

Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

²⁵ **When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”**

²⁶ **Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”**

²⁸ **Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”**

²⁹ **Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

³⁰ **So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”**

³² **Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, 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. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**

³⁴ **“Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”**

³⁵ **Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (NIV 84)**

Theme: Check your Priorities

What is most important to you in your life? We all have our set of priorities and those priorities may change from time to time depending on certain situations. But we get so busy with everything in our lives, it is good to sit back for a second and check your priorities. Jesus helps us do that today in our text for today.

But first, some background: last week’s gospel was the feeding of the 5000. A group of 5000 men, not counting women and children, followed Jesus to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, a somewhat

secluded and remote location. Since the crowd had nothing to eat Jesus fed them by multiplying five loaves of bread and two small fish. Everyone ate and was satisfied and they had 12 basketfuls of food left over.

The people were obviously amazed. So the next morning a group of people began looking for Jesus. When they found him in Capernaum, on the other side of the lake he said to them, **I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.** The people didn’t care who Jesus was or that his miracles proved that he was sent from God and is God. They looked for him because he got them free food. In verse 15 John tells us that Jesus left the crowd after he fed them because they wanted to force him to become their king—their bread king. If he was their king they could have all the food they wanted and they wouldn’t have to do a thing—they wouldn’t have to work or farm or tend any vineyards. And as we see too often today, the people love you if you can give them free things that allows you not to work! But there was a major problem with this—they didn’t want a Savior, they wanted a bread king! They were so focused on earthly things that they missed Christ. So Jesus tried to set their priorities straight, **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life.** Don’t worry about food or any earthly thing for that matter, nothing lasts—instead worry about the one thing that lasts forever.

He changed the subject from earthly things to spiritual things. But the people didn’t get it they asked, **What must we do to do the works God requires?** Pretty typical of us sinful humans—we think that there must be something we can do to save ourselves, that we contribute in one way or another to our salvation. They thought that by doing a certain amount of works they could impress the Lord so that they would be saved. But Jesus pointed out that there is only one work that leads to eternal life: **The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.** And notice that this work is the work of God—it is God who works and gives faith in the hearts of believers as he works through the gospel. In other words, there is nothing we do or can ever do that leads to eternal life. Eternal life is a gift given to us for free through faith—and faith too is a work of God that he graciously gives to us.

Prove it, they said. They told him to perform a miracle to prove that what he was saying was true—and they even had the audacity to suggest a miracle; they wanted him to give them bread. Moses had given the millions of Israelites manna, bread from heaven, six days a week for 40 years. Jesus only fed 5000 men plus women and children once. So if Jesus could give them bread like Moses, or more, than they would believe him.

It can be difficult to track the thoughts of Jesus and the crowd in this text, so perhaps it is good to give a quick summary. A group of people followed Jesus because he performed a miracle in feeding the 5000; Jesus told them that they cared more about eating free food than the actual miracle or Jesus himself, and that they should be concerned about eternal life, which is theirs through faith, a gift of God; and then finally in response they told Jesus to prove that what he was saying was true by giving them bread for a lifetime.

Do you see what the problem is? They were focused on earthly things—on getting free food. Jesus was trying to have a conversation with them about spiritual things, but all they cared about was earthly things. He was talking to them about faith in him and eternal life, but all they cared about was getting some free bread. Their priorities were all out of whack.

At times, our priorities may be the same way. As Christians we all know the first commandment and that the first commandment means that we always put God first in our lives—he is to be our top priority, that we love him above anything else.

Most of us aren't going to sit down and write out a list of our top priorities—but we all have an idea of what is important in our lives. But even if Christ is first in this list, it doesn't really matter. You can and should put him first in your list, but it is but it is how you live your life that shows your true priorities. And far too often, he is way down the list. Work, family, money, sleep, enjoyment, the huskers (or any other team for that matter), and so on often get placed ahead of God. "But I go to church every week" you say. "Good," I respond. "And I attend Bible Study too." "Even better," I say. But did you know that if you attended worship and Bible study every week—that is two hours a week dedicated to God and his Word—that is about 1% of your week. Is only 1% always putting God first in your life? We have been putting quarterly attendance reports in everyone's mail boxes for a few

years now. Not to make you feel guilty or to strong-arm you into worshiping more; but so that you may see it written out for you and you can decide for yourself. Does your worship attendance indicate that Christ is your top priority?

Now, of course, making the Lord and his Word your top priority doesn't mean that you constantly have to be worshiping him or reading the Bible. There are times when our life dictates that we miss worship on Sunday; so, how then, is Christ going to be your top priority the rest of the week? Are you going to read the Bible at home, listen to the sermon on the internet, or just not think about him till next week? Putting God first in your life means that you strive to always obey his Word—to do what is good and pleasing in his sight. It means that we continually ask ourselves, "is this pleasing to the Lord or does it anger him?" It means in all we do, we do it for the Lord; and seek to glorify him in all thoughts, words, and actions. Making God your top priority means that your heart and mind is first and foremost on him and his Word and his will before anything else—before your friends, family, job, money, fun, and so on.

But really these things may be a symptom of a bigger problem—a lack of love for Christ and his Word. What we do throughout our days really indicates where our heart lies. We become so attached to what we know and have, that Christ gets pushed further down the line. We often love the things of this world more than we love the Lord.

And so it is good to be reminded of who Christ is and what he has done for us. When we talked about Jesus' discussion with the people a little bit ago we skipped over some important words of Jesus, **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.** Jesus, the Son of Man, came for one reason—to give us the gift of eternal life. That is the work of Jesus, to bring us to heaven.

And how can Jesus do this? Because he is both God and man at the same time. The name Son of Man is a reference to Daniel chapter seven. And there is it clear that the Son of Man is also true God, for he is given God's power and honor!

Plus the Father put his seal on Jesus. Now, don't be misled by the NIV's translation here. Jesus isn't saying that the Father put his seal of approval on him (although he did at his baptism); rather the Greek

says that on Jesus God put his seal, or imprint. If a king or other high-end government official wanted to send a letter or something of the sort we would take his signet ring and seal it. So on that letter would carry the imprint of the king. God put his seal on Jesus—Jesus has the very imprint of God. Again Jesus was telling the crowds that he is God.

Then there are the miracles that Jesus performed. Only God is able to break the laws of nature which Jesus did again and again. The miracles proved that Jesus was sent from God or is God. The miracles point us to the words of the one doing the miracles, and he says he is God!

And why did God come down from heaven? In his conversation with the people about the manna the Israelites were given in the wilderness Jesus said, **The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.** Jesus is true God, but he came down to earth to be born of a woman—to be both true God and true man at the same time so that he could be under the law yet keep it perfectly and give that perfect life to us. So that he could serve as our substitute as he suffered and died in our place. Jesus did this for the whole world. He suffered, died, and rose for the whole world—for everyone. And then he rose from the dead to assure us of our own eternal life.

And it is faith that receives the blessings that Christ won for us. Faith, as you remember, is a work of God that he gives to us through the gospel. So there is nothing we do or can do to be saved, Jesus did it all for us. Jesus is the bread sent from heaven who gives eternal life to the world.

And as Jesus said, **I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.** Jesus, of course, is not talking about earthly bread; he is not saying that you will never be physically hungry or thirsty again. No, Jesus is concerned about our spiritual needs. Those who believe in him, those who feed on him and his word will remain satisfied. For all your spiritual needs are taken care of. There is no doubt or where you'll be, no fear of what your sins will lead to, no questions about where you stand before the Lord. Your sins have been removed and as a redeemed child of God you know that you'll live with the Lord forever in heaven. Completely satisfied, you live your life for Christ.

Everything in this world perishes, except Christ, his Word, and the eternal life that he gives to us. And so we strive to follow the command Jesus gives us in 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.**

We all have different priorities in our lives. For us as Christians, Christ comes first—in everything we do. The Lord of heaven and his Word is our top priority. So we show our love for God and his Word by worshiping him, by being in Bible Study, by reading our Bibles at home, and by striving to always obey his will. And when we fail we remember why Christ came down to this earth to save us and give us eternal life. Amen.