



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 6:1-14

"The Feeding of the 15,000"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture this morning is from John chapter 6 and we're reading verse 1 through verse 14. And if you have your New Testaments or your Bibles please turn with me to the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. I have always been, I must say, a little embarrassed by Mr. Prier's comment that we teach the Bible in a systematic way at Believers Chapel because I really sometimes wonder if what I do is very systematic. But then when he explained that it means we begin at the first of the book and go through to the end I was greatly relieved because that is one of my soul claims to consistency and to systematic teaching. We do do that so in that sense I guess we are systematic.

In chapter 6 and verse 1 the apostle continues his great propaganda document seeking to bring men to the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in believing in him they might have life. This is the second of the signs. It's a very important one as we shall try to point out later on.

"After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee which is the see of Tiberius and a great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles which he did on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain and there he sat with his disciples and the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come unto him he said

unto Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?' And this he said to test him for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 'Two hundred denaries worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother saith unto him, 'There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?' And Jesus said, 'Make the men sit down.' Now, there was much grass in the place so the men sat down in number about five thousand and Jesus took the loaves and when he had given thanks he distributed to the disciples and the disciples to them that were sitting down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled he said unto his disciples gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost. Therefore, they gathered them together and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above that which they had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth, that prophet that should come into the world.'"

That last statement is a reference it seems to the great prophecy of the prophet to come that was given to Moses and which he writes about in the eighteenth chapter of his final book, the book of Deuteronomy. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

We're looking this morning at John chapter 6 verse 1 through verse 14 and our subject is "The Feeding of the 15,000". Yes, fifteen thousand rather than five thousand but we're not making a big issue over this. I do think that it probably would have been better entitled this way if one wanted to be completely "systematic". Because you see, according to the accounts there were five thousand men who were present. Matthew in the 14th chapter and the 21st verse of his Gospel uses the Greek word for man that distinguishes a man from a woman, that distinguishes a husband from a wife, that distinguishes a man from children. And so it is not the generic term "men" which word include women and children as well. But "men", that is masculine adults. If that is true in the light of the customs of the time the chances are that many of the wives were present and many of the children were present. We know of one little lad who was there with five barley loaves and two little fishes.

And so at a reasonable estimate there probably were at least fifteen thousand there and that's why we've entitled it "The Feeding of the 15,000. We're not trying to make any big issue over it but just to remind that there probably were more than five thousand people that were there.

It is the only miracle recorded in all four of the Gospels. We have an account of the feeding of the five thousand in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of John. It must therefore be a somewhat important miracle. Furthermore, it is the occasion of the first of our Lord's great "I am" statements.

In John 6 verse 35 when he is expounding some of the significance of the miracle that he has just performed we read, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." We shall see as we go through the Gospel of John that these great "I am" statements are built upon Exodus chapter 3 where Moses asks what is the name of the God who is bring him out of the Egypt, bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and bringing them into the Promise Land. And remember he received the answer, "I am who I am." There is no way in which the true God can give a definition of himself in the absolute since because the minute that we begin to define God we limit him because we must define him by human standards and he rejects that. He says simply, "I am who I am." He will not be defined by human standards.

He goes on to say, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." We may have a relational definition of God in the sense that he commits himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but no absolute definition of God is possible. Now, these statements in the Gospel of John, "I am the light of the world. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the bread of life." They are built on the statements of Exodus chapter 3. They are statement that carry the readers back to that great statement. And in the light of them and in the light of the things that John writes in his Gospel, in the light of the things the Lord says it's clear that he wants his readers to make the connection between the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, and the Lord Jesus Christ. So John chapter 6, the feeding of the five thousand is the occasion of some of the tremendous claims for deity and for divine revelation that the Lord Jesus made.

In the 20th Century and also in the latter part of the 19th Century there was quite an interest on the part of modern scholarship on the study of the historical Jesus. Students of the New Testament, students of theology were anxious to discover the historical Jesus. So many quests for the historical Jesus were inaugurated. We have one late in Bishop Pike who went out to the land of Palestine in order to discover the historical Jesus and perished in the deserts there. But one of the things that characterizes New Testament scholarship has been the interest in the historical Jesus, thinking that what we have in the New Testament is not really the historical Jesus and seeking to show that there is a historical Jesus laying back of the records of the New Testament. No one has ever been ever to reach a conclusion because of course the historical Jesus is found right here in the Scriptures, and there is no other place so authentic as the texts that are before us.

But some of the things that were said about the Lord were very interesting. For example, Renon called him after his search “the amiable carpenter.” Tolstoy spoke of him as a spiritual anarchist. Schweitzer spoke of him as the imminent cataclysmic. Joseph Clausner spoke of him as unorthodox rabbi. Otto spoke of him as charismatic evangelist. All of these were failures to understand the Lord Jesus Christ because they did not understand him as he is set forth in the historical records as very god of very god. William Temple who was the archbishop of Canterbury a few years back said some very interesting things about some of these things. He said at their worst the liberals scaled down the imperial mind of Christ to the level of a well-meaning Sunday school teacher. "The liberal Jesus," Archbishop Temple said, "is not nearly big enough to explain Christianity. Why any man should of troubled to crucify the Christ of liberal Protestantism," he said with some asperity, "has always been a mystery."

That's true. If our Lord is simply an amiable carpenter why were men so angry with him that they crucified him? If he was simply a spiritual anarchist why did they do that? We allow spiritual anarchists not only to be with us but enter into our Christian pulpits and proclaim from them.

The thing that distinguished the Lord Jesus Christ from all of these men is the fact that he said, "Ye must be born again." He said, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts." So our

Lord's opinion of human nature was such that he created antagonism in the minds of men because men do not like to be told that they cannot justify themselves. They like to think of themselves as being able to justify themselves by joining the church, by prayer, by what they think of as good works. Whereas, there is no good work that does not proceed out of faith in the true God and for the glory of the true God. They like to think that we might be justified by observing the ordinances, by joining a particular church and responding to their own sacramental system. But Jesus swept all of that aside and said, "Ye must be born again."

I understand why they crucified him. That creates tremendous enmity in hearts that are already at enmity with God. The mind of the flesh is at enmity with God. "It is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be," Paul says. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God, cannot, cannot, cannot please God. That's the message of New Testament Christianity.

There is a story which I have told here before. I hope that some of you maybe have not heard it. It is a story about C. K. Lee who was a native Christian leader in China. He was in this country some years ago and one Sunday he spoke in a modernistic church in California. At the conclusion of the message a young university student came to him and put to him this good question. "Why should we export Christianity to China when you have Confucianism in your country?" "There are three reasons," Mr. Lee said. "First of all Confucius was a teacher and Christ is a Savior. China needs a Savior more than she needs a teacher. In the second place Confucius is dead and Christ is living. China needs a living Savior. And in the third place Confucius someday is going to appear before Jesus Christ to be judged by him. China needs to know Christ as Savior before she meets him as judge."

Now, one thing I think becomes evident at we look at the account of the feeding of the fifteen thousand is this: that the Lord Jesus is more than man and no understanding of him that does not admit that can possibly be right.

Now, the text begins with a simple connective phrase "after these things". John does not tell us the precise historical context that went before the feeding of the men on the side of the Sea of

Galilee. The other Gospel writers do give us some of the details. What had happened immediately preceding was the slaughter of John the Baptist by Herod. At a feast the head of John the Baptist was brought to King Herod and so the beheading John the Baptist is in the immediately preceding context. And the other Gospel writers say that as a result of that event the Lord Jesus went out to be alone. That is what we are reading about here in verse 1, "After these things (that is after the beheading of John the Baptist) Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberius. He wanted to be alone." One thing you notice about our Lord is that he does withdraw himself from time to time in order to meditate, something that we've lost the art of in the 20th Century. We do not like to withdraw and to really mediate over spiritual things, but he considered the extremely important. He, the person who always lived in complete obedience knew the importance of finding the mind of God while as the mediator he carried out his work.

Well, he sought a quiet place and a few of the men were with him. But the word got out, "Jesus is going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee," and great multitudes came out from the cities round about in order meet him there. So here we've just had Herod's feast and now we are going to have the feast of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a different kind of feast we have in John chapter 6 from Herod's feast.

Herod's feast was a feast in which, well characteristic of it was the wine, the heavy air reeked with the fumes of the wine, and blood, and lust, and drunkenness, and murder. And on the other side on the side of the hill by the Sea of Galilee there was the cool evening breeze from the lake that played around the companies on the springing grass. The fair was course and wholesome. The eaters awed into some dim recognition of the giver and he himself was revealed as lovingly careful for the humblest needs. What a difference between the feast of Herod and the feast of the Lord Jesus Christ. The one that led from sumptuousness to sin and finally to divine wrath. The real feast was out on the mountainside where the Lord Jesus was with the disciples.

Now, the situation is described by John in the opening verse. We read, "After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberius and a great multitude followed him."

Incidentally, in this second verse the verbs are largely imperfect expressing durative action in past time so you can see the multitudes on the move out toward him because they were seeing the miracles which he was doing on those who were diseased. And so here were constant miracles being performed, a constant stream of people going out to him there and gathering round about him. The Lord Jesus had gone up on the side of the hill and there he sat with his disciples. And John adds a most important time reference. He says, "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near."

Now, that I take to be a significant fact because the Passover, among the many things that it signified was the fact that he was the true bread of God for when they sat down at the Passover feast and ate of the lamb and of the bread they were in effect saying that by feeding on the Lord Jesus Christ we are preserved from judgment and we have life.

Now, in this context in the message that follows the Lord Jesus will speak about the fact that he is the true bread out of heaven in verse 32. He will speak of the bread of God in verse 33. And then in verse 51 he will say, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." So here he is at the time of the Passover feast. The thought of that is on the minds of everyone. And he's now going to speak of himself as the manna as the one who fulfills the manna giving men more than that which they ate when they ate the mitzvah of the unleavened bread at the Passover meal. So all of this is very significant. Our Lord is performing this miracle of the feeding of the people at the time of the Passover. Now, I think that what he ultimately wants to show is that he is the one who will be the host at the great Messianic banquet of the future in the kingdom of God upon the earth when he will serve as the master of ceremonies and will feed the flock of God. So that's very important. That's laying in the background of this event. We'll have more to say about that when we deal with the walking on the water because there's certain things about the ceremony of the Passover that link him up, the one of whom the ceremony speaks, with walking on water and controlling the elements that are about us.

In the 5th verse we read, "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come unto him he saith unto Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?'" Now, there are some

things that John has omitted and I'll just mention them. Matthew said that when he saw the crowd coming he was filled with compassion. So the since of the compassion of our Lord as expressed in his healing of those who were sick is particularly singled out. And furthermore, in the Matthean account a slightly different question is given there that is not found here. It's Matthew chapter 14 and verse 16 and following. Jesus said unto them, "They need not depart. You give them to eat." You see, he had been asked about the food. So he said, "You give them to eat." I gather that he question to Philip probably was asked just after he arrived in the remote spot and that's when he said, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" because he wanted to test Philip. Later on after the healing he says some of the other things.

One might think, speaking humanly, when this great crowd came out to the Lord Jesus and he was anxious for quiet and meditation to think over the significance of John the Baptist death -- for remember our Lord began his messianic ministry when John was put in prison. That was the sign for him since John is the forerunner of the Messiah that it is time for his messianic ministry to begin. So when he heard that John had been thrown into prison he began to say, "Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." Now the news has come John has been beheaded and our Lord realizes now that his ministry is to be in full swing. And of course, the sense of the beheading of John creates no doubt over him his own human concern with respect for his future for he knew that his future was to involve a death. That's why in the Garden of Gethsemane he cries out, "Oh, my God, oh my Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

So the sense of his impending death comes upon him again when John the Baptist has his head taken off. He might have said of the crowd, "Now, I came here for rest. Go home." But Matthew says his heart went out for them. They longed for a shepherd and the true shepherd was he. He is the shepherd and in the manifestation of the compassion we see the true humanity of the Lord Jesus. He is God with a sigh, God with a tear on his face, God with all of the concern that we think of when we think of the human ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I think there is some other things we should just note here before we go on. You notice he takes the initiative in talking. It's just one of the many signs that it is God who moves to provide bread for us. And furthermore, when he takes the initiative and says to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" he seems to have certain knowledge of the fact that his own resources were ample for the needs. Just an indication of the self-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the question raises another question and that is, "Why did he ask Phillip where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" and said this simply to test him. Well, there is a truth that we must that we must recognize if we are to ever be blessed by God, and that question to Philip was designed to draw attention to it. It's simply this: that in order to appreciate the ability of Jesus Christ we have to come to understand our inability. It's impossible for us to truly appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ as a Savior until we have come to understand that we are sinners and that we stand under the judgment of God; every one of us, that we are guilty, that we are condemned, and that if a transformation does not take place if we are not born again we have no hope. And so one of the things that the spirit of God does in the hearts of men is to convince them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And one of the things in the lives of the saints that he must do is to bring them to such a sense of their inability that they will cling to him and to his ability for their salvation. And so that's what he would like for Philip to understand. "Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" And this he said to test him for he himself knew what he would do. Well, Philip is a modern man.

If Philip were here with us do you know with whom he would work? International business machines. He would be a computer specialist. He's a statistical pessimist someone has said. He's already figured out how much money it would take for everybody in this crowd to have just a little bit. He replied when our Lord said, "When shall we buy bread?" Why he said, "Two hundred denarius worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may have a little bit." I don't know what two hundred denarii would mean today. All kinds of speculation has taken place over it. If you read the commentaries that come out of Great Britain you will find them suggesting,

"Well, twenty pounds, forty pounds, eighty pounds." That is in money of that time. And in the United States they talk about dollars, and I guess in Mexico if there are some expositors of the word they'll talk about thousands of pesos. And we have only one clue that I know of and that is that our Lord tells a little parable in Matthew chapter 20. And he says in that parable that a working man's daily wage was one denarius in his illustration. So let's just assume that it is equivalent to one day's wage.

Now, I don't know what a daily worker's wage is. I'm a preacher. I don't work. [Laughter] But let's just assume it's anywhere from forty to sixty dollars a day; a working man's wage. I imagine that it at least meets the bottom line. And so what we're talking about is from eight thousand to twelve thousand dollars. So that's what Philip has already figured out. He would say, "Why Lord it will take from eight to twelve thousand dollars for everybody in this crowd to have just a little snack. So how is it possible for us to feed them?" Notice he doesn't really answer the question. The question is, "Where or whence shall we get the food." But he's too busy calculating to remember the true source of the solution to the problem.

In the Matthean account the Lord Jesus will say with reference to the food, "Bring it to me." Now he is the source. It doesn't make any difference how many thousands of dollars it might take. Why he is able to multiply. In fact, he is able to create for he is the all-creating Son of God himself. But he's too busy calculating to remember the true source. The true source is the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if Philip had had the faith that he had later on when Jesus said to him, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" he would have said, "We cannot buy bread to feed this crowd but you are able to do it for you are the bread of life."

Well, there's another one there and he's Andrew. And Andrew always seems to be in touch with people. I think Andrew would have made an excellent deacon. He always seems to be in touch with the crowd. "One of his disciples Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 'There's a lad here. He's got five barley loaves and two small fishes. But what are they among so many?'" Incidentally, that would seem to suggest the others came out in such hurry to be with the Lord that

they didn't have any food at all. That will have a lot to do with what we see later on when liberals begin to try to explain this miracle.

But Andrew has been in touch with this little boy and he notices that he has the five barley loaves. Incidentally, they were little hard flat loaves; not very large at all. And then he had two fishes which were probably cured. Most of the fishes were cured like this so what he had was what you would find on an ordure table. A little piece of bread or two and then a little fish, just enough for him to have a snack and that was all.

Now, I think there are couple of things suggested by this and I don't have time to expound them but simply to mention them. This, of course, is designed for us to enable us to realize our poverty. Our fitness is to recognize our unfitness. And when we are at the place where we recognize our unfitness to bring salvation to ourselves then we are fit for the reception of it from the Lord Jesus Christ. One other thing that Bible expositors have properly made out of this is that this little lad here did not have very much; just the five little flat loaves and two little fishes. But a little is a lot if God is in it because he's able to multiply what we have.

Well, the multiplication of the food is described in verse 10 through verse 13. And we read that Jesus said, "Make the men sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place so the men sat down in number about five thousand." What a magnificent miracle of grace abounding over unbelief. And the accompaniment of the miracle is most interesting. We are told that the Lord Jesus required everybody to sit down. He said, "Now, everybody sit down." I'm sure there were questions, "Why are we going to sit down? Why do we have to sit down?" "Well, we are going to be fed." "We're going to be fed?" "Yes, we're going to be fed. There's a little boy over here that has five little loaves and two little fishes. We're going to be fed." And so this vast multitude sits down. Now, if you don't think there were people who ridiculed this in this crowd then I don't think you understand crowd psychology. There were lots of people who ridiculed it, some perhaps who wouldn't even sit down. But our Lord had them all sit down just as if they were at a banquet. "It's

time now to sit down." And you look down on your plate and there's the ham and peas, but in this case not even that. [Laughter]

So everybody sits down. There is quietness. And the Lord Jesus takes the food that has been brought to him: the five little loaves, the two fishes, he could hold it all in his hands. And he lifts his voice toward God and he gives a word of thanks. This is an anticipation of the Messianic banquet with our Lord as the messianic king doing the miracles.

Then he began to distribute. Philip, Andrew, others who [were] there; he took the loaves and he gave them to them. And he kept doing it; the fish and the loaves. And finally he said, "I cannot hold it all in my hands." And so he put it down on a little table and he continued. And all the time that he is subtracting from the food he is multiplying the food. And when he winds up they had twelve baskets filled with the fragments of the five barley loaves that remained over and above that which they had eaten. Multiplication by his touch through the agency of the apostles.

Now, isn't it interesting? This is not even described. This is, it would seem to us, the most important thing. How did he do it? I would imagine a good magician would commit suicide after this. [Laughter] He couldn't figure out how in the world he was doing this. "Talking about taking rabbits out of a hat, if I could only learn that I wouldn't have to worry anymore at all," Simon the magician of the Book of Acts might have said. "They'll be calling me the great one if I could just figure out that. One of the Scottish commentators speaks of this as Omnific Omnipotence. Well, if we had his humanity stressed in his compassion, we have his deity stressed in his all-creating ability.

Now, one of the most amusing things about this entire account is to read the explanations of the modern students of the Bible. Explanations of men like William Barkley, explanations of other contemporary scholars; what do they say about this? Because after all, John seems to think that our Lord has multiplied the food by the power of God. Well some of the commentators, and this seems to be a very popular explanation, some of the commentators say that we are to understand this miracle as a kind of sacrament that actually each individual did not receive a lot of food. All he received was just a tiny little bit. And just as we observe the Lord's Supper, it just a little crumb so

everybody was able to get just a little crumb of the loaves and the fishes. Now, if there were fifteen thousand people that might raise a question about that just from a human standpoint.

But you'll notice that when they finished they have twelve baskets full of the fragments leftover. But we are told this is just the like the service of the Lord's Supper when the deacons come forward and they break of the bread and we each have just a little bit at the Lord's Supper. That's what this was. This was just one great sacrament. That's one explanation.

I would imagine that if you had been in something like that that the last thing that would have come to your mind was, "This is that prophet that should come into the world." There is nothing in that whatsoever that would create the impression that this individual who had performed that act was some great prophet. Well, a child could do something like that. But then there are other explanations. Another explanation is that really the people all had food. They would never have left their homes and gone out on the mountainside if they did not have food. And so they brought their food with them, but they were very selfish and no [one] would give those who had come without food any of their food. And so they kept their food in their boxes and bags until the Lord and his disciples began to share the little bit that they had with others. And everybody began to share and before they knew what was happened there was enough for everybody. And so the miracle was not the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, it was the transformation of selfish people into generous people at the touch of Christ. And so it was the miracle of the birth of love in grudging hearts.

Well, I want you to know that if that happened that way it was a miracle. [Laughter] And I don't know whether that miracle is not bigger than the other miracle. [Laughter] The miracle of love in grudging hearts. Now, do you think that when they finished something like that that they would say, "This is that great prophet that should come into the world." I don't think so. I think the interpretation of the crowd here, the crowd that was there, that a miracle so great had been performed that they were convinced that this must be the prophet that Moses had prophesied would come. That makes more sense to me. As many of have said, as I've often said, it takes far more faith to believe the explanations of the critics than the simple truth found in the word of God.

Well, what shall we say in conclusion? This is a miracle designed to show that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He has the right to sit on David's throne. He has demonstrated by the miracle that he has performed that he meets all of the qualifications of the Davidic Messiah and one day he shall serve at the messianic banquet where all of the people of God shall be. And then I think it's a beautiful lesson on the sufficiency of our Lord; his sufficiency for salvation.

There is a lot of illustrative power in what our Lord did here. Do you know how you make bread? Well, if you answer no you're in my condition. I don't know how to bake bread but I do certain things you have to do. The grain that grows in the field must be cut. I know that the grain must be bruised. I know that the grain must be baked, and that procedure illustrates suffering. And so when our Lord says, "I am the bread of God that cometh down from heaven," or "I am the bread of life," lying back of that is the process by which bread becomes bread. And our Lord Jesus becomes bread by virtue of the fact that he gives his life for us. So it is a lesson in the sufficiency of our Lord for salvation. In order for him to become bread he must be cut and bruised, and he also must be the recipient of the just work of God in punishment for sin -- what we might call the oven. He must be baked in the oven of the divine righteousness, executing penalty upon him for those for whom he dies.

But this also illustrates his sufficiency for the sustenance of life. In verse 56 we read, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. And so our Lord is the bread of life not only for salvation but the bread of life for daily life as well. All of our Christian life is bound up in right relationship to the Lord Jesus. You can take Plato's teaching and do what you like with Plato but you cannot take Christ's teachings and do as you like with Christ. His personality is the center of his gift to the world. "I am the bread of life." That he should give it is much but that he should be it is far more, and that is what he is.

Socrates and Plato held up their philosophies and said, "Consider these: Buddha and Mohammed enunciate their religious teaching and they said follow these." Jesus Christ said, "Follow me" What a magnificent claim that this.

Someone asked Irenaeus the early apologist of the 2nd Century, "Irenaeus, what has Christ brought that other religious leaders have not brought?" He said, "He brought himself." That's what makes our Lord different. He brought himself. It's not simply his teaching, significant as that is. But his teaching concerning himself and himself; he brought himself.

Well, how do we respond to this? Well, the text says they ate. Ate is the means of appropriation. That, I think, is the point of "they ate". Eating, he will go on to say in the sermon, is the same as coming. It's the same as believing. Listen, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that believeth on me shall never thirst." Coming, believing, eating. These are expressions of faith. Augustine said, *Crede et manducate*, believe and you have eaten."

Have you eaten? Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you sure that you have so partaken of him and his saving work that you can say, "I know I have eternal life." Are you assured of the fact that Christ has died for sinners? That you're a sinner and you've come in your heart and you've said, "Thank you Lord for dying for sinners. I'm a sinner. I receive the life that you give." Is that your experience? Do you know? Do you really have it?

I love that part of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in which he pictures himself before Simon Peter at the gates to Paradise and the words from Peter come to him, "Good Christian, speak and manifest thyself. What thing is faith?" Dante says as he describes his own response, he says, "Whereat I followed on and I said this, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the argument of things which are not seen, and this I take to be its essence.'" And then Peter replies, "Right well hath now been traversed this coin's alloy and weight. But tell me if thou hast it in thy purse?" And Dante answers, "Yea so bright and round, I have it that there is no perhaps in its impression."

Do you have it that way? Do you really know that you have come to faith in the Lord Jesus and in coming to faith in him you have life, and that there is no perhaps about it? That's what God would want you to do. Come to that place. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. In him is life and the life is the light of men. He that believeth on the son hath life. Remember? Got it. May God help you to respond. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words that the apostle has given us, an exposition of our Lord's ministry. How wonderful it would have been to have been there. How wonderful it is to be able to read the Scriptures and know that they are relevant to us today, and to be fed by our Lord in 1982. Those who partook of the bread and fishes do not have what we have for we may partake of him. O God, if there should be someone here who has never believed in the Lord Jesus give them no rest nor peace until they rest in him.

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]