

John 6:22-40

22 On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone.

22 The crowd knew Jesus didn't leave with the disciples. Apparently they had camped all night on the grass waiting for Jesus to come down from the Golan Heights.

23 Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

23,24 Tiberias was on the western shore. Boats had come nearby, perhaps delivering goods or people to Bethsaida. So some of the people who had eaten the bread and fish from Jesus' hands boarded the boats to go look for Jesus back in Capernaum. Surely many of them also walked back. There were many boats in Jesus' day. In fact, during the Jewish revolt in 70AD the Jews made a naval attack on Tiberias.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

25,26 Wouldn't this have been the perfect opportunity for Jesus to explain that He is the Master and Maker of matter? But Jesus never responds like we would expect. Instead of answering the question He spoke to the problem in their hearts. They wanted more free fish sandwiches.

Isn't that often our problem too. We run to Jesus when we are in a crisis or want something, but then when the crisis is over we go our way and neglect prayer and reading the Word. Jesus longs to give us something much more than the physical things we often ask for.

27 Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

27 All our work should be to glorify God. To receive the eternal food, the incarnate Word should be what we long for and work for. The spiritual realities of who He is and what He means to us endures to eternal life. All else perishes. He will explain in a strange way, saying His food is to do the will of God (John 4:34), and that He is the bread of life (vs 35). The seal is the stamp of God attesting that He is from God. The ultimate seal (proof of authenticity) was the resurrection, but all the Messianic signs were also God's attestation seal (1 Corinthians 9:2).

28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"

28 The Jews were so into works to please God that they wanted to know some action that would cause them to be sure of their salvation. It is the same today. Some churches claim the work of God is to go out street witnessing, or worship on the Sabbath, or be baptized in their church, or tithe, or attend every Sunday, or receive communion from them alone. Note carefully Jesus' answer.

29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

29-31 Some rabbis of the first century believed that when the Messiah came, he would feed the people manna. They suggest that it be the sign from heaven, in other words feed them for the rest of their lives. That is the sign they wanted and that is just exactly what Jesus said was the problem in their hearts (verse 26). They were focused on the physical and what was in it for them.

32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."

32 The manna came from God, not Moses. They were expecting Jesus to provide for them and not looking to God. The shadow is the manna, the reality is Jesus. They asked for the foreshadow of Christ when He was right in front of them. This is John's use of the Greek word logos - the shadow and the true substance. He is re-emphasizing that Jesus is a gift from God, an invitation to a relationship with God.

33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

33 Just as manna was all they needed to sustain their physical lives, the source of every need for our spiritual life is Jesus. Jesus again declares that He is not from this world. He is God stepping into His creation so that we might have our relationship with God restored.

As the bread sustained them through their pilgrimage through the wilderness, so Jesus is our sustenance through the wilderness of this life. As they needed to go out daily and gather what they needed to survive, so we must meet with the Lord daily and let Him be the sustenance of our spiritual life (Matthew 6:11). The manna was as important for their physical existence as Jesus is for our spiritual existence. They could not live without manna, nor can we live spiritually without Jesus.

34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

34 They didn't realize what they were asking. He says He is the gift, the bread from heaven, and so they ask to be always given that bread. We often see in John that Jesus must spell things out before people understand what He is getting at.

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

35 Jews referred to the Torah as bread. They would have understood that Jesus was saying He is the Word incarnate. Nothing in this world will satisfy the soul. We should hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus said if we do, we will be filled (Matthew 5:6; Isaiah 55:1-3). The way to be filled is to come to Jesus and believe in Him.

36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

36 Believing is to partake of the bread of life. They saw Him heal and feed the multitude, but they still would not believe Him to be the Messiah and source of life. They wanted the gifts of God not the Giver of the gifts. What about us?

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

37 God draws us to Jesus (6:44). When we then come, we are safe in Him. He will finish the work he started in us (Philippians 1:6). We may stumble along the way, but He will not cast us out. The verb "come" is in the present tense, to continue to come to Him. Predestination and free will is a mystery but is somewhat understood in the sense that God knows the future. He knows who will accept His drawing them to Jesus and who will reject that grace.

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

38 Jesus came to demonstrate the heart of the Father. Our desire should be the same, to do the Father's will. It is interesting that in His humanity He could have a will other than that of the Father (Luke 22:42). Can we say what Jesus said here?

39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

39 Jesus keeps us. Yet Judas did walk away (John 17:12). All who seem to follow are not necessarily given by the Father. Jesus will raise believer's mortal bodies and transform them into eternal bodies that will rise and meet our spirits in the air.

40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

40 The ones who are given to the Son are those who look to the Son and believe in Him. Here again is the mystery of free will and the sovereignty of God. God draws us to Jesus and if we look to Him and believe we are given to the Son, thus we have eternal life and our bodies will be raised incorruptible. (See 1 Corinthians 15).

Questions:

Why did the crowd follow Jesus?

In what ways do we do the same?

What does Jesus command us to focus our energy on?

What does God require of us?

What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the bread of life."

What did Jesus promise to those whom the Father draws to Him?

Is verse 38 a life goal for you?