**JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE**

 November 27, 2016

John 6:16-40 /Key Verse 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.’”

 In the last week, we learned that Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Through this event, we learn that Jesus has compassion for our physical hunger and needs and he cares for them. But in today’s passage Jesus teaches more important truth that he did not come into this world to give bread but to be bread. In another word Jesus did not come into this world to assist us as useful but to be precious and central. Jesus did not come into this world to assist our desire for perishable things but to change our desire. Then what is it that Jesus really wants us to desire? It is himself because Jesus himself is the bread of life. So, I pray that through today’s passage God may touch our heart to truly accept Jesus as our most precious treasure; the bread of life so that we may desire him and seek him and fall in love with him and as a result we may have overflowing life of God in us which is 9 fruit of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a). I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

In verses 16-21, the main point is that Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water when they were in adverse situation due to a strong wind in the middle of the lake. Humanly speaking it is unimaginable and impossible thing for a man to walk on the water. But this event is another miraculous sign revealing that Jesus is God Almighty. Sometimes when we are in very adverse situation that we feel like we are stuck in something, we cannot make progress in our life journey, and we feel like no one can help us, we need to remember that Jesus can come to us to help us even in that difficult situation. When many things can be too hard to us, nothing is too hard to Jesus. He protects us and helps us in any circumstances when we trust in him.

In verses 22-24, the crowd who had experienced the fantastic event of eating the free bread provided by Jesus were very desperate in search of Jesus. Once they realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were in the place where they had eaten the bread, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum to search for Jesus.

Look at verse 25. Finally when they found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they were so happy. So they gladly greeted Jesus asking him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” It seems that Jesus would welcome them in their desperate need as he had done before. But, how did he answer?

Look at verse 26. “Jesus answered, “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.” As you know, Jesus’ signs always point to him. When we experience miraculous work of God, we need to learn who Jesus is and know him better and deeper. Then we can grow to be like him. This is the real purpose of Jesus’ miraculous sign and what Jesus really wants for us. But the crowd missed the whole point of the miracle that Jesus had performed. They were satisfied only with the bread that Jesus had provided and now their motive in coming to Jesus was just to get bread more and continually. In fact, in the previous passage, in verse 15, Jesus already knew that they intended to come and make him king by force. Jesus did not say, “Yes!” to their will. Now when they came to Jesus with wrong motive, Jesus took this time as an opportunity to teach what they really should accept. So, how did Jesus help them? Let’s read verse 27. “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Jesus never ignores the value of food that spoils because he knows our physical need. In fact, it was Jesus who gave them bread just a couple of days ago. But living for food that spoils is different matter and seriously wrong life. This is a degenerated life. Living for food that spoils is a cursed life. In Genesis 3:17b, when the first man Adam sinned against God, God cursed the ground and Adam. It says, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.” And in Genesis 3:19, God said again, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Before man didn’t sin against God, he did not need to work for food. Man only worked to serve God as his steward (manager) and food was already given and abundant. Now Jesus came to this cursed world to restore man’s original blessed life. Man’s original blessed life is enjoying eternal life with God. So Jesus teaches the crowd what man should work for. Let’s read 6:27 again. “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval” Here Jesus teaches us that unlike food that spoils, there is food that endures to eternal life and this food is given by the Son of God. When they heard about such bread, how did the crowd respond to Jesus?

Let’s look at verse 28. “Then they asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’” In order to get food that endures to eternal life, they thought that they should do something. Definitely their concept of working was to do something with their own effort; such as keeping some rules or regulations like that. But how did Jesus answer? Let’s read verse 29. “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”

The food that endures to eternal life is not what we earn through our doing something; through our traditional concept of working. It is gift; the gift from God through his One and Only Son Jesus. The work God requires for us is not working. It is believing; believing in him whom the Father God sent. Here “believing in” means “trusting in, accepting, relying and depending and eventually obeying.” In order to believe in Jesus, we have to deny ourselves; our mind, our emotion, our fixed idea, our pride, our goal and will and we have to follow him; his mind, his will, and his goal. Otherwise, we cannot really say, “I believe in him.”

Jesus taught the crowd what God really wants them to do, that is to believe in him. But the crowd still was not interested in that. They were only concerned about getting bread and asked for a sign of bread from heaven to eat, quoting Scripture (v.30-31). They just a couple of days ago saw a great sign that Jesus fed 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Why did they ask for another sign? They were trying to pressure Jesus feed them continually, and in return, they would believe in him as Messiah. It was a kind of deal. Many people including ourselves want to make a deal with Jesus. They say to Jesus, “You do something for me first, and then I will do something for you.” With this kind of attitude, we take Jesus only as useful for our need but never take Jesus as precious and central treasure in our life. With this kind of attitude, we can never taste true life that God really wants to give us. As the good shepherd, Jesus really knows what the crowd really need. In verses 32-33, Jesus said to them again. “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.” What the crowd really needed was true life in God enjoying eternal life with God. Here the true bread from heaven did not mean physical bread that spoils. But the crowd did not understand this bread and they just desperately and persistently asked for the bread that they wanted. So, in verse 34, they said to Jesus, “always give us this bread.” So far, Jesus continued to talk about eternal life and true bread from heaven; life-giving bread but the crowd kept talking and asking, “Manna, bread, and bread.”

Actually we can understand the crowd. For those who suffer from hunger, obtaining bread is a serious matter. Many people in the world are starving in places like North Korea, Africa, and some Asian countries. The United Nations estimates that about five million children die from malnutrition every year. They say that worldwide food production is sufficient to feed everyone in the world. But food is not distributed properly, mainly due to people’s greed and selfishness. That is why Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us today our daily bread”(Matthew 6:11). Jesus deeply s understands how people suffer from hunger. So he fed the large crowd. But even toward physically hungry crowd, Jesus knew that men should not miss far more important thing that man’s life does not depend on our physical bread alone. Jesus himself testified when he was tempted by Devil while he was fasting for 40 days in the desert by saying, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

So, now Jesus plainly talks about the true bread from heaven; the food that endures to eternal life. The true bread from heaven; the food that endures to eternal life is not bread, I mean, physical bread. It is person. It is Jesus. Let’s read verse 35 altogether. “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.” Here, everything becomes clear. Why did Jesus come into this world? Jesus did not come into this world mainly to give bread but to be bread. Jesus said to the crowd, “Do not work for the food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life and the Son of God will give this food.” And now Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” If we summarize all of these, Jesus is saying that we should work for gaining Jesus because Jesus is the bread of life; eternal life. Next week we will study the last part of John 6 in the continuation of Jesus’ teaching about giving himself as the bread of life. In verse 53, Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” Since Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life’, when we think Jesus as the bread of life, what does it mean to eat the bread of life Jesus? What does it mean “eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood”? It means we accept Jesus and his word until his words become myself. As we know we are what we eat and drink. All food that we eat and drink becomes the parts of our body. Likewise, if we really accept Jesus and his words, they become my thought and will and direction and treasure in my heart. It means if we don’t think nor desire as Jesus thinks and desires, we are not accepting him yet even though we may say, “I believe in him.” So by actually living according to Jesus’ word, I am demonstrating that I really believe in him.

People living in this world are very concerned about security issue; job security, future security. People want to obtain visible and tangible security; such as, money, good job, decent house, social position, fame, or physical well-being life, etc. Of course, these are all important. We should work hard properly for these things, too. But Jesus said, “Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life.” Through this, Jesus teaches that all the perishing things should not be our ultimate goal or purpose of life. Rather, our central desire and goal should be Jesus himself; gaining Jesus and knowing Jesus because Jesus himself is the true bread of life. To gain Jesus and know him personally, all we have to do is to believe in him. Believing in Jesus leads us to have right relationship with God. By our own doing or our own efforts we cannot get eternal life. Eternal life is the gift of God and it is given only when we accept him.

In verses 36-40, although Jesus patiently taught about the true bread of life, they still didn’t believe. But Jesus was not discouraged by that. Jesus acknowledged the Father’s Sovereignty. So he said, “All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” (37) To Jesus himself, the work of God was also to believe in the Father’s Sovereignty. Like Jesus, to believe in Jesus is the work of God that he requires from us.

Through the preparation of this message, I have looked back on my life in Jesus. When I look back on my life, the greatest thanksgiving topic of my life is that I came to know Jesus; my bread of life. I grew up in a poor family. My dream was to work hard and get a good job and make sure my future security in my own efforts and also I want to support my poor family. But amazing thing happened to my life. When I was a college student, I was invited to UBF bible study and through bible study, I came to know Jesus. When I came to know Jesus, my desire was changed. Instead of hunger and thirst for seeking my future security in my own efforts, hunger and thirst for seeking to know spiritual truth; ultimately Jesus became my central desire. My whole life direction was changed from me-centered life to Jesus-centered life. But when I look back on my life in mission field in Canada, I many times lost my central desire toward Jesus due to hard life in mission field, I wasted my time for meaningless and fruitless things such as watching internet Korean newspaper too much. In a sense I degenerated in my goal of life. I deeply repent of my sinful desire; my old self-desire. I really pray to rededicate my heart to Jesus purely. I also pray for all of us that we may all rededicate our desire to Jesus purely more and more.

In conclusion, today we learn that Jesus did not come into this world mainly to give bread but to be bread. Jesus did not come into this world to assist us as useful but to be precious. Jesus did not come into the world to assist our desire for perishable things but to change our desire. May God bless us once again so that we all may accept Jesus as our greatest treasure; the bread of eternal life and seek for Jesus more and more. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.