

The Gospel of John

Chapter 6:1-21

March 23, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life

- **Review and Introduction**

We have concluded the lengthy discussion that Jesus had with the Jews and Pharisees which produced even more desire on their part to kill him. Chapter 6 represents somewhat of a watershed chapter in that after Jesus finishes teaching the multitudes many turn away and animosity toward Him grows quickly. Up to this point His popularity has grown rapidly but now although many faithful still follow, it is the citizenry who rejected Christ that demanded that He be crucified.

The miraculous sign of feeding the multitudes is the only miracle that is recorded exactly the same in all four Gospels. John's primary point is not the miracle itself, but the fact of the miracle lays the foundation for understanding the teaching Jesus delivers later in the chapter.

- **Exposition**

John 6:1-21

After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

- Having left Jerusalem and heading north again, Jesus comes to the Sea of Galilee and specifically the portion of the sea near Tiberia which was called the Sea of Tiberias.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.⁵ Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

- The reference to the Passover is not only for establishing chronology but is also significant because of the fact that the things discussed in this chapter reveal that Jesus is the fulfillment of a number of OT typological events.
- Without an apparent request from the people, Jesus seeks to feed the multitude and turns to the disciples to test their thinking. His purpose in testing them was to see if they were thinking temporally or did they really believe in His ability to do anything as a result of His deity?
- The Scriptures teach us that our Father does not tempt us but that He will test us for our good. The intent of His test is for the purpose of improvement or advancement but the intent of a tempt is to see someone fall. Our Father does not tempt but tests us so that our faith might be proven genuine. This proving is not for His benefit but is for the benefit of the one being tested and for the benefit of surrounding Saints. (James 1:2-8, 13; 1 Peter 1:6-9)

7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

- It is easy to see why the disciple responds this way. Having been asked where to buy the food he responds that they don't have enough money. In fact he claims that two hundred days wages would not be enough. Surely this is not a positive response to the test provided by Christ. Surely, Christ was looking for Philip to rest in the fact that he was with the Lord and anything is possible for God.
- Andrew adds that the only food immediately available was not even remotely sufficient, apparently adding to the despair found in Philip's reply. Christ wasn't looking for them to have correctly identified the manner in which He would solve the situation but He was looking for them to be absent from despair knowing that our Lord cares for His people and that He is able to do so in any manner He pleases.

10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five

thousand.¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

- Jesus takes the food and gives thanks to His father. Giving thanks before we eat is clearly a Biblical practice but frequently we lose sight of what we are giving thanks for. When we give thanks for our food, we are thanking our Lord for sustaining us through days to come and we are thanking Him for the labor He provides behind the food.
- The disciples although unaware of what Christ would do, respond obediently to Christ's instructions. They have the five thousand men and probably at least another thousand women and children (Matthew records that there were women and children in addition to the 5,000 men).
- The Lord isn't stingy in the blessing of provision; He provided until the multitude can eat no more. He does not provide them with great delicacies but grants them sustenance. We see demonstrated the promise where we are told to seek first the kingdom of God and all of the food, money and shelter would be provided.

12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."¹³ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

- Notice how even though the provision was abundant, Christ takes care not to squander any of the blessing. He is not a miser but does not want to be disrespectful to the Father by being careless with the blessing. Jesus demonstrates great stewardship with the blessings of the Father. As we are taught in the Scriptures, if we are faithful in little things we can be faithful in great things.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

- The multitude did not understand the role and mission of our Lord. His purposes were not political although He spent much time dealing in the political realm. The multitude sought a political solution and our Lord provided a spiritual solution. The irony in this section is that even though the Jews were not successful in forcing Jesus to be King, He was King already and by birthright would have been in line for the throne as the firstborn of a descendant of David.

16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. ¹⁸Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. ¹⁹So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. ²⁰But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. NKJV

- After Jesus departs to be alone, the disciples (probably weary from the day) get in a boat and head for Capernaum. Clearly in the providence of our Lord a storm comes and threatens the safety of the disciples. John chooses not to record the walking on water episode with Peter but focuses mainly on the Lordship of Jesus over the creation. Since all things were created by Him, through Him and for Him, Jesus even is Lord over oceans, wind and gravity.