The Bread of Life BY Malusi Skunyana

Read John 6:33-35, 47-51

JOHN 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

JOHN 6:34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

JOHN 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

JOHN 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

JOHN 6:48 I am that bread of life.

JOHN 6:49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

JOHN 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

JOHN 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

It is crucial to understand that the mission of Jesus involved more than just healing the sick and feeding the hungry. Jesus came to bring salvation to a perishing world. He came to seek and to save the lost. As the Bread of life, Jesus not only provides for physical needs but most importantly, He provides spiritual sustenance and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Reading John 6 forces all of us to examine our real reasons for following Jesus. Are we following because of Jesus’ miracles? Or are we following because it is fashionable to follow Jesus? The multitude that followed Jesus had to face the very same question. At the very beginning of the chapter, we learn that the multitude followed Jesus because they had witnessed or heard of His miracles. His fame had spread throughout Judaea and its surroundings. Indeed, at this time it was fashionable to follow Jesus. His next miracle as recorded by John in this chapter is the feeding of over 5000 people. John records in verse 15 that the people wanted to “come and take Him by force, to make Him a king.” But, to their surprise Jesus refused the kingly crown, He departed into the mountain alone.

On the next day, the people still sought after Jesus and could not find Him. No doubt, the multitude had increased incredibly due to the spread of the word about the feeding of over 5000 people the previous day. Jesus and His disciples had crossed over into Capernaum, and that is where the crowd finally found them. Finding Jesus, the people asked, “Rabbi, when did you come here, we were looking for you?” Jesus’ answer showed that He understood their motives; they sought Him only for temporal benefits. Jesus would set the record straight; He came to seek and to save that which was lost. This was His mission, and if they were hoping for material prosperity and an earthly kingdom, they misunderstood His mission.

When Jesus instructed the multitude not to labour for bread that perishes but for eternal life, they asked for a sign that they might “work the works of God.” They reminded Jesus that Moses gave their forefathers manna, and entreated Him to show them a sign that they might believe. Jesus pointed the people away from the bread that perishes, to Him – the Bread of life that abides forever. He unfolded His mission to the crowd; He was not a political messiah but a Saviour of lost sinners. Those who would follow Him needed to have faith in Him as a Saviour who would die that they might live. Jesus was the true Bread of heaven that gives eternal life. All who would believe in Him and accept Him as their Saviour would not perish but have eternal life.

Dear friend, the question comes to you today, Why do you follow or seek to follow Jesus? Are you following because you seek temporal benefits such as this world’s goods or do you seek eternal life which is found only in Jesus? Jesus cares for us and we can trust Him to provide for our physical needs, but it was to save us from sin and eternal loss that He gave His life for us. He came as a bread of life to give life to us who were condemned to death, and it is because He sacrificed His life that we have the hope of eternal life. Because of Jesus, we have hope for tomorrow. May you allow Him to live within your heart. God bless you! Amen!