

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 6:22-35

JESUS IS OUR BREAD



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

I have an eating disorder....and so do you. We all do to one degree or another. Every single person alive has an eating disorder. I'm going to prove that to you today but I also want to share the cure with you. We begin by distinguishing between appetite and hunger.

Appetite is a person's general desire to eat food and dictates how much food we want to eat as well as the type of food we feel like eating. **Hunger** is our body's biological response to a lack of food. It occurs when the body recognizes that it needs more food and sends a signal to the brain to eat. Eating disorders usually result from disorders of appetite or hunger or both. For example:

- Someone has an appetite even when their body lacks signs of hunger (leading to over-eating)
- Someone lacks an appetite even when their body has signs of hunger (leading to under-eating)
- Someone lacks both appetite and hunger (again leading to under-eating)

Hunger is largely physiological but appetite is affected by many factors: physical, social, sensory, cultural, cognitive, habitual, geographical, economic, historical, etc.

A healthy and balanced appetite and hunger is a gift of God. It means everything is combining to give us reasonable and appropriate desires and cravings for food and a satisfaction with it. Only Adam and Eve experienced that, and only before the fall of humanity into sin. After that, every human being has suffered with disordered eating of one kind or another.

However, as with every part of God's curse, this part is also ultimately intended to be a blessing as it sends us to God for healing, not just physical but spiritual healing. In John 6:22-35, we see Jesus addressing and curing disordered eating. He basically says to everyone, "You have an eating disorder that I alone can cure." **What is Jesus' cure for our eating disorder?**

NB: Like all mental health problems, not all eating disorders are only the result of personal sin. They can be in whole or in part a physiological or biological problem.

BACKGROUND

- Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-2)
- Jesus is our Creator (1:3)
- Jesus is our Light and Life (1:4-9)
- Jesus is our Big Brother (1:10-13)
- Jesus is our Tabernacle (1:14-17).
- Jesus is our Preacher (1:18)
- Jesus is the Messiah (1:19-28)
- Jesus is our Sacrifice (1:29)
- Jesus is our Rabbi (1:35-46)
- Jesus is our Ladder (1:46-51)
- Jesus is our Wine (2:1-12)
- Jesus is our Temple (2:13-21)
- Jesus is our Midwife (John 3:1-8)
- Jesus is our Vaccine (John 3:9-15)
- Jesus is our Gift (John 3:16)
- Jesus is our Acquittal (John 3:17-18)
- Jesus is our Expose (John 3:19-21)
- Jesus is our Bridegroom (John 3:22-30)
- Jesus is our Witness (John 3:31-26)
- Jesus is our Water (John 4:1-45)
- Jesus is our Wonder (John 4:46-53)
- Jesus is our Doctor (John 5:1-16)
- Jesus is our Judge (John 5:17-30)
- Jesus is our Bible (John 5:31-47)
- Jesus is our Multiplier (John 6:1-15)
- Jesus is our Peace (John 6:16-21)
- Jesus is our Bread (John 6:22-35)



What eating disorder do I have?



1. JESUS RE-ORDERS OUR PRIORITIES (26-27)

The day after the 'Feeding of the 5,000' the crowd searched for Jesus, eventually located him across the lake in Capernaum, and asked how he'd got there (22-25).

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal" (26-27).

They prioritized the physical and temporary

The crowd's priority was food for their bodies, and viewed Jesus primarily as someone who could fill their bellies. Hence his solemn rebuke: "**Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves**" (26). It wasn't even his miraculous signs they wanted to see; they just wanted food. It wasn't "Fill our eyes with your miracles, but fill our stomachs with food." Their whole day was filled with food-finding, prompting Jesus to say, "**Do not work for the food that perishes**" (27). Jesus was not forbidding working in order to get money for food to live, but making life all about that and primarily about that. Why? Because it doesn't last. Our health doesn't last, our working ability doesn't last, our money doesn't last, our food doesn't last, our being filled doesn't last.

Jesus prioritizes the spiritual and eternal

Jesus reverses their priorities: "**Work...for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal**" (27). Make spiritual food your greatest concern, focus, passion. Why? Because it lasts; it lasts longer than physical food, it lasts longer than life itself, and lasts even into eternity. It is non-perishable. It has no expiry date. Get your greatest satisfaction from Jesus. Jesus was telling the crowd, "Seek me by all means but seek me for the right reasons. I'm not here primarily to satisfy your bodily appetites but your spiritual appetite. God the Father has made clear that I am his way of filling up hungry humanity."

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Let's admit our disordered priorities. "I confess that I have disordered appetites, that I prioritize my body over my soul, physical food over spiritual food, the temporary over the eternal. I try to satisfy my spiritual needs with sensual pleasures and it leaves me spiritually anorexic or obese. I confess that I spend an hour thinking about bodily needs for every minute on spiritual needs (Deut. 8:3).

Let's get our priorities from Jesus. Jesus can re-order our appetites and therefore our priorities. He can give us healthy appetites and satisfy them with imperishable food. Just as our body is composed of what we put into it, so our soul can be re-constituted by changing our inputs. Jesus can change what we desire and how much we desire. He can take away or give control over harmful desires as well as give us new healthy desires.

DISORDERED SPIRIT
DISORDERED BODY

What do I do first?



2. JESUS RE-ORDERS OUR WORK (28-29)

They started with what they could do

Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" (28).

Jesus had just called them to prioritize the spiritual and eternal over the physical and temporary. They clearly got the message, at least part of it, because they are now prioritizing the works of God over their own work for food. But they missed a critical part of the message. Jesus had said that he would GIVE them imperishable food. They respond by asking, "What do we do to earn it. They are wanting the work of God instead of working for food, but they still think they must work to do the works of God, rather than simply receive it by faith.

Jesus started with what he does

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (29).

"You want to talk about doing the works of God, start by believing the work of God." Don't start with your work but with God's. Look at God's work in sending his Son and put your faith in that work of God, that Sent One. Before you work, God must work. God works so that you work. God's first work is faith in Jesus. You can't start anything good until God starts his good work in you.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Let's admit our wrong starting point. "I confess that I start with myself, my work, my deeds. I confess that my focus is often, what I must do to please God, to work for God. I confess that this wears me out, leaves me feeling guilty, depresses me, and leaves me anxious because I can never do enough and nothing I do is good enough.

Let's start where God starts. God starts with his work in sending Jesus then his work of giving faith in Jesus. Both are God's works, both are miraculous works, both come before any work we can do for God. God has done all the work that needs to be done and calls us to put our faith in his work. Faith is the opposite of work. It's resting in the work of someone else. That's a beautiful starting point to any day.

IF YOU START WITH YOURSELF, YOU'LL NEVER FINISH
IF YOU START WITH GOD, IT IS FINISHED



How satisfying is this?



3. JESUS RE-ORDERS OUR SATISFACTION (30-35)

They tried satisfaction through the senses

So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (30-31).

We're back to square one again here. They ask Jesus to do another food miracle. They are back to trying to get satisfaction through their eyes and their mouths. Moses did it for our fathers, so why can't you do it for us?

Jesus offers satisfaction through their spirit

"It wasn't Moses but God who gave you bread from heaven thousands of years ago," Jesus corrected them. And the same thing is true today, "**My Father 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**" (32-33). Jesus says, "I am heaven's life-giving food, enough to feed the whole world, should the whole world want it.

At last they seem to get it, "**Sir give us this bread always**" (34). They recognize their hunger and the only one who can fully and forever satisfy them. Jesus doesn't keep them waiting any longer but declares plainly how he fully satisfies the deepest needs of humanity. **Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst"** (35). Coming to Jesus and believing in Jesus are two ways of saying the same thing. Both result in satisfaction that no amount of physical food can ever offer.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Let's confess our unsatisfied appetites. "I confess I've tried to satisfy my heart through my eyes and mouth and I'm as empty and hungry as I've ever been. Sometimes I just feel sick.

Let's find our greatest satisfaction in Jesus. God the Father has given us true bread, the bread of truth from heaven to this world and offered his life-giving Son to us. Have we begged, "Sir, give us this bread always." Whatever other disappointments we face in this world, this is true: insofar as we believe in Jesus and come to Jesus we will be satisfied by Jesus. Like bread, Jesus is necessary food, a basic staple of life, not a luxury. Like bread, Jesus is universal food, suitable to every culture, palette, and digestive system. Like bread, Jesus is daily food, not rare or occasional but an everyday food. Like bread, Jesus must be taken inside if we are to get any benefit from it.

SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION
IS SUPER-SATISFYING



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Lord I confess all my disorders.
Re-order them by giving us this bread always.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which parts of ourselves and of our world have escaped God's curse upon sin which which parts have suffered from God's curse?
2. Where do you see disorder in your eating or drinking?
3. How has Jesus changed your appetites?
4. What damage do we do to ourselves if we start with our work and not God's?
5. How has Jesus satisfied you?
6. What areas of life remain that still need satisfied and how can Jesus meet that?

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