

## 13. John 6:25-59

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### Getting started

How do you explain to other people what it means for you to follow Jesus and identify with him? What images and metaphors do you use to illustrate this and help them understand?

### Observation and interpretation

Introduction: read verses 25-31 to establish the context

#### *Bread from heaven (verses 32-51)*

##### **Some background**

A particular teaching technique in Judaism was to take a text and then pick out individual words within it and expand and explain these. The text was usually taken from the Torah (first 5 books of what we call the OT). The teacher would often bring in another supplementary text from either the prophets or the writings to make a supplementary point.

This is what Jesus appears to be doing from verse 32 onwards. Jesus takes the scripture the crowd quotes in verse 31 and then his 'sermon' expands on ideas from the text, the ideas of 'bread' and 'from heaven'.

In verse 45 he introduces another text from Isaiah and expands on that until in verses 48-51 he summarises his point so far.

In response to the Jews question in verse 52 the final part of his sermon focuses on the word 'eat.'

1. In verse 32, how does Jesus correct the crowd's understanding expressed in verse 31?
2. According to verses 35-40, 48-51 what does it mean for Jesus to be the bread of life?
3. What is the Jews problem with Jesus' teaching in verse 41-2?
4. What is Jesus' point in verse 43-47 as he replies to the Jews grumbling?

#### *Eating the bread of life (verses 53-59)*

1. What do you think Jesus means by these words? If he is not speaking literally why do you think he speaks in such graphic terms?

## **Implications**

How would you answer the Jews' question in verse 52?

While this passage is not about the Lord's Supper we do use similar language when celebrating it: take and eat, take and drink... How do you respond emotionally to this language (either in the Lord's Supper or as a metaphor for relationship with Christ)?

How useful are graphic metaphors like these in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia? Do they clarify or confuse?

If you were going to use a metaphor for helping people understand that they need to rely only on Jesus what would you use?