It's really simple. It's "Jesus is the Bread of Life." Isn't that really simple? And I have just a few points, and if you would take your outline out, it's message two. And I'm not going to cover all of the verses—there's not enough time—but there's one instance, Jesus feeding the 5,000, and I just want to highlight something there in that instance. You know, He did a miracle of taking five loaves and two fish from a young boy who offered them and then He ended up feeding 5,000 people and it's one of the best-known miracles of the Lord. In fact, it's one of the only miracles that's in all four of the gospels. But I'd like you to just cause your eyes to pass over verse five.

"Therefore, Jesus, lifting up His eyes, seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread so that these may eat?"

And I just like that scene, and I like what it says about Jesus. You know, He saw a large crowd, and you know what He thought? *I want them to eat. I want them to eat.* And so, He asked His disciples, "Where are we going to buy bread?" And maybe the disciples, they saw that crowd and they were thinking, "What are we going to teach them?" And Jesus was showing what His first concern is. And so, Sarah Wagner. Sarah is from all the way from St. Louis, across the river. Jesus just looks at you; *I want you to eat.* That's the main thing: *I want you to eat. I want you to eat.* And He's causing the disciples, like a picture of the church, think about that first. How about their eating? How about their eating? And then, you know, you may be going through a lot of things right now. You know what Jesus' main concern is? Are you fed? Are you fed? And when I'm not fed, I can get, there's a word called "hangry—" hungry and angry. Have you ever been hangry?

[04:31]

One wife, whenever her husband got upset, she just gives him a hamburger. That's the first thing to check. And it's like, are you fed? Are you fed? That's what Jesus is interested in: are you fed? So, you could ask, like, "Am I fed?" And then, I wish we had time to go through the story, but we don't have time for that, so just the next verse. It's really short—this verse is really short. If you ever want to memorize a good verse and be proud that you memorized a whole verse, you should memorize this verse—John 6:48—let's read that together.

**All:** "I am the bread of life."

**Rex:** Isn't that a great verse? You know, when Jesus gave that miracle of feeding the 5,000, it was kind of like Him giving an object lesson. This is the object—this is the lesson: Hey, there's Jesus, and then I'm eating this bread. And Jesus is like, "Get it? Get it?"

"Hey, there's Jesus!" And then, it's like, all of a sudden, I have fish.

"Get it?"

And then, you know, like, that's the best way to teach people. You know, if you want to make people happy, just feed them. But He is like, "I'm giving you that lesson. That's what I want." And He's like, "*I am that bread of life.*" And then,

there's two lessons in that verse: One, it's *I, Jesus Himself, I*. It's not anything *about* Him. There's one book was titled "Religion Saves and Other Lies," or something like that. It's not about religion—religion doesn't save you. Christian religion doesn't save you. Jesus does. Jesus does. You can be religious, and you just become a hypocrite—*hy po crite*—but with Jesus, you can't be a hypocrite. Why? It's Him. It's real. It's life. And it's *I. I am that bread*. I am that bread. And so, it's like a direct confrontation with Jesus. And you eat Him. I just took Him in. And then it's life. And let me tell you, Mark was talking about life. When you abide, there was that flow last night. Remember that flow? I like that—I can't do that. Flow. It's life. And you have to be tuned to life. *Life*.

[07:56]

What is life? Life is this: life is Christ Himself. And life is only Jesus who died and resurrected. You realize, like, "Wait a minute, I have life!" What does that mean? I have Jesus who died and resurrected. And then that life can get you through a whole bunch of different things. How do I interact with my parents? You need life. I don't know how to respond to my parents, but the One who died and resurrected does in His life. I don't know how to get an A on this test. I prayed for that a lot—"Give me an A so I can serve You. Give me the answer quickly so, I can serve You more." I prayed that. And one time, I did dream about an answer. And I woke up, and I tried it because I was a physicist, so you dream about an answer, but you don't know if it's right. You have to do pages of calculations. And it was wrong! That was a bad dream. But the Lord was like, "I'll be with you while you study." That's life. That's life. Life.

Dealing with sin. Oh, how do I deal with sin? How about I read a book saying how bad sin is? The story about how do you kill a wolf—have you ever heard that? You put bacon grease on a knife, and then the wolf licks the knife, and then it starts its tongue bleeding, and then it tastes the blood It'll bleed to death. That's a picture of sin in the Christian life—you just keep licking that knife. Isn't that a great story? I don't know if it works—I never killed a wolf that way. But you can read it as like, oh, that's terrible. And then the sin comes, and you're like [*mimes licking knife*], but you know what works? Life! Somehow, there's death and resurrection of Jesus—I am the bread of life! And then you have the power, not just the knowledge, you have the power. You have something within you. It's, like, *alive*. And then that's the Lord Jesus Himself alive as life, and He says, "I am the bread of life. I'm there." When I think about following the Lord in this age, I feel sorry for all of you. I do. It's not easy. Not easy. You face so many things. How do you get through? You need a life—a life—a living Christ life. I am the bread.

So, Jesus is very radical then. He's so radical. I don't know why He did this; I would recommend against it if I was the Lord's advisor. But it's almost like He took this to an extreme, and He said this in verse 54—this is after the feeding of the 5,000—"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink." Just imagine being with Jesus. And then you realize, wow, every word He says is true. That's what they said, "Oh, this man teaches. He doesn't teach like the scribes. When He teaches, He has authority." And then other times they said they just marveled at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth. And then He comes up—maybe He had some visuals with that. Come here.

[12:32]

And He was like, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood." Where's your carotid? Is it around here, you medical people? Carotid. Then all the blood just, *whoosh*. Maybe He pointed to His carotid. He's like, "...eats My flesh and drinks My blood." And then you're like, "That's weird." Thank you. That's weird, but Jesus said it. And it was almost like, maybe Jesus was thinking—I don't know what Jesus was thinking—maybe He's like, "I got to get through to these people, so I gotta be extreme." It's like—somehow, it's just not easy to get things into us. And He's getting like, "I want you to *eat* My flesh and I want you to *drink* My blood." Drink it; eat it. You know, drinking the blood, it's kind of like this. Like, I have a sin, and then I need the blood. I need the blood of Christ for my sin. But you can know Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood for your sin, but somehow that knowledge—it doesn't cause you to really understand *my—my—sin* is forgiven. It's like a weird thing. I can know Jesus died on the cross to cleanse my sin, and He shed His blood, and when He shed His blood, my sin was cleansed. But then, I still have this experience where it's still like a lead brick in my backpack, and I can't really get free from it. You know what you need to do? Drink. That's why Jesus was made.

[15:12]

I don't know if—that's Rex's speculation of why Jesus was so extreme. Drink My blood. It's like a Mongolian horseman. Don't they drink the blood of the horses? I saw some YouTube thing on that or whatever. They cut the horses, and then they put the blood in the cup and then drink it. I mean, you have no vegetables, so you just got to—anyway. But He's got to get in. And when He gets in, you can say this: "My sins are cleansed." And you could even say this: "The specific sin I was struggling with is cleansed." It's no longer "Jesus died on the cross—I learned about it," but "—I drank it." Drink My blood. And then, also eat My flesh. So, it's just like, I really get Him in. I really—I *really*. It's like this. Like, I know Jesus has strength for me—I know it. I know it. This is Jesus' strength. I know it. I know it. I can say, "I am in the Lord's army. I am in the Lord's army," but then I can't quite follow Him. I can't quite follow Him until you eat. And then when you eat, it's kind of like this: there's a lot—there's a lot. There's enough. There's enough. I have eaten; I can stand. And I've had so many experiences of that in my life, thinking like—sometimes it's like, how could I be like that brother? How could I be like that super Christian?

And then it looks so distant, so far away. And then you eat, and then you are. You eat, and you become. So, in 57, the last verse, "As a living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me." *Will live because of me*. So, Jesus is, like, He says, "Look at Me. I live because of the Father. Why do I do these things? It's because of the Father." And then, you know, the Father gave Him life. And then, why did He heal? Why did He cast out demons? Why did He teach with such authority? And why did He want to, you know, go away, stay away from Jerusalem for a period of time, and then go up to another feast? And then you look at His whole life. It's like, "Why, Jesus?" And He would say, "Because of the Father." And then when you're in this realm of life, you live because of *Him*.

[18:39]

One time, a sister, she asked this person, "Do you read the Bible?" And he's like, and this was His answer: "I want to want to read the Bible." Have you ever been there? I want to want to. I really wish I wanted to. And then you could take another derivative—like a third derivative—"I want to want to want to read the Bible." Do you read the Bible? Do you follow the Lord? "I want to want to want to want to follow the Lord." That's religion. Following the Lord is a *fact*. There's a difference. I'll say it again. That's religion: I want to want to. That's religion. If you ever want to want to, just give up. It's not Christ. This is Christ: I eat, and I live because of Him. And you just, you're just *there*. Why? Because I ate. See, that's why we're talking about life and that's why Jesus is like, "I'm the bread of life." I'm the bread of life. Why? It's not I want to want to. It's like, you look back—how could I live that life of faith for the Lord? How could I do that? I was fed. I ate, and I lived because of Him. It's just a fact. It's a fact.

You know, that's the great big teaching—great big difference—about living in religion versus living by life. Religion is aspiration—it's "wanna wanna." I love that answer. Do you read the Bible? "I want to want to read the Bible." life is like, yeah. Doesn't that, isn't that what Jesus says? "Let your yes be yes; your no, no." Everything else is what? Of the devil. Just yes, I have it, I have it.

[21:23]

Well, the crowds, if you turn your page, after they ate of that bread—the 5,000—and you could read the story in John 6. You know, Jesus, He performs another miracle. He sends His disciples across the lake, and then He walks on the water. walks on the water. So that's His second miracle: feeding the 5,000 and followed by, like, walking on the water. And then, the crowds who got this miracle done to them and they ate the bread, they just followed. They figured out how to get into a boat, how to find boats, and they took boats and went across the lake, just like the zeal of a crowd going to a Browns football game in the middle of December! They braved the elements, they will stand out there for hours, they'll sit in the cold and the snow and the whatever, and they're like, "Yeah, they lost again!" Okay, it was kind of like that, except with Jesus. And then He's like, "You seek Me, not because you saw signs, but you ate the loaves and were filled."

And they're like, "Yeah, I am following my belly." And then He says, "You know what, just do that, but not with this physical food, but with eternal life." And you can kind of see that. Life just leads you. It just leads you. Like, why? Why do I follow Jesus? Because my belly is filled. My belly is filled.

One time, I was talking to a young man. He was just experiencing life—*life*—in this way. Like, “I am the bread of life.” He was doing that. This is what he said. I remember; it was like a holy scene in a coffee shop: “I want to get into this.” And I felt, like, struck. Wow, yeah, I want to get into this, and then he's moving that direction. It's not “I want to want to,” but what was that life? It's like, I ate, and I want to follow. And then how do you really fulfill this? Like, that next verse—let's read that together, John 6:63.

**All:** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

**Rex:** Isn't that a great verse? So, Jesus kind of defines; after He said, “Eat My flesh and drink My blood,” He kind of says, “You know, I'm not talking about the physical flesh.” And then, you know, some people say, like, every time there's bread and wine, there's a miracle, it becomes the flesh of Christ. It doesn't. And you don't need it. You know what He was talking about? The Spirit. It's the Spirit who gives life. The Spirit gives life. And that's what we're going to talk about in the next meeting, so I won't, like, expand too much, but it's the Spirit. It's a Spirit experience, and that Spirit, the Holy Spirit, gives life like that, and it's just like eating the flesh. But He says the flesh profits nothing. That's even His flesh at that time. You know, it's like, no, it's a Spiritual experience, and you live a life in spirit like this. And you'll just realize, like, wow, I just want to follow the Lord. And the life is working in me and it's powerful. It's powerful.

[26:03]

But not many will do that. In fact, as a result of this—this is [John] 6:66—as a result of Jesus saying, “Eat My flesh, drink My blood,” many of His disciples withdrew and we're not walking with Him anymore. This is really true about Jesus. A lot of disciples just withdraw, withdraw. It's too hard, too hard. And I understand the challenge—it's just hard. And sometimes He'll say things like, “Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you will not have life,” and then you're just like, that's insane! I'm out of here. And don't think that just happens in 2023, it happened with Jesus. And then, look at [verse] 67. This is amazing. He just turns to the 12 and says this: “You do not want to go away also, do you?” It's like this.

Sean, come up. You don't have to follow the Lord. If you want to go away, you can. I'll say that to everyone in the room. You don't have to follow. Do you get the scene? Jesus turned to the 12 like, are you going to go away also? Many people withdrew, many people. Thank you.

And then Peter answered, “To whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.” You get it? They got the words, and it became life. And they're like, we're following You because of the words of life. This is the power of life, the power of life. They [said], “We believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God,” but You have words of eternal life.

[29:03]

And I see this. I see people making decisions all the time, and it's harder and harder to follow the Lord. There's a morality in the Bible, even a definition of what a human being is in the Bible. And it's no longer the same as society's definition of what a human being is. And many people, they come to that point, and they just say, “I withdraw from Jesus.” And then other people, they've been inundated with society's morality and the voices are so loud. And then they have a registration—*You have words of eternal life*—and they end up following Jesus. But not many, not many. Some people say, “When I follow the Lord, He should bless me, and there should be all kinds of good things happening to me.” And then they touch a little suffering, and they're like, “I'm out of here.” Withdraw. Jesus doesn't twist your arm. He's like, “Do you also want to leave?” And then there was something in him—in Peter—that said, “Where should we go? You have words of eternal life.” And you realize, *whoa*, there's something really strong there. Okay, that's the message. We'll stop.

[31:10]

We want to talk about a way to come and then you're going to have a practice of this. And we talk about eternal life—it could be broad, it could be grand—but it's also, like, every morning, just like Aletheia said. And so I'd like to just talk about a way to come to the Bible every morning, every morning. I encourage you to aim for every morning. Want to want to, not just want to want to. And then sometimes you're there—it's you and the Bible—and you just don't know what to do. You don't know what to do. So, I'm going to introduce one thing that you can do. I call it “find the flow,” find the flow. And it's a way to come to the Bible and then just touch life, experience life, just take in something of life. Where

in the morning, you would just be like, “I just touched the Lord. I just touched the Lord.” And then I will just give an example of how do you handle the Word. How do you use the Bible in the morning? And then, let's look at John 6:63. And what I'm going to do is I'm just going to read this verse. And then, I'm not going to pray other things—I'm just going to pray the words of the verse—and then I'm going to look for a flow on my insides.

And you would say, “What's that flow like?” You'll know it when you feel it. So, let me give you an example. And I'll give you an example of maybe what I do and what you could do alone. You can also do this in groups, but I think it's very important for you to do it alone, by yourself, with the Word. So, I'm going to read the verse slowly, and as I read the verse slowly, I'm just going to kind of like, look for water in my spirit. And when I find that water, I'm going to stop, pause, and just abide in that water, in that word. So, the water could be the most important word in the verse. That's very good. It may be *not* a most important word in the verse. It could be another word in the verse. But what I'm looking for is where that water is. And then I am going to take that sense of water, that sense of gushing, as like, that's the Lord's message for me today.

[34:44]

So, I'm just going to give you an example. I take this verse, and kind of be spiritual, like I just like sense. It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. Thank You, Lord. The words that I have spoken, spoken, spoken. Thank You, Lord. You spoke words to me. Thank You, Lord. I don't have to look for them, You've already spoken. Thank You, Lord. I hear Your words, the words You have spoken. Thank You, Lord, for speaking to me. Thank You that I have heard Your voice, the words You have spoken. Thank You, Lord; You spoke them. Those words are spirit and life. Lord, help me today to be in Your speaking. Thank You, Lord, Your words, the words You spoke. You have spoken. Lord, I want to treasure all the words You've spoken.

Okay, I kind of let you into my holy place. You know what the word that popped out to me was? “Spoken.” Now, there are other important words, like “Spirit,” “life,” “give,” “words,” but I'm just kind of going through the Bible. I'm just praying the Bible and finding where God is speaking. And then, I would then tell you, throughout my day, you know what is kind of inspiring to me is “spoken.” The Lord speaks. And then, He gave me that word. Now, sometimes it doesn't work, like Aletheia described—your breakfast is kind of oatmeal—but sometimes it's better, and there's something there. And sometimes the Lord surprises me. The Lord surprised me this morning. I was praying over a verse, and then the words that came out to me, it was like, “I have seen your tears.” And I'm like, I felt like the Lord spoke to me: “Rex, I have seen your tears.” And I'm like, when did I cry? I'm not that sad.

Like, Marty, if I would say, “Marty, I have seen your tears,” and you're like, “What?” So, sometimes it's like that. You're like, “Why did You speak to me like that, Lord?” But there is a way that we can all come to the Word. And when you come to the Word, it's like bread of life, and that's like a life supply. And that's what the message was on: life. You have words of eternal life. It comes this way. So, I think we're going to have some practice.