

SESSION THREE

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:22-34

²² The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples in the boat, but only his disciples had left. ²³ Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks. ²⁴ When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. ²⁵ And when they found him across the sea they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” ²⁸ So they said to him, “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written:

‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ So they said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Small details to consider prior to prayer

- The crowds are confused as to where Jesus has gone after the miracle of the loaves. They go in search of him to the other side of the sea.
- When the crowd finds Jesus, he tells them that they are searching for him because they had been fed, not because they saw a miracle. They pursue Jesus for earthly reasons (a free meal) and not spiritual reasons.
- The crowds ask Jesus to perform another sign for them so that they may believe. They seem to imply that they wish Jesus to keep feeding them, as their fathers were fed for 40 straight years on the manna.
- Jesus corrects the crowds, saying that God provided the manna and not Moses. In addition, Jesus reveals to the crowds that God intends to give them the “true bread” from heaven.
- The crowds ask Jesus to provide this bread “always”, which is a greater miracle than the manna, which was provided for only 40 years.

Preparing to dialogue with Jesus...

- I will take a moment in silence to acknowledge that I am in God’s presence. He looks on me with love. He has planned for this time of prayer since before I was born and has prepared a special grace for me.
- I take a moment to become aware of what thoughts, feelings, desires, or questions arose in my heart as I read the selected scripture passage.
- I invoke the help of the Holy Spirit as I now enter into conversation with Jesus using the following questions as a starting point...

Questions to ask Jesus ...

- *Jesus, why didn't you reveal the miracle of your walking on water to the crowds? They asked you when you arrived on this side of the sea, but you did not answer their question.*
- *Jesus, I feel that I must work for food that perishes, otherwise I won't have my material needs met. Why do you instruct me to not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life?*
- *Jesus, what is the food that endures for eternal life, and how do you give it to me?*
- *Jesus, sometimes I feel that I need to ask you for a sign so that I may believe. What signs have you done for me that are meant to help me believe in you? Is it ok for me to ask you for signs in the future?*
- *What other questions arose in my heart or mind for Jesus after reading this section.....?*

Questions to imagine Jesus *asking me...*

- *My daughter/son, sometimes, like the crowd, you may be confused about where I have gone in the midst of your life. Are you willing to look for me or will you move on from me during those moments?*
- *My daughter/son, when you pray to me, are you more concerned about your earthly needs being met or your deeper, spiritual needs?*
- *My daughter/son, are you working more for the food that perishes or the food that I want to give you? What keeps you from working for the food that endures for eternal life?*
- *My daughter/son, do you believe in me? Do you believe the Father has sent me, put his seal upon me, anointed me to bring you glad tidings, to feed you, to lead you to your eternal home?*
- *My daughter/son, just as the crowds mistook the work of God and attributed it to Moses (v 32), so you too, at times, mistake the work of God and attribute it to chance or to humans. Do you believe that I am the one who provides for you?*
- *My daughter/son, will you ask me to provide for your needs and stop trying to provide for your own needs?*
- *What other question(s) can I imagine Jesus asking me in the context of this section?*

Concluding reflection questions to help capture the fruit of my prayer.

- What stood out to me from the scripture selection (word, phrase, verse, etc)?
- What question(s) moved me most in prayer? What thoughts, feelings, or desires arose in my heart as a result of that question(s)?
- What do I feel Jesus was saying to me in this prayer time?
- What do I feel Jesus is inviting me to do to act upon our conversation or the grace I received? *If I find this question difficult to answer, I will calmly put the question to Jesus and ask him to help me know how to proceed...*