

One more week of bread

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*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page, which includes Bubar's current *Living by the Word* column as well as past magazine and blog content. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

This year, as many years before, I planned my summer vacation schedule with this stretch of lectionary readings from John 6 in mind. I suspect I am not alone. Five straight weeks of chewing on the bread of life is just a little more than most of us Protestants can stomach. I'm not sure I have that many sermons on the subject in me. So please take my reflections here with a grain of salt. I'll share with you what I can, but then I'm off to the airport.

Having said that, there was one year when I decided to tackle all five weeks, and to really delve into John 6 in my preaching. I also decided to use that as an opportunity to celebrate communion each Sunday—something new and a little scary for a congregation accustomed to communion only once a month. And I found that, as grueling as it was to prepare a sermon on John 6 each week, it was also tremendously rewarding. Especially when all that talk about bread found its culmination at the table. To preach on the bread of life without giving people actual bread to eat seems just plain wrong. I found that this experience of sustained engagement with John 6 greatly enriched our church's eucharistic theology and practice.

If I were preaching on John 6 this summer, I would most certainly turn to Sara Miles's wonderful memoir *Take This Bread*. If you are planning to preach on John 6 and have not read Miles, please leave this page immediately and go order yourself a copy. Her account of coming to faith, the centrality of the eucharist in her story, the way she describes "the raw physicality of that mystical meal," the way she connects eucharist with mission—all of this will help you to read John 6 with new eyes. And it just might help make you—and your congregation—a little bit hungrier for the bread

of life.