

The Bread That Feeds The Soul

What bread is to hunger, Jesus is to the soul. Travel to almost any country and sit in any restaurant and they will have bread. If the rich have everything, they still have bread. Bread is not a regional food nor a national dish. No country claims to be the exclusive source of bread. It may be in the form of a tortilla in Mexico or a bagel in New York, but bread is available everywhere. So is Christ. He is not limited by boundaries. No country claims him. No region owns him. No nation monopolizes him. He is everywhere at the same time. He is universally available.

Bread is eaten daily. Some fruits are available only in season. Some drinks are made only at holidays. Not so with bread. And not so with Jesus. He should be brought to our table every day. We let him nourish our hearts, not just in certain months or on special occasions, but daily.

Bread is served in many forms. It is toasted, jellied, buttered, flattened, and grilled. It can be a sandwich, sweet roll, hot-dog bun, croissant, or biscuit. Bread can meet many needs. So can Jesus. He adapts himself to meet our needs. He has a word for the lonely as well as for the popular. He has help for the physically ill and the emotionally ill. If your vision is clear, he can help you. If your vision is cloudy, he can help you. Jesus can meet each need.

Can you see why Jesus called himself the bread of life (John 6:35)?

I can think of one other similarity. Consider how bread is made. Think about the process. Wheat grows in the field, then it is cut down, winnowed, and ground into flour. It passes through the fire of the oven and is then distributed around the world. Only by this process is bread made. Each step is essential. Eliminate the plant, and you have no wheat. Eliminate the winnowing, and you have no flour. Eliminate the fire, and you have no product. Eliminate the distribution and you have no satisfaction. Each step is

essential.

Now consider Jesus. He grew up as a "small plant before the Lord" (Isaiah 53:2). One of millions of boys on the planet. One of thousands in Israel. One of dozens in Nazareth. Indistinguishable from the person down the street or the child in the next chair. Had you seen him as a youngster, you wouldn't have thought he was the Son of God. You might have thought him polite or courteous or diligent, but God on Earth? No way! He was just a boy. One of hundreds. Like a staff of wheat in the wheat field.

But like wheat, he was cut down. Like chaff he was pounded and beaten. "He was wounded for the wrong we did; he was crushed for the evil we did." (Isaiah 53:5). And like bread he passed through the fire. On the cross he passed through the fire, not because of his sin, but because of ours. "The Lord has put on him the punishment for all the evil we have done" (Isaiah 53:6).

Jesus experienced each part of the process of making bread; the growing, the pounding, the firing. And just as each is necessary for bread, each was also necessary for Christ to become the bread of life. "The Christ must suffer these things before he enters his glory" (Luke 24:26).

The next part of the process, the distribution, Christ leaves with us. We are the distributors. We can't force people to eat the bread, but we can make sure they have it. Yet, for some reason, we are reluctant to do so. It is much easier to stay in the bakery than to get into the truck.

Are you doing your part in the process?

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