

The Gospel of John
Week Nine
John 6:7-34

Day One

7 Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not 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 the men sat down, about five thousand of them.

v. 7 – This gives us an idea of how big the crowd was. The estimate was that eight months' wages would not cover the cost! You can see why Jesus asked Philip. Philip seemed to be a calculating kind of man and his calculations told him there was nothing they could do to feed the people. **What is your mind telling you that it is impossible to do?** Remember the verse:

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

v. 8 – Someone once commented that Andrew was probably joking when he made the comment about the loaves and fishes. The context doesn't bear that out, but clearly Andrew was looking at what the disciples had in their own storehouse and not what they had in the Lord. **What was Jesus trying to teach them here?**

1. Don't look at the need, look at the Lord
2. Don't see what you don't have, focus on what you do have.
3. Nothing is too difficult for God or for those who put their faith in that truth.
4. God has a plan; it's always good to tap into that plan.

I also see that Jesus was not turned off or offended by the honesty of the disciples. The disciples had no idea of the power to which they had access. Consequently they said silly things, but Jesus always used that as a teachable moment. He let them talk and answer the question He posed and then He acted.

Do you have discussions with God? I'm serious. I did a study a few years ago of the questions that Jesus asked the people and titled it "What Would Jesus Ask?" **Is God posing any questions to you and are you attempting to answer? Are you asking any of Him? Are you growing from the process?**

v. 10 – Jesus had the people sit down. This is a position from which you can do very little for yourself. It is a position of rest, where you are waited upon instead of busily rushing around to wait on yourself. **Is Jesus instructing you to sit down so you can receive something from Him?** I think that is what He is telling me to do at this point in

my life. I wonder is this scenario with the grassy field and the bread has anything to do with Psalm 23?

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. **He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters**, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23:1-5 emphasis added).

Day Two

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. 14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, 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.

v. 11 – After the people had followed His instructions, Jesus took the boy's loaves and fishes, gave thanks and distributed them to the crowd of 5,000. Notice that He gave thanks as part of the multiplication process. He was thanking the Father for the miracle before it took place, so confident was He of the outcome. **Can you thank God for something for which you have faith, yet cannot see at the present time?**

v. 12 – Everyone didn't just receive a snack; they were completely satisfied! They had all that they wanted. Jesus wanted His disciples to see that God wasn't in the business of just meeting needs with barely enough. God deals in abundance with everything He does. Everything Also, Jesus had a purpose and He was always teaching and training. I publish a daily devotional quote from Proverbs and today's quote was:

My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge (Proverbs 5:1-2).

Jesus lips always preserved and spread knowledge. **Do yours?**

v. 13 – The disciples gathered the leftovers and they filled 12 baskets! Jesus would move from this miracle into a discussion of the fact that He was the bread of life from heaven. **Do you see the connection here?** There isn't just enough of God's grace to go around; there is an abundance in Christ! God never exhausts His supply. He can meet all our physical and spiritual needs and never run out of reserves. God is endless and infinite and so are His blessings! Thank You, Jesus!

v. 14 – The people knew what had taken place. They had followed Jesus to this place because they had seen Him heal. Now they saw Him provide for their physical needs. They had seen all they needed to see in order to proclaim that He was the Prophet to come, the Messiah! Yet their focus was wrong. They were ready to “vote” Him in as the Anointed One based on what He could do for them. They really did not understand what He had come to do, so Jesus had to thwart their plan and momentum to crown Him as their new King, for He had not come to be a King as Caesar was. What’s more, Jesus was already King, but the people and the disciples had yet to comprehend this spiritual and not political truth.

v. 15 – So Jesus withdrew and avoided the scenario where they would take and make Him king by force. What a comic picture! They would come and take the Lord of peace and force Him to be their king! Yet that is what I have done from time to time. I have tried to force Jesus to rule over my life, while I was still ruling it myself. I wanted Jesus to meet my needs but I did not want to fulfill His commands. **Who is really on the throne of your life? Have you tried to set Jesus there on your own terms, or have you yielded to His Lordship and made Him king of every area of your life?**

Day Three

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 three or three and a half miles,[b] they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. 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.

vs. 16&17 – Jesus’ disciples headed for home, while Jesus stayed behind. It was dark and I don’t know why anyone did not ask Jesus how He was going to get home to Capernaum. We learn later that there were no other boats, so perhaps the men thought Jesus was going to take the land route home.

v. 18 – A strong wind was blowing and the waters were rough. This is a poignant picture of how life can be. You can proceed with a decision or course of action with the best of intentions and suddenly all heaven and parts of hell break loose! I have been told that even though the disciples were on a lake, the wind can come whipping through the narrow valley at the lake’s head with such intensity that it creates the conditions we read about here. **Are the conditions of life blowing against you?** Then do what the disciples did: keep rowing and wait for Jesus to arrive!

v. 19 – Once again you get a perspective of how big this lake is. They had rowed almost four hours and they weren’t even close to home. The men had worked hard and made little progress. Suddenly, Jesus came to them walking on the water. Keep in mind He had

walked as far as they rowed. So He was on His way to help them but they didn't know it. The same is true for you. He is on His way to help; just trust Him and keep rowing!

These seasoned fishermen who had grown up around this lake were terrified at the sight of Jesus walking on the water! They probably thought they had seen all there was to see as lakeshore dwellers, but they never expected this! Jesus is still in the business of doing the unexpected, and the miraculous! **Are you anticipating his supernatural help in your situation? If not, why not?** You can change that today if you wish.

v. 20 – Jesus told them not to be afraid. One pastor has said that when God tells you not to be afraid, it's usually too late. You are already afraid! We read in another gospel that the men thought Jesus was a ghost! So Jesus comforted them and He will comfort you, too. **Are you afraid right now about something that is happening or may happen in your life?** If you are, then Jesus is speaking to you today. **What is He saying?** He is saying not to be afraid. If He is commanding you not to fear, then it must be in your power to control fear. **What is your choice today?**

v. 21 – The disciples let Jesus into their boat and then another miracle took place. They didn't have to row any longer and fight the elements; the boat was suddenly at its destination. This is what happens when you control your fear and you let Jesus into your circumstances, no matter how challenging or out of control. He will bring calm both to you and your circumstances! **How can you do this, you may ask?** Read what Paul said and you will have the peace that he (and Jesus) promises:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

Day Four

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.

v. 22 – Now the crowd tried to figure out what had happened that allowed Jesus to come to Capernaum with no boat. **Are we seeing a pattern in this chapter?** We are indeed, for first Jesus fed the crowd with very little to work with and then He got from one side of the lake with no boat. **Are you getting the picture that there is no limitation in or with God?** He can work with a lot of nothing at all, and still achieve His purpose.

The crowd could only try and figure out what happened. Those closest to Jesus knew what happened because they say it firsthand. That is the benefit of staying close to Jesus. It makes me think of the psalm that says:

He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel (Psalm 103:7).

The crowd saw Jesus' acts but the disciples saw His ways. **Which are you content to see? Do you just see what God does or do you understand what He does and why? I want to be among those who know His ways and not just observe His acts. Will you join me in that endeavor?**

v. 23 – The crowd was still arriving where Jesus had been, the place where He had multiplied the loaves and fishes. I suppose word spread quickly around the lakeside villages. Yet these people were coming to where Jesus had been; people still do that today. They make decisions based on the past and not the present. I want to follow and be part of the new thing that Jesus is doing and be wherever He is, not where He has been. **Are you with Jesus in His now actions and word? What do you have to do to catch up with Jesus?**

The Jews were going to where God had been instead of to what God was doing. **Have you ever done the same thing? Are you doing it now? In what area of your life or walk with the Lord?**

v. 24 – The crowd was so desperate to see Jesus that they got back into their boats and went to where He was. At least they acknowledged their needs, albeit in a selfish way that caused them to come to God only to have their needs met. They were soon thereafter to hear a discourse from Jesus that would cause many to return home disappointed and disgruntled, but at this point, they were determined to find Jesus so they could receive something for themselves.

Are you searching for God to get what He can do for you? Actually, it isn't a bad thing, for we are all so needy where God is concerned. Ultimately, however, that cannot be the only reason you seek Him.

Day Five

25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs 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. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

v. 25 – Notice how accessible Jesus was to the people. They went to his hometown and found Him right away. He had no bodyguards or secretary. He was a Jew living among His people. Once they found Him, he people were trying to figure out how and when Jesus had come back from where He had multiplied the bread. They knew that He had no boat to use.

v. 26 – Jesus did not feel compelled to answer their questions. He maintained control of the conversation because, as always, Jesus used their visit as a time to teach them. This time it would be a hard lesson, one geared to stop some who were seeking Him simply for what they could receive. This is the eighth use of “I tell you the truth” in John’s gospel.

Jesus knew the hearts of those around Him and He knows yours. **Are you honest with God?** You can be, for He knows your thoughts from afar. If He were going to punish you, He would punish you for what you think and not what you say, because He knows what you are thinking before you say it! **Does that make sense?**

Jesus was never interested in gathering a crowd so He could impress others or have a large following. This group was not even interested in Jesus’ miraculous works; they were simply interested in the natural bread that Jesus produced with the loaves and fishes. They wanted a handout and were willing to follow Jesus anywhere to get it.

v. 27 – Jesus started out by admonishing those present not to simply seek after food that spoils. Jesus was offering food that lasted forever, which of course was a relationship with Him. There is some work involved in obtaining that “food.”

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:12-13).

Are you willing to pay the price for this eternal food?

Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding (Proverbs 23:23).

Yet while you work for this food, it is still a gift of God. Jesus will give it to you because the Father in heaven has endorsed Jesus with a seal of approval. That is how Jesus could do miracles like the people saw. God the Father was with Him, as Jesus had explained in chapter five. Jesus was setting the stage for what He had yet to say: That He was the bread of life and He was the One that they needed to seek, not the physical bread the effects of which would pass quickly.

Day Six

28Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." 30So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

v. 28 – These were good Jews who heard these words, so they asked Jesus about the works that were required for them to receive the bread they sought. They were searching for a partnership, where they would do their part and God would then do His part, which was to satisfy their physical needs. The Jews were accustomed to hearing about the works that God required, as evidenced by the man who approached Jesus and asked:

Master, what must I do?

It is so easy for us to slip into this works mentality. What can I do to earn God's favor and grace? There is nothing you can do to earn it, but there is plenty that you can and must do once you have earned it.

Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16).

v. 29 – Jesus was direct and straightforward in His response. The only work required was that the people believe the One whom the Father had sent and that person was of course Jesus. It is difficult for people who want to earn their status with God to just let go and put their trust in Him to do what they cannot do for themselves.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17).

v. 30 – At that point, the people revealed their unbelieving hearts. After Jesus had multiplied the loaves and healed the people, as well as walking across the lake to get home, the people demanded some kind of evidence! They wanted an additional sign. This was not because they desired to believe and have their faith confirmed; it was actually because they did not believe. Seeing another sign after what they had already seen would not have helped them at all.

Do you require the same thing? After all God has done for you, after all you have seen Him do, do you still require Him to confirm His will to do by some miraculous intervention? Are you waiting for another person to tell you to do something or for circumstances to be just right before you take your first steps in obedience? If you are, then you are functioning in the same disbelief that these Jews were in this situation.

v. 31 – Jesus identified with the Jews; He called the Jews of the past "our forefathers." He then went on to link what had happened to them to what was happening between Him and the crowd. Their forefathers ate manna in the wilderness. God was then going to sustain them with more bread from heaven, this time in the form of His Son. The forefathers did not recognize the manna or like it that much. They would have the same response where Jesus was concerned.

Day Seven

32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, 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 he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

v. 32 – Jesus pointed out that Moses was not their source of life in the wilderness or in Jesus’ day. Moses could not give the people bread back then or in Jesus’ time. Yet the people’s focus was on Moses and the Law, thinking they were the sources of spiritual life. The manna was a gift from God and Jesus was the same. Jesus tried to help them see that there was a connection between what God did then and in His day. He was the connection, for the manna was simply a shadow or type of who He was, the bread from heaven.

v. 33 – Jesus was very clear. The manna came down from heaven; now He had come down from heaven. The manna sustained the people on their spiritual journey and Jesus was sent to do the same. The people in the wilderness could not have lived or survived without manna and the people would hear that they could not live without Jesus. **Do you see the connection that Jesus is trying to make?** This truly unites the Scriptures and does away with the artificial boundary between the Old and New Testaments. Jesus was the common theme and thread in both.

The manna gave life on a daily basis. There as no lack and it arrived faithfully. The same is true of Jesus! People have misunderstood this concept and do funny things with the interpretation of it. It is quite simple. As bread is in the natural, so Jesus is in the spiritual. Bread sustains natural life; Jesus sustains spiritual life. Manna miraculously arrived from heaven; Jesus miraculously arrived from heaven. Manna was a gift of God; Jesus was and is a gift from God. Manna was the same every day; Jesus is the same every day.

v. 34 – The people declared their readiness and willingness to receive this bread, but they were equating this bread with the manna their fathers ate in the wilderness. They had no idea what Jesus was talking about. They were thinking, “Hey, if God will send bread to us every day like He did with the manna, that’s cool! We will be taken care of every day!” That’s not what Jesus had in mind.

Just like the woman in John 4 who wanted the water that Jesus offered, so did the Jews want the bread that He had to offer – or so they thought. They could not understand Jesus’ spiritual words because they were thinking with carnal or natural minds.

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God (Romans 8:6-8).

They thought they understood but they did not. Jesus then went on to be much more specific in His explanation and it would offend many and cause them to turn back from following Him. We will pick up the study of how that happened and what Jesus said to cause that to happen next week.