

## **The Bread of Life**

**By Pastor Russ Gaar**

*Evangelical Free Church, Grant*

Are you hungry? I'm not asking if you're hungry for supper, or for your favorite meal. I'm asking if you're hungry (meaning...you haven't eaten for a day or more?) Much of the world lives in hunger. Day to day, they work hard to find food that might satisfy their hunger. In the affluent United States, we know very little of this kind of hunger. But there is a hunger we all know something about; it is spiritual hunger.

In John 6:35, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." I love bread, but it's not something I have to think about much. We are blessed to have a great grocery store in Grant where I can go and get bread whenever I want. We have several places to eat in town, where almost every meal comes with some form of bread. I have a sandwich nearly every day for lunch. Bread is always available. I can't think of any time in my life where not having bread was a concern. In Jesus' day, however, things were different.

In Jesus' day, bread was the (the) staple food. It wasn't cherished simply because people loved it; it was actually needed in order to survive! Bread wasn't added to other food to make it more palatable. More often than not, bread was all you had! If you don't have bread, you go hungry! In the ancient world, people without bread would often die of starvation! Here's the point: If you don't have bread, you don't have life!

When Jesus says "I am the bread of life!"—He's claiming to be more than just some bread added to a meal to make the meat dish more appetizing. Jesus is not claiming to be an optional side dish that accompanies the real meat of life. Jesus is claiming to be the main meal!

Without bread, you don't live. Without Jesus, you don't live! Bread (for the ancient Israelite) kept them going physically. Jesus (the Bread of Life) promises to keep us going spiritually! Without Jesus, there is no spiritual life! This is stunning to think about. Jesus is claiming to be the staple that we need in order to really live life. Without the Bread of Life, there is no spiritual, eternal life!

So, let me ask again: Are you hungry? Are you spiritually hungry? Jesus, claiming to be "the Bread of Life," is claiming to be more than just a dispenser of bread. He is not merely a dispenser of spiritual life. Jesus is claiming that He himself is the bread we need to live on! Jesus is offering himself! Whatever your issues or sins or struggles, Jesus offers himself to satisfy your hunger! Anyone who comes to him will find fullness and fulfillment and eternal life. Notice the invitation in Jesus' words: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Jesus invites "whoever" to come to Him and to believe in Him and find spiritual fulfillment. If you don't, you will starve and you will die! Jesus' words offer hope to the hungry (to the starving). Are you hungry? Go to Jesus; He is the Bread of Life!

