

BRMC Small Group Study: John 6:22-59

Leaders Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

Leader's Notes:

Context:

In the previous study, Jesus has walked on water amidst a storm to get to the disciples. The crowd who Jesus had fed with the miraculous sign of multiplying bread and fish is looking for him and his disciples. Here, they go to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

Lesson Objectives:

1. To understand that there are two types of providence. Physical bread that spoils, and Jesus Christ, the true bread of life that endures.
2. To know that those who have faith in Jesus will have eternal life and be raised up at the last day.
3. To let faith and belief in Jesus be the chief work of our lives as a small group.

Observation

1. What was the first interaction Jesus had with the crowd?

- (John 6:25-27) Crowd: "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus: "You are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. [For] On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

- The NIV omits the conjunction 'for' (gar) and so fails to make clear that it is because God has placed his seal of approval on him that Jesus can provide the food that endures to eternal life. It was, probably, by the bestowal of the Spirit at his baptism that the Father placed his seal of approval upon Jesus.

2. What was the second interaction Jesus had with the crowd?

- (John 6:28-29) Crowd: "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

3. What was the third interaction Jesus had with the crowd?

- (John 6:30-35) Crowd: "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

Sir... from now on give us this bread."

Jesus: "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. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

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."

4. What was the response of the Jews to Jesus' claim that he was the bread of life?

- (John 6:41-42) At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

5. What is Jesus' response to the Jews' dispute?

- (John 6:54-58) Jesus: "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died."

Interpretation

6. Give some possible expectations the crowd and the Jews had of Jesus.

- Like God fed them in the past through Moses with manna in the desert for forty years, the crowd and the Jews wanted miraculous food from Jesus like he had done for them with the five loaves and two fish. They were looking for a leader would bring them out of political bondage from the Romans. A leader like Moses who brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

7. Explain what is the work of God that Jesus speaks of.

- The work of God is to believe in Jesus, who is the one sent by God.

- This involves feeding on Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood through faith. Feeding on flesh and drinking blood is not literal. It is a metaphor for "[looking] to the Son and believing in him" (v. 40 & v. 54).

- Jesus was explaining that in the case of Moses and manna, the Jews ate the manna but still died (v. 58). However, one who eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Jesus will not die, but live forever.

- Looking to the Son and believing in him is the criteria for doing the work of God. This involves trusting in the work of Jesus, including his death and resurrection on the cross that gives us life everlasting.

8. What are some reasons the Jews responded with unbelief to Jesus' claim "I am the bread that came down from heaven." (v. 41)?

- Jesus said: "I have come from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." (v. 38). The Jews could not accept that Jesus came from heaven because they knew his earthly family. Also, no prophet, even the most eminent, claimed to have come down from heaven.

- *The Jews said: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (v. 42). The Jews thought that they knew where Jesus had come from.*
- *They were relying on earthly understanding that could only conclude that Jesus was the son of Joseph.*

Application

The repeated motif in this study is that of the bread of life against the bread that spoils.

9. How can you and your small group let faith and belief in Jesus be the chief work of your life?

- *This week, try to put your faith in Jesus as the bread of life instead of putting your faith in physical comforts, pleasures and material wealth.*

10. How can you share the Bread of life in your community?

- *Living by faith and expressing your life of faith.*

- *e.g. A crisis in the workplace, your finances, or your family.*