
In His Own Words:
“Jesus: The Bread of Life”
John 6: 25-40

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Everybody’s got a hungry heart.” – Saint Springsteen

“To be human is to be animated and oriented by some version of the good life, some picture of what we think counts as “flourishing.” And we *want* that. We crave it. We desire it. This is why our most fundamental mode of orientation to the world is love. We are oriented by our longings, directed by our desires. We adopt ways of life that are indexed to such visions of the good life, not usually because we “think through” our options but rather because some picture captures our imagination.” – James K.A. Smith

“Self-indulgence tends to suppress gratitude; self-discipline tends to generate it. That is why gluttony is a deadly sin: oddly, it is an appetite suppressant. The reason is that a person’s appetites are linked: full stomachs and jaded palates take the edge from our hunger and thirst for justice. And they spoil the appetite for God.” – Cornelius Plantinga

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” – Matthew 5: 6

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- After reading through the passage together, ask your group what makes an impression upon them from the passages and why it strikes them.
- The quotations above seem to make a case that part of being human is to have longings for fullness and satisfaction. Do you agree? How conscious and explicit is that longing for you? For the people with whom you live and work and worship?
- Do you count your hunger and thirst as a blessing?
- Jamie Smith asserts that those longings and cravings are animated by some picture that captures our imaginations. What picture of flourishing has captured your imagination? What picture has captured our city’s imagination, our culture’s imagination?
- Why does Jesus use the ordinary image of bread to try to capture the audience’s imagination? Why not something more dazzling and unique?
- What is the comfort and challenge of Jesus stipulating that the work God requires is simply to “believe in him whom he has sent”? How is belief both a gift and a responsibility?
- What is the comfort and challenge of Jesus’ promise that “all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out”?