

BREAD OF LIFE

FOR THE FIRST SIX YEARS OF OUR MARRIAGE my good wife Linda made all our own bread. Now, again, since she retired from the business world, she has returned to this blessed task.

Around this time every year, in addition to baking bread for this home, Linda begins making bread for our church's annual Crafts Day. By the time of that Saturday she will have baked approximately 125 loaves of bread which will be sold to fund the purchase of her yarn, with which she crochets afghans. These afghans are, in turn, given away to nursing homes and to individuals who donate to the charity she supports, *Operation Christmas Child*.

But I digress.

There is something organically *essential* about bread. The rich aroma of baking bread that wafts over me when I climb the stairs and step through the door into the kitchen stirs something primal within me. It doesn't just *smell* good—the fragrance strikes the tuning fork of fundamental life. And slicing into and eating from a loaf still warm from the oven is an experience that transports far beyond the taste buds. Consuming fresh, homemade bread that has been mixed and kneaded and formed by hand is far more than just adding a starch component to a meal. It is lingering before a warm fire on a cold winter's eve. It is paging through comforting memories of childhood.

It is good and substantial.

It is *real*.

The one so blessed is thus not surprised or confused at all by the Lord Jesus referring to Himself as the "Bread of Life."

Jesus then said to [His disciples], "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."

Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

John 6:32-35 (emphasis added)

Temporal life would be malnourished without bread. And eternal life—both on earth and after earth—would be impossible without the Bread of Life. Those who answer Jesus' call to believe in and walk in Him know a life in which the essentials are met.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

John 6:47-51

Our Bread of Life is good and substantial.

He is *real*.

