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### *John 6 – “LIVING BREAD”*

***Last week - John 5:*24“*Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life* …”**

The 1st half of the gospel of John is often referred to as “The Book Of Signs” Chapter 6 mentions 2 of the seven signs. So far we have seen;

1. Turning Water Into Wine (John 2:1-12) ...
2. Healing the Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54) ...
3. Healing the Man at the Pool (John 5:1-11) ...

We are about to see;

1. Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-15) ...
2. Walking on Water (John 6:16-21) ...

By the time chapter 6 begins, Jesus had become very popular. People were hearing about his miracles of healing (signs) and crowds were following him because of them. Jesus wants people to follow Him, but not for signs and sustenance, He wants them to follow Him because they believe in Him so that they will have eternal life*. (This is the recurring theme of Jesus teachings, throughout the entire gospel of John.)*

**John 6:1-4 “**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. **4**The Jewish Passover Festival was near.”

In Chapter 5 Jesus was in Jerusalem, where he healed the lame man and challenged the Jewish leaders. *This chapter* finds him in Northern Israel crossing the Sea of Galilee to the Northwest side. We know it is springtime because the Passover 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?”

Jesus often tested his disciples, to see if they would respond in faith or in doubt. Philip’s reply seemed hopeless, but Andrew offered what little he could find.

Andrew’s question wasabout to be answered in the next miracle, *The Miracle of Multiplication.*  *(Interestingly, Andrew is only mentioned a few times in the New Testament, but on each occasion we see him bringing someone to Jesus. Many people have the ministry of Andrew, they may not have all the answers or all the resources, but they bring people to meet Jesus and He does the rest.)*

**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.

**12**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.

This amazing miracle happened another time as well, 4000 were fed in Mark 8. Jesus took what little they had and created more than enough food for not only his disciples, but also a crowd of 5000 men *(which could possibly have been 20,000 or more if you include the women and children.)* The fact that the leftovers amounted to more than what they started with, astonished the crowds even more. (They probably sent the boy home with enough food to feed his village for a week.)

The lesson we learn from this; when faced with a need, a crisis, or an impossible situation, will we respond in *doubt or in faith*? Do we rely on our own ability to provide for the needs at hand or are we willing to take what little we have and give it to the Lord to do more than we can ask for or imagine. When it came to feeding the multitudes. Philip seemed to give up because of the impossibility of the task, Andrew offered what little he had, though he questioned how it far it would go.

I’ve learned that being faithful and obedient, is far better than being resourced and self-sufficient. There are times when God wants to do something spectacular, but it can only happen in situations where we are completely reliant on Him, and not ourselves.

Our NSF team motto: D T B W W Y H A W Y H A G W D T R *(and He does)*

**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.

Jesus was not interested in being made King of these people, He had more important things to focus on, the Kingdom of God . He stated clearly in John 18:36 *“My kingdom is not from this world.”*

Jesus, as He often did withdrew to a quiet place by Himself, to pray and spend time with His heavenly Father.

### Jesus Walks on the Water – The 5th Sign

**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.

This amazing miracle of Jesus is written about in Matthew and Mark as well.

Mark’s account tells us that “when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they were terrified.”

Matthew’s account is even more interesting because it tells us that Peter also stepped out of the boat and walked a few steps, before he began to sink.

By this miracle, Jesus proved to them that, not only did he have authority over the wind and waves, but over the *gravitational laws of nature* as well. After this miracle, the disciples began to understand Jesus’ divine nature a little more. Matthew tells us that “those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “*Truly you are the Son of God.”*

**22**The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. **23**Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24**Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

So, the original crowds went to where the disciples were heading, and noticed Jesus was with them when they left. They must have wondered how He got across the lake without a boat.

Then another crowd joins them. They must have heard about the Miracle of the Fish and Bread and went to that place to see for themselves. When they arrived, Jesus and his disciples were gone, so they chased them to Capernaum.

**25**When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

**26**Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. **27**Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

***28****Then they asked him, “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.”*

**30**So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? **31**Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

**32**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. **33**For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

These people were looking for free bread and sensational miracles. They completely disregarded the intention of what Jesus did as “a sign”. He multiplied the bread primarily so that they would believe, secondly that they would be physically fed.

**34**“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

**35**Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. **36**But as I told you, you have seen me and still *you do not believe*. **37**All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. **38**For I have come down from heaven not to do *my* will but to do the *will of him who sent me*. **39**And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. **40***For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life*, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Once again, Jesus is stating the purpose of His mission, to do the Father’s will. The Father’s will is very simple, that people *believe in Jesus and have eternal life*. The crowds were not happy with this. First they wanted Jesus to be their physical King, then they wanted Him to be their bread supplier. Neither of these were the reason he came to them.

**41**At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” **42**They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

**43**“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. **45**It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. **46**No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. **47**Very truly I tell you, *the one who believes has eternal life*. **48**I am the bread of life. **49**Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. **50**But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **51**I am the *living bread* that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

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Then it gets a little weird for them. Not only is he telling them that He is the *Living Bread,* but He says that they must eat this bread. He begins speaking to them in *spiritual* terms, and they only perceive it according to the flesh. He tells them later that *“The words I have spoken are of the Spirit and life.”*

Notice the similarities to this encounter in Capernaum, to the encounter with the Woman at the Well in John 4, but instead of offering her *living bread*, he talked to her about *living water.* The difference was she received it, and they didn’t. She was more interested in the Spiritual water than physical water (she left her bucket to tell others). These people in Capernaum disregarded the spiritual aspects of what Jesus was saying, and were only interested in physical bread.

**52**Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

**53**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. **54**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. **55**For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. **56**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. **57**Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. **58**This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on *this bread* will live forever.” **59**He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**60**On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

**61**Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? **62**Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! **63**The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. **64**Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. **65**He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

**66**From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

### Ok, this is *not* the way to grow a congregation and increase your popularity. If Jesus was trying to come up with a user-friendly, seeker-sensitive message that’s simple to understand, and easy to relate to, this was not it. Instead of expanding his crowd, and increasing his following he drastically reduced it*.*

### *It’s as if He went from thousands of likes and followers, to 12 in one sermon.*

### In fact in in Luke 9, He told them that if they want to be His disciples, they must take their ‘execution stake’ (cross) with them as they followed Him.

### Luke 9:[23](http://biblehub.com/luke/9-23.htm)-24 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.  For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”

### In other words, following Him was not going to be an easy, leisurely, path. It is often a journey marked with hardship and sacrifice.

### Then he turned to the apostles and asked about them. They heard all the same things He was saying to the others. They were likely as perplexed by some of the things Jesus said as the others were.

### He then asked them a very important question, and they responded with a very important answer…

***67“You do not want to leave too, do you?”* Jesus asked the Twelve.**

**68Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.**

69We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” **70**Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” **71**(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.) <>

[Interesting that he reminds them that He *chose* all twelve of His apostles, *including Judas*, who he describes as “a devil” *(diabolos -slanderer, false accuser).*

*Again:*

**67Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”**

**68But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”**

In other words, Jesus asked them if they still wanted to follow Him, even if following Him meant much more than just seeing miracles, getting fed and having a fun adventure.

They decided that it was well worth it, because they had developed a hunger for the “words of eternal life”, and there was no one else who had them except for Jesus.

The question we need to ask ourselves from this scripture is this; “If being a follower of Jesus requires sacrifice, hardship and not just fun-fellowship, exciting worship, and good times, do we still want to follow?

If you’ve experienced His words of eternal life, you will certainly say yes, because once you’ve experienced Him, you can never do without Him.

**Close:**

[Bear & Honey analogy: A Black bear will go its whole life eating, berries, fruit and insects and be perfectly happy. But once it stumbles upon a beehive and tastes the sweetness of honey, it will never be satisfied until it has more honey, In fact it will go through the pain and torture of being stung hundreds of times on the nose to rip into a beehive and eat the honey.]

That is how it is with us. Once we taste and see the goodness of the Lord, nothing else will ever take its place, and we’ll be willing to put up with any amount of hardship and difficulty in order to experience the goodness of the Lord, and the words of eternal Life.

**Psalm 34:8** “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”