

17 August, 2009

## How to know Jesus – Bread of Life

*Joh 6:35, 41-51*

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+ You may remember the ad on TV where the genie appears and gives the girl a wish. She can have anything she wants and she wishes for...

...a packet of Tim Tams that never runs out!

What a crazy girl! What a waste!!

When she *could* have wished for a bag of Mars Bars that never runs out!

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Last week I drew your attention to the middle line of the Lord's prayer which reads...

*"Give us this day our daily bread"*

...in other words...

"Please give us the physical things we need"

I also mentioned that the word **daily**, found nowhere else in Greek, and in the light of an Old Syriac translation is quite probably to translated...

"perpetual, ongoing."

In other words we could translate the line...

"Give us this day the bread that never runs out"

Jesus talked about himself as that sort of bread...

Bread that never runs out. The Bread of Life.

He's talking on a spiritual level, not a physical one.

Spiritual life that never runs out. Eternal life.

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As I walk around Port Macquarie, everywhere you see outlets for food a drink, from the fast food places, to the take-away shops, to the restaurants and the food courts in the shopping centres. Everywhere there are places for us to graze.

It is a testimony to the importance of food.

We get concerned if a baby is not putting on sufficient weight. And we get concerned as we get older that we put on too much weight...

All because our daily bread, and steak and pastries and cake are so important to us.

There would be serious consequences for parents who neglected to feed their child.

BUT JESUS SAYS TO THE CROWDS...

<sup>27</sup>*Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."*

Now of course he is not saying, "Starve yourselves and your children" He is rather saying...

There is an infinitely more important food than the stuff you put in your mouth and swallow. AND IT'S THAT FOOD THAT SHOULD BE STRIVING TO GET HOLD OF!!

When the crowd ask how they get that sort of bread Jesus says...

Believe in me, the one whom God has sent from heaven.

Because I am the bread of Life.

If you put your trust in me, and invite me into your life as Lord

Then you will have eternal life.

Elsewhere Jesus also puts the other side of the equation...

If you don't have me, you don't have life!

Now let me ask you a question...

Which is the greater neglect...

To not feed yourself or your family with breakfast lunch and dinner?

OR

To not put your faith in Jesus Christ

and neglect to share Jesus with the rest of your family.

Physical life may last a bit over a hundred years if you are fit.

Spiritual life lasts for eternity.

We are both physical and spiritual beings.

WE are created for fellowship with God.

We are supposed to live this life to the full with our spirits alive to our creator!

We are made to receive God's Spirit within us and to truly come alive – here and now!

But the fact is that without Christ we are spiritually dead in our sins.

...we are missing out 80% of what this life has to offer, and 100% of what the next life has to offer.

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The basic question we need to clear up in all of this, is whether we believe that these claims Jesus made about himself were true.

Many of the crowd didn't think so...

Their attitude was...

“Who does he think he is?

We've seen him grow up.

We know his parents.

We know where he lives.

So which Jesus do you believe in today?

+ I watched a video of a guy in a gift shop and on one rack there were T shirts with different pictures of Jesus.

One was a classic, long haired Hollywood-film type Jesus

Another was a Jesus, gentle, meek and mild, who wouldn't hurt a fly.

Another was a Jesus in a flak jacket with a machine gun, who obviously *would* hurt a fly – and a whole lot more!

In Jesus' day there were those who called him teacher, and labelled him a prophet. Some were looking for a freedom fighter.

But what do YOU think?

Where does your picture of Jesus come from?

Is it a collection of half remembered stories about miracles?

Is it the gentle shepherd welcoming the children?

Is he a collage of bits of information gleaned from the media?

Or is he someone who doesn't really register at all on your radar?

Let me say that Christians can also have a distorted image of what Jesus is really like.

It all depends where you are looking for your information.

Let me say that the Bible is the only real source of information about Jesus.

For solid reasons that we don't have time for now, the gospels present as a reliable source of information about what Jesus taught and did.

And he said this...

<sup>46</sup>*Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.* <sup>47</sup>*Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.*

Jesus claims to be the only one who has seen God.

The one sent by God, speaking God's words and enacting God's plans and purposes.

He says that anyone who has learned anything from the Father, God, would inevitably come to Jesus.

Jesus also claims to be the only way to God.

He claims to be the one who holds the key to life.

You may be rather uncertain about these claims at the moment.

The worst thing you could do for yourself and your family would be to shelve them. To say, "I'll think about this some other time"

+ Just imagine that a group of you are stranded in the desert, and you come across a walker with a pack who tells you, "There's a huge storm coming in a few hours, but if you head due east for just 500m over the sand dunes, you will find shelter in a hut with food and a well. If you stay here you probably won't survive."

What would you do?

Even if you had your doubts about the guy you met, you would surely check out the story wouldn't you?

+ TV programming seems to be full of cooking programs these days.

Some of them are competitions - one chef against another.

Towards the end of the program comes the moment of truth.

The finished dish is put in front of the expert.

How will he judge it?

It may look good. Beautifully presented.

It may smell delicious.

It may appear to be well-textured.

But the ultimate test is to taste! To try it out!

Psalm 34 reads of God...

<sup>8</sup> *O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed are those who take refuge in him.*

Jesus says...

<sup>48</sup>*I am the bread of life.* <sup>49</sup>*Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.* <sup>50</sup>*This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.* <sup>51</sup>*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

Jesus' words are very confronting.

(Even more so in his day, and in his culture)

And his disciples told him so.

But what he is saying is...

I must be the staple diet of your spiritual life.

Nothing else will satisfy.

Everything else will eventually let you down

Nothing else lasts.

But if you entrust your life to me.

If you receive his forgiveness and his Spirit

You will come alive and live forever.

This food is not pie in the sky.

He makes a difference, and helps you to make a difference too.