



# MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

August 11, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Exodus 16:15-31](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 34 CW

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [John 6:24-35](#)

## I Am the Bread of Life Spiritual Food for Those Focused on the Earthly THE BREAD OF LIFE: TRUE SATISFACTION

1. People are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
- But more than \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. People seek Jesus for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jesus fulfills our \_\_\_\_\_ needs \_\_\_\_\_
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus mean \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

There are a few bright minds in our world. I think sometimes of people like Elon Musk or Jordan Peterson or these people whose brains are running miles and miles faster than ours and they say something and you hear them and you think, "What did you say? What are you even talking about?" Maybe you might have to hear it a few times, but it's kind of up here and we are down here. Maybe you can think about it as someone who is one of your elders and they are trying to give you pieces of life wisdom but you maybe are a little too young or too immature and they are talking about what you are going to face in life and you aren't even thinking about that. You're just thinking about school and sports. They are trying to give you these pieces of wisdom that just kind of goes over your head. Maybe you have been in that situation, too, of trying to share that wisdom and people just don't seem to get it.

I think that's kind of what we find in our text today when Jesus is at this point of talking about the Bread of Life. Why do I say that? It's because he is at a point of great popularity. He had just fed the 5,000. People are coming to him to be healed and he is getting crowds and crowds of people around him. But as we spoke about and the video

talked about this morning, as he begins to talk about the Bread of Life, people begin to struggle and say “What are you talking about?” We’ll see as the lessons go on, we won’t see it quite yet in our lesson today, but they are troubled by it. They are confused. And it says people even begin to leave because it’s a hard teaching.

When we look at this, we are going to see why it is important that Jesus talks about this. Why does he talk about the **Bread of Life**? It’s because we need to see where our **true satisfaction** comes from—that Jesus is the Bread of Life and he gives us what we really need. The problem, though, is that we, the people at Jesus’ time and the people of this world, are often so focused on the wrong thing. That’s what Jesus shows them as we begin our lesson. We see the context of where things are.

Jesus had fed the 5,000 and then last week you heard about how Jesus was walking on the water and he calmed the storm and it was kind of a frightful thing for the disciples. But Jesus, again, showed his power. Now we see that the crowd realizes that Jesus and his disciples aren’t there, so they got into boats and went to the other side. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said “Rabbi, how did you get here?” Notice then what Jesus responds. Does he answer their question? Instead he says this: ***“Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.”*** Jesus does what he often does when people ask him a question. He gets to the heart of the issue. They are saying “How did you get here,” but he is more focused on why they are following him and why they are seeking after him. He says that it’s not just that they saw the signs but they had their fill. We are going to see that the people want to make him their “bread” king. Like us, those *people are creatures of comfort.*

Do you think that’s true? That we need the comforts of this life and we struggle so hard when we don’t have them? I think of a typical thing that I heard recently. Some of the comforts that we have in this life make us neglect to think how good we have it compared to all the generations of the world before us. Think of 50-60 years ago and how many people had great, running plumbing to have hot showers. Are there some of you who grew up without hot showers? Think about how that is just a normal thing for us.

I remember my first year in China and I shared one bathroom with four teachers and we had one hot shower. It had that little water heater and if you were the second person, you probably didn’t get a hot shower. Or if you like camping, that’s one of the things you maybe miss—a hot shower. They are the comforts that we neglect to cherish because we are kind of privileged.

We just traveled to Virginia and I think about how easy it is to travel and to get your directions now because of GPS. You put the location in on your GPS and if there is construction and it leads you around it. I still remember when we had to print off the

MapQuest directions and if they got out of order or you lost a page, what do you do?! Or if you go way back when you had to have a huge pull-out map and if you folded it the wrong way, then it had the holes in it and so forth. You had to have passengers looking at this when you were driving.

We have all these comforts that we kind of neglect to see that we have now and we like to be comfortable. We like all the things that make life easy and we avoid the difficult things. But as we look at the earthly things, God wants us to focus on something more.

As he speaks to the people, he says ***“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”*** Even though we are creatures of comfort, it’s important to remember that we are *more than flesh and blood*. We like to be more. We like all the comforts of this world, but it’s not just all about that. It’s not about the flesh and blood, the physical things and the comforts of this world. It’s great to have things go well in this life, but that’s not everything. We are spiritual and there is more to this world than just living and being comfortable and having everything go well, even just being healthy. We are spiritual creatures, eternal creatures. So Jesus is helping the people of his time to focus on that and he wants us to focus on that as well.

It’s so easy to get caught up in the physical things and to ignore the spiritual. We think that everything in life is going to go easy and you might not have to think about heaven. There are so many people that go throughout life and finally, maybe at the end of life when they are getting sick, they start to think spiritually, but are they so far from God that it’s going to be difficult? Or sometimes we think our life is going to be so long, but God cuts that life short. It’s easy for us to think about the here and now, but we need to see there is more, a spiritual side, an eternal side. Jesus wants us to focus on more and he gives them a warning about why they are seeking him.

He says, ***“Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.”*** Here he is giving two reasons that people seek Jesus that are not exactly the best reasons. *People seek Jesus for signs and satisfaction.* “Jesus, what more can you do for us? Can you do this thing? Can you heal this thing?” Do people today still do that? “Jesus, give me a sign and then I’ll believe.” “I’ll strengthen my faith, or I’ll have hope, if you just show me this thing or do this thing in my life.” What is so interesting about this is Jesus had just done a sign and they are still seeking signs. We are going to see that in just a second where it says that they are looking for more. ***So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”*** What are they saying and doing? He had just fed 5,000 people from just a little child’s meal. It was an amazing miracle and they are like “Huh. Do you know what Moses did? Moses gave the Israelites food every day, day after day. He fed so many

people, but it came every day. Can't you do that? This was nice, but we would like something more." He corrects them and says "It's not Moses who actually did it, but God who gave them bread." So we see when you want signs, you want more and more. I heard at the worship conference this week that whatever brings people into church or into contact with God is kind of what they want more of. If it's signs, maybe they want more signs.

But the second thing he says that people were seeking Jesus for is satisfaction. He says, "It's not the signs you are looking for but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." When it talks about "fill" here, it is using a word that is used for animals eating food, often like pigs. If you've seen pigs eat—remember the fair is coming up—how do pigs eat? They just eat so much. They don't stop. What I found interesting as you read the Old Testament lesson, when they talk about the manna, there are instructions and each person had to take just a little bit, like just enough. It wasn't to take so much. But if they took too much, it spoiled. Here he is saying it seems at the feet of the 5,000, we hear about how everyone had enough and there was more left over. It seems like they had their fill. They want to be so satisfied.

I think the truth is for us that not only are we creatures of comfort, but we need that satisfaction. We need to have more and more. It's the same idea of the signs—whatever you like as signs—you always need more. When you have comfort, don't you need more and more? More stuff, always needing to top other people, to be more and more comfortable. The question is do we look to Jesus in the same way? Do we look to him for signs and just for flesh and blood satisfaction? I think there is truth that often we do see him as a vending machine and say "Well God, can you give me this?" Maybe we even make it transactional. "I'll do this, God, if you give me this." "If you give me this, God, then I'll do this." But that's not how God is.

Notice as we hear what he talks about when the people are asking him to show a sign, he says, ***"Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*** Jesus here is saying he is so much more than this vending machine to give us what we want in life and to make us feel comfortable. His purpose is that he is going to be the Bread of Life. In Verse 35, ***"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*** This is a gift. Jesus is giving something that is eternal and exponentially better than we could ever imagine. *Jesus fulfills our eternal needs exponentially.*

What does that mean? The people are saying "Can you give us bread? We want you to be the one who feeds us, our people." Notice what he says about what the Bread of Life is—it comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Not just a people, not just for a meal or two; he gives life—spiritual life and hope—for the world. ***For God so***

***loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*** <sup>(John 3:16)</sup> That's what it is saying. ***"Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*** It's a true spiritual peace, true spiritual life, now and forever.

Notice how this happened. Before this, when he is talking about the work for what they want to do, he says "You shouldn't work for the food that spoils but for food that endures through eternal life." The people say ***"What must we do to do the works God requires?"*** Notice that they are like, "Yeah, you know, this is interesting. Tell us how this happens." He says ***"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*** The work he requires is not to make your way up into heaven, to compare ourselves with other people, but to believe. It's this gift of connecting us to Jesus and his work for us. It's this free gift; this free gift of forgiveness that God give us. It's not really a work because God is working that faith in us. It's so much greater than anything that we could do. Notice they kind of just pass over it. "Well, yeah, okay, now show us the sign." But it's all about that believing.

Why is it all about believing? *The free gifts of Jesus mean life or death.* We talk about Jesus being the Bread of Life, but why use the idea of the bread of life? We need to eat. We need to be fed, we know that. If you go today, tomorrow, several days, a week without food, what happens? You perish. You die. You can't make it without food. We know that on the physical side, but what about the spiritual side? Just like we said—we could be so focused on the flesh and blood, just like the people of Jesus' time as they said "Just give us this food. Give us more food." We cannot see our need for repentance and forgiveness, and to see Jesus as our Savior and that he came for something so much greater than we could ever imagine. What does that look like?

C.S. Lewis, a famous author, said this in his book, The Weight of Glory. He talks about how our desires, our wants, it's not that we have such great high desires and wants that God is like "Oh, you guys are really reaching up to me." He says this, in fact, that our desires are not too strong, but they are too weak. C.S. Lewis describes it this way. "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

God is saying there are so many things in this world. There are a lot of pleasures. There are a lot of comforts. Look to Christ, not as one to give us those comforts and pleasures but to give us true, eternal peace and forgiveness. There are a lot of things to look at in this world; a lot of fears, a lot of worries, a lot of doubts. Some people continue to boil Christianity down to "Be good and you go to heaven. If you're not good, you go to

hell." That's not it. Jesus tells us that it's about belief and believing in Jesus, the Bread of Life, who gives life to the world.

So the message here is not to say "Don't work." He says, "***Do not work for food that spoils...***" God wants us to work. But God wants our priorities in the right place; to be focused on the spiritual and the eternal; to look to God as one who loves us and has sent his Son to die for the whole world. Know that is true for you; that God loves you so much to give you this Bread, this Bread of Life, that will nourish you into eternal life and give you a satisfaction that far outweighs any pleasures in this world. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.