

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “THE BREAD OF HEAVEN”

For individual study or group discussion

In 2005, *60 Minutes* aired an interview with Tom Brady, then quarterback of the New England Patriots. Brady was at the height of his career. He had won three Superbowl titles, two MVPs, had a supermodel for a wife, and was a multimillionaire. Reflecting on his life with journalist Steve Kroft, he asks, “*Why do I have three Superbowl rings and still think there’s something greater out there for me? I think it’s got to be more than this. I mean, this isn’t it? This can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be.*” Kroft asked, “*What’s the answer?*” Tom Brady responded, “*I wish I knew.*”<sup>1</sup>

After having their stomachs filled, the crowd pursues Jesus because they want more, not realizing that their souls are empty. In John 6:22–40, Jesus puts a spotlight on the human dilemma: We have a hunger we cannot satisfy. He presents himself as **The Bread of Heaven** and invites his listeners to stop working for the “*food that perishes*” (v. 27). Start feasting on him and be satisfied.

#### What we must not do (vv. 22–27)

The crowd’s pursuit of Jesus reveals a common human tendency: using God to resolve problems. Sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, in their 2005 landmark study on teenage spirituality, coined the term *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*. MTD describes the human tendency to assume it’s God’s job “*to solve our problems and make people feel good. In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps people feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process.*”<sup>2</sup> The crowd pursuing Christ mirrors this modern mindset. And he confronts their consumeristic faith by commanding them seek the food “*that endures to eternal life*” (v.27).

- Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. Humanity longs for eternal fulfillment, and often seeks it in earthly things—status, health, wealth—but none of these can satisfy the soul or reconcile us to God. How can only Christ fulfill our deepest longings? (cf. Psalm 16:11 and Revelation 7:16–17)
- What characterizes a wrong pursuit of Jesus, and what characterizes a right pursuit? (cf. Isaiah 55:1–7)

#### What we must do (vv. 28–33)

In verse 29, Jesus tells the crowd what they must do: “*Believe in him whom he has sent.*” Jesus is the true Bread from heaven, greater than the manna given in the wilderness. The manna sustained physical life temporarily but only Christ can offer eternal life and rescue from death. To come to Jesus in faith is to find the satisfaction our souls so desperately seek (Psalm 107:9).

- The crowd wanted to get in on whatever Jesus was doing, so they asked him how they could do the works of God. How does Jesus define this work in verse 29? What is the significance of Jesus’ claim in verse 32? What does it tell us about true faith and the way of salvation? (cf. Romans 10:9)

#### What only God can do (vv. 34–40)

The final section shifts the focus from human effort to the sovereign action of God. In the climax of the passage, Jesus identifies himself as “*The bread of life*” (v. 35). He is the only one ultimately capable of satisfying the human soul so that it never hungers or thirsts again. Jesus goes on to explain that it is the Father who effectually calls and eternally preserves all those who come to him. In his spiritual classic, *The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer points out “*that before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man.*”<sup>3</sup> Tozer adds, “*We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit.*”<sup>4</sup> God’s irresistible grace culminates in Jesus’ promise to gloriously raise every believer on the Last Day. In the *Bread of Life* discourse, Jesus makes it abundantly clear that while we must believe, it is God who provides, sustains, and perfects our salvation.

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. What great exchange took place on the cross?
- How do Jesus’ statements in vv. 35–40 encourage you in regard to your eternal security?
- What does Jesus claim about the nature of salvation in verses 37 and 39? Read Hebrews 7:22–28. How can Jesus make these guarantees?
- Read John 6:51 and Isaiah 55:1. Next time you take communion, do it with these texts in mind. As you remind yourself of these truths, thank God that by accepting the *Bread of Heaven*, you have hope eternally.

DATE: May 17, 2026

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 6:22–40

## Family Dinner Table

### Why Me?

The following reflection by R.C. Sproul explores the mystery of sovereign election: “*The deepest theological question that I can think of, the one for which I have no adequate answer, is the question, ‘Why me?’*”

*My students come to me with all kinds of conundrums from theology, but they rarely ask, ‘Why did God save me?’ It sometimes seems as if we’re thinking: ‘Why wouldn’t He save me?’ Yes, we have little aphorisms such as, ‘There, but for the grace of God, go I.’ Do we really believe that? Are we really amazed by the measure of grace God has poured out on us? Can we say with John, ‘Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!’ (1 John 3:1). I cannot give a single reason under heaven why God would save me other than, as the prophet Isaiah said, that the Suffering Servant of Israel should see the travail of His soul and be satisfied—that God has determined to honor His Son by giving Him adopted brothers and sisters (Isa. 53:11). In the final analysis, the only reason I am a Christian is that the Father wants to honor the Son. From all eternity, He determined that the Son’s work would not be in vain and that He would be the firstborn of many brethren. Therefore, He determined not just to make salvation possible and then step back and cross His fingers, hoping that somebody would take advantage of the ministry of Jesus. No, God the Father, from all eternity, determined to make salvation certain for those whom He had determined to give to His Son.”<sup>5</sup>*

- Read Ephesians 2:4–10. If our salvation is a gift from the Father to the Son, how does Paul’s description of us as God’s “*workmanship*” (v. 10) change the way we view our purpose?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Hope for the Inner City, supported ministry partner

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Ender P., supported missionary partner

<sup>1</sup>SuperBowl 2010: 60 Minutes Looks Back at Tom Brady in 2005, June 30, 2010, CBSNews.com. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/super-bowl-2010-looking-back-at-tom-brady-in-2005-60-minutes/>

<sup>2</sup>Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 2005, Oxford University Press, 165

<sup>3</sup>A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, 1993, Christian Publications, Inc. 11

<sup>5</sup>R.C. Sproul, *John: An Expository Commentary*, 2009, Reformation Trust Publishing, 113–119.