

Bread of Life

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John 6

Have you realized that during crises church attendance increases? In Lebanon during the civil war; in the US after 9/11; when people face pain, they search of comfort and answer for their suffering. I get it, we welcome to church anyone anytime, this is the house of the Lord. Yet, God is not “spare tire”, whenever we need Him, we can call on Him. God loves us; that means He loves to communicate and to have an intimate relationship.

Let us move to the 6th chapter.

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. (John 6:1-3 NIV 11)

As you realize, by now Jesus is moving from place to another. There is a crowd following Jesus. How serious they are in their walk in their faith? I don't know. But in this chapter, we will find that there is a group who enjoyed seeing the signs, miracles. Later we will find out that some of those people will stop following Jesus. Jesus wants people to see beyond the signs, the meaning of those signs, and the reason why the Messiah is here.

We find that he goes with his disciples away to the mountainside. We all need that. Time to recharge and move forward.

⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near. ⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” ⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ⁹ “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the

loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. (John 6:4-11 NIV 11)

With the exception of the resurrection, the feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. Why? Let us examine the story:

- Jesus is preparing his disciples and the crowd and us for the Eucharist; he is the Bread of Life, and he will be the last sacrifice for our salvation.

- Jesus cares for his people. It's the most public demonstration that he can meet the needs of everybody present (5000 men, multiply by three for household, 15,000). That says something about the magnitude of his ability to provide for the needs of the crowd.

- He is training his disciples. Jesus is teaching them to take responsibility to minister to the crowd. He asked Philip (a tough test for poor Philip).

“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” (6:5b)

Now remember it is the Feast of Passover. Let us go back in history, the same question Moses asked to God in the wilderness:

“Where can I get meat for all these people?” (Numb 11:13 NIV)

Going back to the text:

“He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.” (6:6)

Don't you love how Jesus works?

Jesus had a plan, and he wanted to teach his disciples to trust Him.

That comforts me. My rabbi, my teacher has a plan in his mind. Remember this every time when you face a trial... my Jesus has a plan...

- **It is mission impossible.**

“It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” (6:7)

Don't we all face impossible situations? I identify with Philip. How in the world we can solve this problem, go find food, seriously...

-**Andrew**: Do you remember this guy, Peter's brother, who invited Peter to follow Jesus? He sees a possibility.

“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” (6:9)

Bread with barley signifies the poverty of the crowd. The boy was carrying not much.

Again, comparing with OT accounts. In 2 Kings 4:42-44; **Elisha** fed hundreds of men with 20 loaves of barley bread, and there was leftover as well.

Or in the same chapter, **Elisha** helps the widow who said she had only a small jar of olive oil. (2 King 4:2 NIV) God provided....read the story...

Please recognize what is going on here:

"Jesus is fulfilling and recreating images from Israel's sacred past. He is a figure who harks back to great historic figures (Moses and Elisha) who knew God's power intimately. ...John's point is to underscore that Jesus is the provider of food, the source of life for these people (as thus far we have seen him be the source of rebirth, living water, and healing).¹

-Thanking God for whatever we have.

I love how Jesus administered this thanksgiving meal.

"Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks," (6:11)

Do you see Jesus' attitude? Thanking His Father for whatever little he has. I want this attitude to be engraved in our hearts. Thanking God for whatever we have. I learned this lesson from my childhood, and still learning. My mother was my teacher. Lately in Armenia, Nanor, my daughter is sharing with me how the little things that they have can be shared with wounded soldiers, their families, or with displaced children of Artsakh and so on. Little things to be thankful for, and how God magnifies those "little things" ...

Please use those "little things" and put them in the hands of God.

-12 Baskets of leftovers

When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. (John 6:12-13 NIV 11)

12 disciples, 12 baskets of leftovers.... What is the lesson Jesus is teaching them and us? God's mission will continue with the 12 and more. Jesus will disciple them and us, and we will continue His work in the world.

-We want a King

¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (John 6:14-15 NIV 11)

People have their own agenda. They saw the sign, but they did not see what God is doing through Jesus. They saw what they wanted to see. "We see a prophet, wow, let us make him our king." Jesus is not going to respond to the people's political desires.

He withdrew from them and went to the mountain.

-Walking over the water

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸ A strong wind was blowing, and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." ²¹ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. (6:16-21 NIV 11)

The disciples are back on the lake and in the boat. Boat and sea.

Every time these disciples go to the boat, we see something is happening.

Such as: Jesus sleeping in the boat during a storm, Jesus asking Peter to come out of the boat, Jesus telling them to fish at certain places when they had given up from fishing, and in this event Jesus walking over the water while there is a storm over the sea.

The sea is a chaotic place, a place of uncertainty. (In the OT, waters represent chaos).

A strong wind was blowing, the waters grew rough. It shows human helplessness.

How are they going to respond? **In faith or disbelief?**

Take these two events together: the feeding 5000 and later the Bread of Life discussion, and Jesus walking on the water during the storm.

I think the disciples did not get what happened during the feeding of the 5000. Jesus wants to teach them an important lesson.

-I don't know how Jesus can walk over a sea. It is against the laws of physics. The disciples are already in tough waters. After three four miles into the lake, they see Jesus walking on the water. They are frightened. Jesus' response: **Ego Emi. Don't be afraid, I am** (it is me).

Let me remind you again, **it is Passover time.** It is a time when the Israelites will remember that they passed from the Red Sea.

Remember things:

It is a time when they will remember that Moses cried out to God for food, and God gave them Mana, and meat;
God provide them water to drink;
they will remember that Moses asked God to say his name, and God said: **I am who I am.**

Jesus' identification **Ego Emi** is a reminder who Jesus is. He is equal to God; Jesus is God.

"Faith is acknowledging that Jesus is who he says he is." (Dr. Mark L. Bailey)

There was a little boy afraid at night. So whenever the boy slept, father came and said, don't be afraid, it is me, I am.

How peaceful it is to know God. He is, I AM.

Application:

1. Thank God for whatever you have. He will bless it and use it for His Kingdom. Be willing to bring whatever you have.

2. There will be storms; there will be situations that you cannot understand (Jesus walking on water). Learn to trust him.

3. God initiates, and humans respond

Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. ⁴⁴"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. (6:43b-44)

Salvation is from God. We as humans, have our part in believing our Lord Jesus. God so loved the world he gave his Son. God initiates salvation...

So again, they asked what is our part?

“What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (6:28-29)

God does His part you have your responsibility...

4. Seek the Bread of Life

I had a friend who was bread winner of the house, who worked so hard to provide, yet he did not have time for the “bread of life.” His kids were lost, his life was miserable, yet they had a lot of money.

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. (6:27)

Jesus Christ is the only provision for **eternal life** and **faith** is the only proper means of responding.

Therefore, God's gracious provision for Salvation is the bread of life (Jesus Christ) that comes down from heaven.

This means:

Seek the bread of life. Hunger for the bread of life and thirst for the Living Water....

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (6:35)

The woman left the bucket and ran towards his village...

We all need to work for bread and water. Yet without the Bread of Life and the Living Water our life is meaningless.

Allow Jesus to be the King and the Lord of your life. Abide in his word...learn and apply His word.

Amen

1 Gary M. Bruce, *NIV Application Commentary* p 194

[Additional notes](#)

We are in the gospel of John. John introducing Jesus Christ, the Messiah. We found in different events Jesus is saying He is the waited Messiah, the one who is replacing the old.

-The jars of cleansing waters to new aged wine (blood of Jesus for salvation)

-The cleansing of the temple: Jesus becomes the new temple for salvation

-With Nicodimus to be baptized with water and spirit; Jesus brought the new area, where the Messiah is that person

-With Samaritan woman the Jacob's well which հազեցուց ժամանակաւոր ծարաւը gave us water for temporary satisfaction...our thirst temporary; Jesus gave the living water, streams of living water for permanent solution.

-With the Jewish leaders who criticized the disabled man for breaking the Sabbath, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, he came to fulfill the old.