

**SERMON Jesus – the Bread of Life**

**John chap 6 v 5-13, 32-35**

**March**

Rwanda rolling power point + music (from CD) **Simon** from about **18.20**

**1 Steve – intro**

**2 Relevant worship songs (3?)**

**3 Reading of passage (by ?)**

**4 Sermon**

**PP1**

In evening series so far we have looked at:

**PP2**

- Jesus as the **Light**
- Jesus as the **Shepherd**
- Jesus as the **Way**

This evening we are looking at Jesus as the **Bread**. Bread is nourishing, a basic food – was now and certainly was in Palestine at the time of Christ.

This evening's sermon will be a bit different from the usual Sunday evening ones as although we are focussing on a Bible passage:

- there will be a number of people speaking apart from me and
- I want to look at this in the context of the end of this week focusing on Global Poverty and build on Steve's sermon last Sunday morning on "*Hope for the Poor*" and we want to link the passages read with some feedback and thoughts about this Church's link with Rwanda. There is so much in this passage (Feeding of the Multitude/5000) that we can only take a slice of it (of the bread!)

Dangers in over familiarity with parts of the Bible and this is certainly one such passage – one of first we read and hear about, perhaps when we were children. Strong visual image for us – feeding 5,000 (Heads of households – men so probably much bigger number) with just 5 small barley loaves and 2 small fishes.

The only miracle mentioned in all 4 Gospels (**Matthew Chap 14 v 13, Mark Chap 6, Luke Chap 9**). Clearly stands out in John's mind as he gives details others do not:

- which disciple replied to Jesus' question "*Where shall we buy bread for these people?*"- Philip (**v5**)
- Recalls it was a boy who gave the food (**v9**)

Why did Jesus ask Philip? If anyone would know where food would be it was Philip as he was from Bethsaida - a town about 9 miles away. Jesus was **testing** his faith by asking for a human solution knowing there was none. So emphasises the powerful and miraculous act He is about to do.

**V 5-7** When Jesus asked Philip where he could buy bread he wanted to teach him financial resources are not the most important ones. We can limit what God does by assuming what IS and IS NOT possible. God can do the miraculous – trust Him to provide resources.

The link between the first verses (**v 5-13**) and second part of reading (**v 32-35**)

- **First about physical needs**
- **Second about spiritual needs**
- ❖ **Bread for body**
- ❖ **Bread for life**
- **Bread for now**
- **Bread forever**

**What can we learn from this?**

**Lesson 1: We should never assess a difficulty in the light of our own resources as the disciples did on this occasion. Hand it over to God and He will work miracles in our lives just as boy did**

### **PP3**

**V6-8** Contrast the disciples with young boy. They certainly had more resources than the boy but they knew they were inadequate. The boy gave all he had and it made all the difference. If we offer nothing to God, He has nothing to use. If we offer Him what little we have, He can turn it into something great.

We can have little and it will remain little as long as we keep it. But if we have little and give it to God--God multiplies it.

**V 8/9** Jesus generally worked miracles through people. We are never too young (or old) to be of service

**V13** The lesson of leftovers! 12 baskets! Not only does God give but God gives in abundance. He takes whatever we offer- time/ability/resources and multiplies its effectiveness beyond our wildest dreams

### **SO WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH US?**

**We should not limit OUR achievements by OUR limited ambitions. Jesus' miracles are generally to do with social action – healing, hunger, physical and psychological damage, social justice. As Christians Jesus can work miracles**

through us in the same way if we just place our meagre talents and possessions in his hands. And He gives abundantly – there will be leftovers.

**Lesson 2: Every difficulty (physical or spiritual) is allowed or given by God to enrich and enlarge us. He uses them to develop us.**

#### PP4

**V 35** Bread is for physical hunger to sustain our physical life. Jesus is the bread of Life.

We need a right relationship with God (through Jesus) to satisfy our spiritual hunger and sustain our spiritual life. We do have a choice. Paradoxically, it is by laying down His own life that Jesus is able to give us life forever. To receive this we must accept His sacrifice. At the Last Supper, Jesus gives a visible expression to this same truth (**M 26 v26-28**)

**Lesson 2: Every difficulty is allowed or given by God to enrich and enlarge us. He uses them to develop us.**

#### **SO WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH US?**

**No matter how hard we need to see life's problems/ challenges/ difficulties as opportunities for spiritual growth. I can tell you and many of the members of this church can tell you that, although it is painful and horrible at the time, when life gets tough is the time when you learn most about yourself and you learn most about your faith. It is when you and it is tested that you and it become stronger. When we are weakest we become stronger. 2 Corinthians 12 v 10**

**Lesson 3: Jesus alone can truly satisfy us – physically and spiritually - but we have to seek him.**

#### PP5

**V 27** “Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life”. If we ask it will be given to us, if we seek, we will find, if we knock the door will open. (**Matthew Chap 7 v 7**) ref Steve’s sermon 2 weeks ago in the morning. **John chap 6 V30** the crowd who had followed him after the Feeding of the 5,000 asked for more miracles so that they could believe. He refused. Miracles are not proof. It is Jesus whole life that is proof that He was the Son of God. – what He **did**, what He **said**, How he **lived**. He is the bread of Life (**v 35**).

Miracles were not proof, they were a demonstration. If miracles were supposed to be proof that Jesus was the Son of God, He could have done a much better job than just feeding 5,000 with bread and fish. He could have provided a banquet with wine.

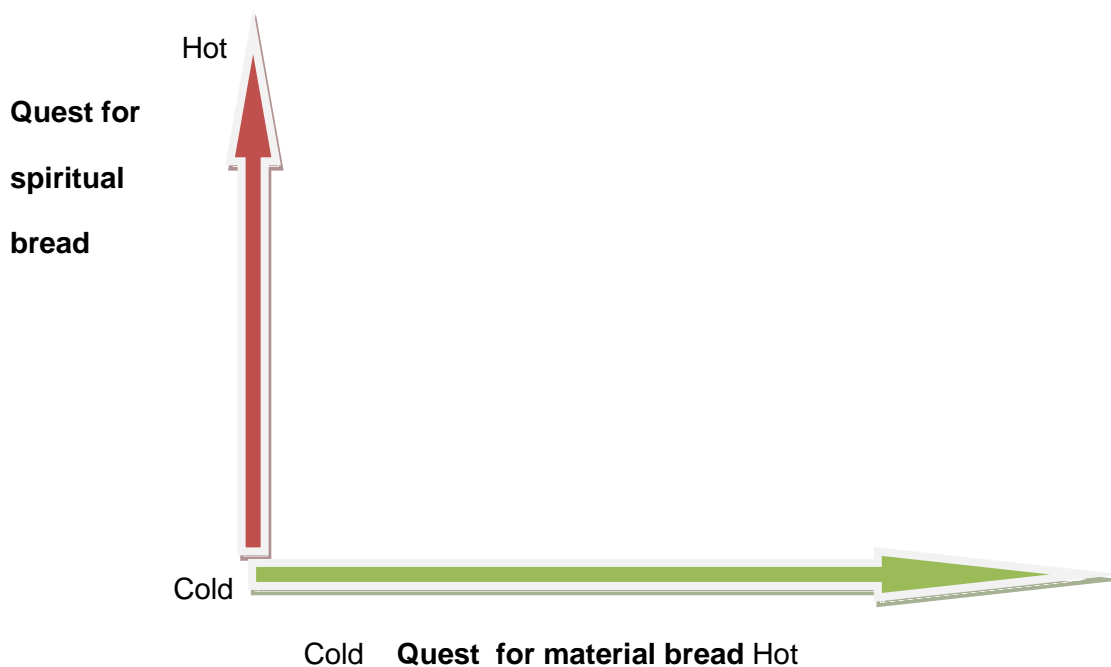
Fruit, meat even ice cream! . He could have flown on celestial wings to the Coliseum in Rome and wiped out all the gladiators and zapped the lions to show His power.

Miracles were not proof, they were a demonstration. Miracles that happen in our lives are not proof, they are a demonstration that Jesus truly is the bread of life.

(v35) *"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"*. But you have to believe and follow. Look at verse **41 + 42** (jumping ahead). This was tough teaching (v **66**).many disciples turned away

So where are we in OUR lives? Are we on a quest for money (bread) and material satisfaction or are we on a quest for enriched spiritual life – the bread of life? They are not mutually exclusive. We usually need to put food in our bellies to be in a position to grow our beliefs. We need to take care of our basic needs in order to be able usually to engage with God. But our priorities need to lie with God.

### PP6



**Lesson 3: Jesus alone can truly satisfy us – physically and spiritually but we have to seek him**

**SO WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH US?**

(PTW)

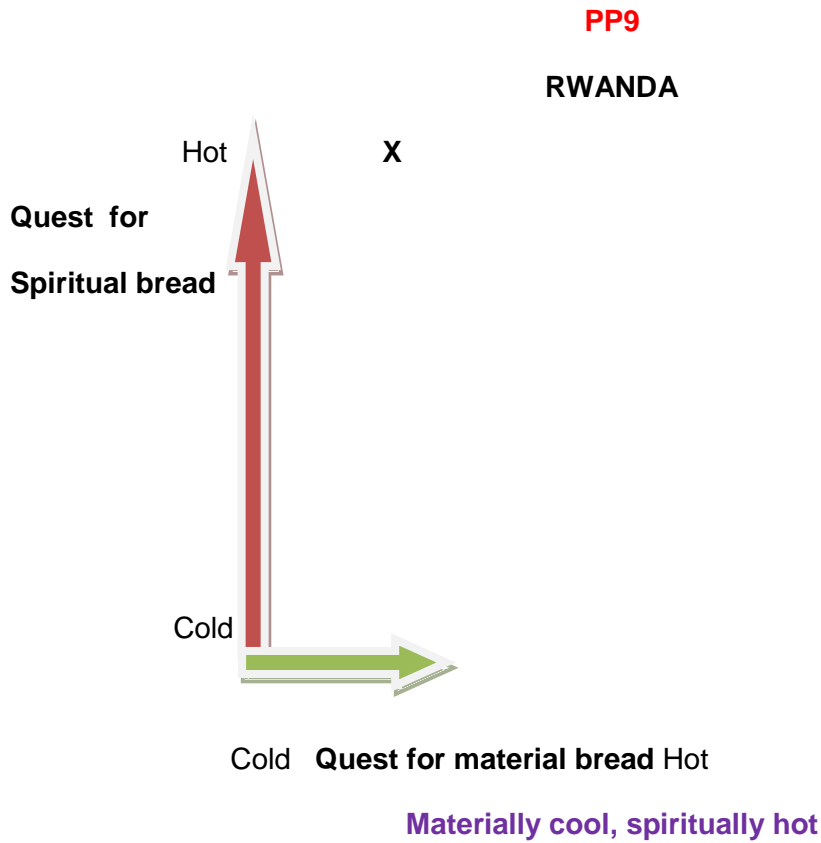
**PP7****PRAY - constantly****TRUST – like a child****WATCH – for God at work in our lives – pleasantly, amazingly surprised****Use a Prayer Journal – write what you pray for and record events that happen in your life. May not be what we expect but He will change things for the better****REF ALI & FRITHA PRAYER VIGIL****Mary Hempshall's thoughts about the significance of the passage in her life (90 seconds)****This is an incredibly rich passage and it may be familiar but there is always something new to learn from it about our faith.****Let's move to RWANDA**

Rwanda- a small very poor country in the middle of Africa that has had a recent tragic history with the inter-tribal genocide when 1 million killed in 100 days. Time of Christ in Middle East must have been similar to Rwanda today- hand to mouth existence. Food- simple and important

Having been there on 3 occasions in the last 4 years an abiding thought I have is the contrast between the way Christianity plays out in people's lives there compared to here.

**PP8****ENGLAND**

**Materially hot, spiritually cool**



**We live horizontally, Rwandans are more vertical**

**WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE OF RWANDA ABOUT HOW TO LIVE OUR FAITH?**

**PP10**

**F**ORGIVENESS – Jonathan Lamb (90 seconds)

**A**LIVE (REAL) – Jan Parsons (90 seconds)

**I**NTEGRATED INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES- Coleen Jackson (90 seconds)

**T**RUST IN GOD – Jan Hoy (90 seconds)

**H**OLY WORSHIP – Jonathan Hunter (90 seconds)

**We have much to learn from others about how to live our Faith. For many in Rwanda, Jesus truly is the bread of life.**

Go home and think about these important issues;

- Where is the balance in YOUR life between the bread for YOUR body and the bread for YOUR eternal life? Are you living vertically or horizontally
- Do YOU rely on YOUR own resources to solve life's problems or do YOU hand them over to God along with whatever resources YOU have?
- Do YOU use challenging situations to learn more about YOURSELF and about YOUR faith?
- Do YOU truly know and believe that it is Jesus who can truly satisfy YOUR hunger?

**5 Testimonies (Steve)**

**Amy, Sarah?**

**6 prayers (?)**

**7 worship song (rousing)**

**8 presentation of Eric's carving to Steve (Gretchen)**

**9 Blessing (Steve)**

**Post- service**

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