

The people were following Jesus in droves and wanted to make him king
Jesus healed the sick
Just the day before he had fed a huge crowd of 5000 with only 5 barley loaves and 2 fish
The crowd had seen the disciples get in the boat and leave for Capernaum
But Jesus wasn't with them
The crowd waited for Jesus to come back, but it became evident that he was gone
and not coming back
So the crowd left for Capernaum
When they found Jesus there, they said, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"
Jesus answered, "*You've come looking for me
not because you saw God in my actions
but because I broke the bread and everyone ate*"
As usual he spoke to the heart of their question...
He tells them to believe
They ask for a sign hoping he'll feed them again—like manna from Moses
But that's not what following Jesus is about

All Jesus has to offer them is Himself—the bread that has come down from heaven
They keep asking for signs, failing to realize that He is the sign
...the miracle
...the One who has come down from heaven
...the true Bread from heaven

Just like the children of Israel complained in the wilderness
the people begin to complain when he talks about coming from heaven
They know his parents and grandparents! Jesus is from Nazareth, NOT heaven!

But Jesus isn't derailed
This bread from heaven is alive so it's even better than the manna their ancestors ate
The bread of heaven gives eternal life
like the living water Jesus offered the woman at the well
This bread and water satisfy for all eternity the deepest hunger and thirst of the soul

The crowd is disappointed, disgruntled, confused, and most of all, hungry
They have been grumbling like tired, hungry children
But rather than soothe the crowd, Jesus says that he is the bread
I am the Bread—living Bread! Jesus tells them it is his own flesh
Jesus' scandalous words reach our ears
having been filtered down through 2000 years of church history
But those who first heard Jesus' words were aghast
Now Jesus, who they had hoped would be their king...
was talking about eating his flesh?!?

John doesn't record the response of the mob, but he does tell us the reaction of Jesus' disciples
The disciples were a larger group of Jesus' followers, not just the 12
This is tough teaching, too tough to swallow
Jesus knew they were having a hard time
After this a lot of his disciples left—it was just too hard

Jesus gave the same chance to the 12
Do you also want to leave?
Peter said, but where would we go?
You have the words of real life, eternal life.
We're committed to you
We are confident that you are the Holy One of God
To which Jesus said, I chose you, I handpicked you

The Spirit-words are life-making...
*I am the Bread of Life. The person who aligns with me hungers no more
and thirsts no more, ever... Anyone who sees the Son and trusts who he
is and what he does and then aligns with him will enter real life, eternal
life. John 6:35, 40 The Message*

As I reflected on this passage—I thought about the words we sang earlier...

*Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord,
Broken and shared, life for the world.
Let us be wine, love freely poured.
Let us be one in the Lord*

*See how my people have nothing to eat.
Give them the bread that is you.*

How is it that we translate Jesus' words, "I am the bread of life" to those who have nothing to eat?

The issue of homelessness is rampant in Seattle—and growing daily
Even those who have a place to live, find it hard to afford life in Seattle
Not only have rents and housing gone up, but the cost of living has risen dramatically

People today are clamoring for answers—for help—just as they were in Jesus' day

It is easy to be critical of the crowds that pushed for signs
Yet, we want signs that someone is tending to the homeless
Those in desperate need want signs that help will come

Spiritual answers seem hollow and inadequate
People walk away, looking for something tangible instead

It is a paradox as we are called to something beyond the physical—to a spiritual life

In that we find that Jesus is bread—that in knowing God we find sustenance
We find the strength to face each day
We find the nourishment of hope
We find life!

Yet we have physical needs as well and it is hard to receive spiritual answers when hungry

I think the answer is in the words of the song...

Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord, broken and shared, life for the world.
It is as we allow God to bless us and in the breaking and sharing that we become life
We trust God for the Leadings—we are willing to be broken and shared to give life