

Jesus Teaches Some Lessons on Life

- I. Don't waste your life on worthless things.
- II. Only He can give us eternal life.
- III. Find your answers in God's Book of Life.

Dear Christian friends,

For **quite a few years** teachers and schools have been pushing good breakfasts and nutritious lunches for children. A well-fed child learns better. When I was in grade school a good breakfast was a BOWL of **Sugar Pops** or **Sugar Smacks** or **Sugar-frosted Flakes**. But sugar is a NO-NO today. We don't want our children coming to school hungry but we also don't want them BOUNCING OFF the walls.

These verses take us to the **day after** the feeding of the 5,000. These people had been WELL FED by our Lord. Now Jesus TEACHES THEM SOME LESSONS ON LIFE. **Jesus teaches** us 1)don't waste your life on **worthless things**, 2)only Jesus can give us **eternal life** and 3)find your answers in God's Book of Life.

I. Don't waste your life on worthless things.

That feeding of the 5,000 **had made** QUITE THE IMPRESSION on these people. They had wanted "to make Jesus king." As they saw it Jesus could just keep doing miracles to take care of them and give them an EASY life.

But that's not why Jesus had come. Jesus withdrew from the crowds **"into the hills by Himself."** The disciples headed back in a boat to Capernaum. During the night Jesus had **"walked on the water"** out to the disciples' boat. The crowds didn't know that. The **next morning** Jesus was NOWHERE to be found. These people **"got into boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus."** When they finally found Him they asked, **"Rabbi, when did You get here?"** Jesus bluntly told them, **"You're looking for Me NOT TO LEARN from Me but because you ate the loaves and had you fill."**

Why did you **come to church** today? **Why** do we have our own Christian grade school – WLA and LPS? Our children can receive a **good education** in the PUBLIC schools. We certainly want our children to **grow up** to be MORAL – RESPONSIBLE – RESPECTFUL citizens. But that can also describe the **diehard Pharisee**. We have our Christian schools so our children can **be taught** GOD'S WORD and **love** in Jesus. Our schools are PAROCHIAL schools not simply private schools.

These people had their priorities all **screwed up**. They wanted LESS from Jesus than what He **had to offer** them. They were so focused on the FREE MEAL Jesus had given them that Jesus tells them, **"Don't work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."** That's such an important lesson to learn – to NOT WASTE our lives on **worthless things**.

WHAT are you spending your life on? Check out your **schedule**. Sure, it varies depending on our age. **For our children** it's getting an education – school – homework, etc. Later on it's the JOB – RAISING a family. Soon enough the **years have fled** by and you're looking at **grandchildren** and retirement – maybe failing health and a **nursing home**.

All that stuff is a part of life but WHERE IS GOD in your life? **Where** does God fit into your **schedule**? Is God the CENTER of your life or have you pushed Him off to the side? Are God and **His Word** a CONVENIENCE or a COMMITMENT – a TOP PRIORITY or an if I feel like it?

Solomon – one of the richest and wisest men ever - once looked at life WITHOUT God. **“Utterly meaningless!”** he wrote. It FINALLY DOESN'T MATTER how far you go with your **education** – how successful you are **at work** – how nice a family you have, etc. If you DON'T HAVE GOD at the heart of your life you've WASTED your life. **“What is a man profited”** Jesus once asked – where does he COME OUT AHEAD **“if he gains the whole world yet loses his soul?”** Jesus is lifting our sights higher than our STOMACHS and wallets.

These people hear that word **“work”** so they ask Jesus what they SHOULD WORK AT. Jesus works at teaching them **another important lesson** –

II. Only Jesus can give us eternal life.

“What must we do to do the work God requires?” they asked. They made an ALL TOO COMMON and deadly mistake. They thought that BY THEMSELVES they could do enough – BE GOOD ENOUGH – to please God so He **would take them** to heaven.

That thinking shows up in **different ways**. One is the “I'm not ALL THAT BAD. I may not be perfect but I'm not a total jerk.” It's common to talk like that. So-and-so is a GOOD PERSON. You never hear them cursing or **gossiping**. They never get drunk and they **don't smoke** either. They're a devoted husband – a **loving mother**. They're always willing to LEND A HAND. They pitch in WITHOUT EVEN being asked! All that is GOOD - but NONE of that ever got anyone into heaven. That's good BY OUR STANDARDS but it's not good enough by God's standards. God's standards are much higher than ours. **“Be holy, for I the Lord you God am holy. Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”** Dig out your catechism and take another look at those 10 Commandments. That's how God expects – DEMANDS! – we live our lives. God will accept nothing less than perfect obedience. **“The soul that sins,”** God bluntly says, **“it shall die.”**

One of the biggest threats in our **society** and **public education** is the thinking called HUMANISM. Humanism replaces God with man – with ME! I decide what's **right/wrong** for me. You get to do the same thing for yourself. There are no absolute right/wrongs. There's not just one TRUE religion. It's what do YOU THINK? How do YOU FEEL about whatever? God may say something is a **sin** – a **lie** but we HAVE THE RIGHT to **overrule** God. God can't tell us HOW to live or WHAT to believe.

God's law is a HARD LESSON to learn. We all are guilty of **ignoring** and **defying** God's clear will – not just once or twice but **over** and over – **day** after day. God had every right to MAKE OUR LIVES now a **living hell** and then send us to hell's **eternal** banishment and punishment. People don't like to hear that. “I'm NOT THAT BAD!” **Yes** we are.

ONLY JESUS can give us **eternal life**. ONLY JESUS can satisfy our spiritual needs. Jesus promises that whoever **“comes to Him will never go hungry and whoever believes in Him will never be thirsty.”** Food and drink are BASIC NECESSITIES. Without food and water **we die**. Without Jesus we **die eternally**.

ONLY JESUS can give us **eternal life**. **“The Bread of Life”** is not a thing but a PERSON – the eternal Son of God Himself born one of us. Jesus is not just an EXAMPLE for us to follow. He is our Savior BY BEING **our substitute** under God's law. ONLY in Jesus' perfect obedience to God's commandments do we have the righteousness that God accepts. **Only** in Jesus' innocent death on the cross do we have the full payment of all our sins. **Only** Jesus' blood – **shed** in sacrifice – cleanses us from all our sins. **Only** in Jesus risen triumphant from the dead do we have the SURE and CERTAIN HOPE of eternal life in heaven when we die. ONLY in Jesus. **Jesus does it all** for us – **Jesus gives it all** to us.

So Jesus continues, **“The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.”** God wants us to **“believe”** – to TRUST in Jesus as our Savior. **God wants** us to look to Jesus for **forgiveness**

and a **whole new relationship** with God. **God wants** us to COUNT ON Jesus to get us to heaven. That very faith that God WANTS US to have God Himself WORKS in us **through** the gospel. Saving faith in Jesus is a GIFT and WORK of God.

These people DIDN'T LIKE Jesus' call to **believe in Him**. So Jesus had to teach them ANOTHER IMPORTANT lesson – to

III. Find your answers in God's Book of Life.

The crowd challenged Jesus, ***“What miraculous sign will You give that we may see it and believe?”*** They wanted to walk BY SIGHT and not by faith. **Yesterday's miracle** was no longer GOOD ENOUGH. They bring up the ***“manna in the wilderness”*** as a FAR SUPERIOR miracle. **If Jesus can't top** that **then** they JUST CAN'T believe in Him. They blame Jesus for **their unbelief!**

Jesus corrects them. They needed to get their FACTS STRAIGHT. **One**, God gave the people the manna, **not Moses**. **Two** – the manna didn't give anyone eternal life. Everyone who ate the manna EVENTUALLY died. **Three** – Jesus is offering them something FAR MORE than manna – ***“the true bread from heaven.”*** And once again Jesus makes clear that HE is that true bread. ***“For the bread of God is HE who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”***

These people call Jesus ***“Rabbi”*** – teacher – but they won't let Jesus teach them. They're more than ready to CRITICIZE and CONTRADICT Jesus than to listen and learn from Him. They needed a MAJOR ATTITUDE **adjustment**.

What about us? What's our attitude toward **Christian education** – and NOT JUST for our children but for ourselves? Do we NOT BOTHER studying God's Word in Bible class – at home – because we figure there's NOTHING MORE for **Jesus to teach** us? Do we stay away because we know we're NOT GOING TO LIKE what Jesus has to say – that if we listen to Jesus we're going to have to make some MAJOR CHANGES in our **priorities** – our **attitude** – in the **way we live** or **what we believe**? Like these people do we HAVE OUR EXCUSES for why we can't do what God wants?

These people still didn't understand but they did ask, ***“Sir, from now on give us this bread.”*** Properly understood that's a GOOD PRAYER! “Lord, give me a HUNGER and THIRST for Your Word. **Through** Your Word ever strengthen my faith in You – make me MORE SURE and confident of Your **love**, forgiveness, faithfulness, promises - guide me in **paths pleasing** to you.”

In a **few more weeks** another school year will start. But it's not just for our children. It's time for all of us to GO BACK to school – **back** to faithfully and diligently studying God's Word. That's ONE MORE LIFE LESSON for us all to learn! Amen.

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