



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

August 18, 2024

Pastor David Ruddat

13th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Proverbs 9:1-6](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 111 CW

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 2:6-16](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [John 6:35-51](#)

I Am the Bread of Life **The Bread that Gives Wisdom and Life** **THE BREAD THAT RAISES**

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, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father, through our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ.

*Direct us now gracious Lord to hear aright your Holy Word.
Assist your minister to preach and let the Holy Spirit teach.
Let eternal life be found by all who hear the Gospel sound. Amen.*

When my wife and I were first married, one of our wedding gifts was one of those bread makers. We could never get it right. I don't know whether our yeast was too old or too hot or too cold. Either our bread was super, super puffy or it was rock hard. Even though we had all the ingredients right and we followed the instructions, we still couldn't get it right.

This morning, Jesus has all the ingredients. Everything is there that needs to bring someone to faith. And it doesn't go well. Next week your pastor, Pastor Enderle, is going to talk about just how badly it is going to get in the verses that follow this, but right now I would like to just ask the question, why doesn't Jesus change the subject? Why does he continue to persist talking about himself as the Bread of Life? Why doesn't he change his tactic? That's the question I want to ask and get answered today as we look at this text. We'll be going through the text verse by verse, and that's the question I want you also to consider. Why doesn't Jesus change the subject?

Jesus' conversation, what he is bringing about, the strategy/tactic that he is using is a tactic he has used before. In [John 4](#), Jesus goes into enemy territory, into the land of the

Samaritans, and there is this woman who was coming out to the well to get water because she is thirsty. Jesus takes this felt need of hers and exposes a spiritual need that she has and offers himself as the solution, that he is the living water. He makes things uncomfortable. He exposes her past. He exposes her sin. But in the end, what happens? If you've watched "The Chosen" in Season 1, you know what happens. She runs back into town and tells everyone, "Come meet the man who told me everything that I ever did." The whole community comes out to Jesus. [John 4](#) tells us that Jesus stayed there for four days and many people came to faith in him.

Now here we are in [John 6](#), and [John 6](#) has people who were fed on that hill where Jesus miraculously took five loaves of bread and two fish and was able to feed 5,000 men, plus women and children. Now they come looking for Jesus because they are hungry. They have a felt need. They are hungry. And Jesus is going to use the tactic of "Yes, I know you are hungry, but you are also spiritually hungry. Without me, you are going to die. Here, let me give you living bread from heaven."

Maybe a month or so ago, there was an interview of a famous musician and there was a miscommunication. I don't remember exactly what the question was but it was something like "When did you always know that you were going to be a musician?" The recording artist misunderstood her, thinking that she said "magician," the guys with the black top hats and the white bunnies. So they were talking passed each other. As we are looking at that question "Why doesn't Jesus change the subject," maybe we ask ourselves "Do they really understand what is going on?" Jesus clues us in on that in Verse 35. It says, ***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. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe."*** "You have seen me. You were in that crowd when I was teaching all day and then as I took those five loaves of bread and two fish and revealed to you that I was more than just a human being. You have seen me and yet you still did not believe." It's not a question of misunderstanding the words that were coming out of Jesus' mouth. There's something deeper there. But why doesn't he change subjects? Why doesn't he change his tactic?

Let's read Verse 37. ***"All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*** As you are listening to this text, it seems like Jesus is repeating himself, but I think that's because our translation made a decision. It doesn't matter whether you are in the EHV or the NIV11, in Verse 37 it says ***"All those the Father gives me..."*** The gender of that pronoun is neutered. But I believe it's better for us to say ***"Everything the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."*** Then you know

you are not talking about two separate things, especially when you start thinking about exactly what Jesus was saying. We are given the opportunity to really just slow down this conversation and analyze every little aspect of what Jesus was saying and what is coming across. It's not a matter of misunderstanding him. It's a matter of us not taking his words to heart. When Jesus says "Everything the Father gives me will come to me," what do you think he is referring to? Everything?

Let's go back down to Verse 51. ***"This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*** "Everything the Father gives me will come to me." What is included in that? Included is his suffering and death for the sins of the world. His suffering and death for not just what we think are little bitty sins but the big ones, too; the disgusting ones; the ones no one else knows about. The Father knows and he is going to put that on Jesus. And Jesus knows it's coming to him because that is why he is here—so that everyone who comes to him, he will never drive away.

For me it's very comforting to think our Savior wants to take on all of our sin, even the disgusting stuff, so that when we would come to him, he would never have to drive us away. He would never have any reason for us to be separate again. Taking all of our sin on himself, suffering the punishment for it and the guilt for it on the cross for us and for our salvation, so that we would never be driven away from Jesus and God with the same thing. What a wonderful comfort that because Jesus took on everything the Father gave him, he has no reason to push us away.

This is the will of the Father. This is the will of God. This is the will of Jesus. He makes that very clear. ***"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*** In Verses 30 and 40, we have that gender issue again so it sounds like he is saying the same thing twice, but in Verse 39 he uses the neuter. "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose nothing that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." Here is the warning. Jesus says "I'm taking on everything the Father has given me so that if you would come to me, I will never push you away. But at the last day, everything will come back again." Do you see the picture? Jesus dies for the sins of the entire world. God looks at the entire world and says "If you believe in Jesus, all of your sins have been taken away. He took all of those sins on the cross." But on the last day, what happens? The believers are on the right. Who is on the left? Why are they on the left? It's because their sins have been raised up again to convict them to eternal death forever. But those who are found in Jesus, who are continually coming to Jesus in faith, they are never pushed away. They have eternal life.

Jesus is talking about some big stuff: salvation, forgiveness, eternal life. And how do they respond? ***At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.***" But here Jesus talks big picture and they start grumbling and complaining. Instead of talking to Jesus directly, they start talking to each other and attacking the person of Jesus. "Who is this guy who says he is coming down from heaven? We know his mom. We know his dad." Why doesn't Jesus change the subject? Why doesn't he change the tactic that he is using? Why does he keep talking about himself as the Bread of Life?

Notice it's not a case of musician and magician with Jesus and these people. They know exactly what he is saying. The Holy Spirit has opened up their minds to this thought. They see Jesus as he really is. They see the plan of salvation that the Holy Spirit has revealed to them, but their sinful natures have closed in again and rejected him. Why doesn't Jesus change the subject? It's because they understood what he was saying.

I think sometimes we get a misconception. We are learning about God and his Word in church, in Sunday school, in our Christian day school, in Bible class, but we get the idea that coming to faith/being a Christian is an academic exercise. As if people would just know the information, they would believe. [John 6](#) tells us that wisdom comes from God, not from our human understanding. God has to open up our hearts and our minds to this wonderful truth of what he has done for us. And sometimes that wonderful truth will be rejected. Sometimes people will close their hearts to this truth that they are starving without Jesus—spiritually starving. And they will die forever without him. But what we have to offer IS Jesus—the Bread of Life; **the Bread that Raises**, yes, objections, but also raises us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Let's close off with thought: ***"I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*** I mentioned that last verse earlier in the sermon but I just want to close off with that thought. Here Jesus understands that they understand. He is going to keep talking about this subject because it is the most important subject. How are you going to get to heaven? How are your sins forgiven? How can you have the confidence that you can stand before God on the Last Day? It's only through Jesus, so he is not going to change the subject. He's not going to change

the tactic because it works! It worked on that Samaritan woman. It works because of the work of the Holy Spirit, not because it's smart, not because it's easy to understand, but because it is the wisdom of God.

But at the very end he says, ***"This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*** "World" John has often used as a bad term. I don't love the world. It's a bad thing. It's going to influence us and lead us away from God. Here Jesus says "I'm going to give my flesh for the life of the world"—coming back to the thought that Jesus is not just here on vacation, that somehow it was some grand mistake that he was arrested and put on the cross, but this is the reason why he is here—to give his life for the world. He is here to take on human flesh so he could live a life that we could not live. So that he could take our place under the judgment of God on the cross so that you and I could have life. He is going to raise us up from spiritual life right now and raise us up at the last day, too. He is the **Bread that Raises**.

Yes, we saw he raised some objections today, but we understand that's what is going to happen. Yes, you are always going to be trying to figure out, "Am I saying 'musician' and they are hearing 'magician'?" You can always have that evaluation. Are we getting across? Are they picking up what we are laying down? But sometimes they are going to pick up what we are laying down, and they are going to reject it, and that's sad. But that should not deter us from giving the Bread that raises—the Bread that raises people to spiritual life; the Bread that will raise us up at the Last Day to eternal life. Amen.

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