

In the thousands of years since this story took place, we find the heart of man remains unchanged. We still invest our lives in the physical. We still selfishly look to Jesus for what He can do for us instead of for who He is. Like the Jews in this crowd, we often misunderstand just what Jesus is saying. John is reminding us of these weaknesses so that we can see the mistakes that were made by others and learn from them. He is reminding us of Jesus' powerful statements and signs to help us remove what blinds us and see the world as it truly is. (1John 2:15-17)

Jesus had just fed the 5000 from one little boy's lunch. The crowd had wanted to make Him king, but Jesus slipped away to be alone in prayer. (John 6:15) That night the disciples were caught out on the lake in a life-threatening storm. Jesus came to them, walking on the water. Suddenly they were at their destination.

*<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"* They knew He didn't leave with the disciples. He could have walked around the shore during the night. They never would have guessed that He walked across the lake. (John 6:19) Here is a perfect opportunity for Jesus to tell them He is the Master of matter. Right?

We are getting used to the fact that Jesus doesn't operate like we would. Jesus' miracles were never for show. In fact, He often asked people not to tell other what He had done. (Luke 8:56) He responded as the Father would have Him respond. Jesus spoke straight to their hearts. *<sup>26</sup> 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.* Ouch! Jesus was revealing to them the motivations of their heart. (John 2:25) They were after more free fish sandwiches. Jesus had come to save their souls for all eternity, and they were looking for what they could get out of His miraculous ability in the present. (Ecclesiastes 6:7)

Have we changed? We run to Jesus when a loved one is ill. We run to Him when we have a financial crisis or emotional pain and we should. But do we run to Him because of who He is? In this passage we see our loving Creator, full of grace and truth, loving and compassionate, and all the people can do is ask for more food. He has come from heaven to enter into a saving eternal loving relationship and they want another sandwich. It reminds me of a lust filled person that can only see his date's physical features. That crowd had the unique opportunity to hear the Word from heaven, to follow the physical manifestation of God on earth. How many prophets have longed to see and hear the Messiah but lived in a different age? (1Peter 1:10-11) May God help our relationship with Jesus to be about who He is and not what we can get.

Many of us would give anything we own, pay any price, to spend a day with the incarnate Son of God. But at the end of the day we might think we wasted our money, because He would tell us what the Holy Spirit already tells us. (John 16:7) He would say the same things that we are reading today. (John 14:26) We can spend the day with Jesus via the Holy Spirit and the Word and it doesn't cost anything except time. But do we want to hear what He has to say? We would like for Him to send us on some incredible mission, but His mission is for us to encourage one another. Keep

**Commented [notes1]:** 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.  
1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.  
John 6:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 19 When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified.  
John 6:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 56 Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.  
Luke 8:56 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.  
John 2:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 7 All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.  
Ecc 6:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.  
1 Peter 1:10-11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.  
John 16:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.  
John 14:26 (NIV)

learning the Scriptures and letting them guide our life. Keep loving one another, and stay in fellowship. Reach out when He prompts you. We can get so accustomed to the Christian life that we forget how significant the little things are. We can end up doing them out of duty instead of love.

Here is what He says then and now, <sup>27</sup> *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.* Life isn't about building a bigger barn to store all your toys. (Luke 12:18) It isn't about seeing how much you can save for retirement. It's about eternity. One religion stockpiled dried food for a coming time of trouble and many folks have their emergency cash for the proverbial rainy day, but Jesus is saying we need to store up treasure in heaven. (Matthew 6:20) Let me submit to you that our greatest eternal treasure is a relationship with Jesus.

Jewish people didn't have a problem understanding this. They often referred to the Torah as bread. They could understand that Jesus was telling them they needed to listen to Him and receive the words of life. This reminds us of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well. He offered her a well of water that springs up into everlasting life. (John 4:14) Jesus isn't sharing temporary solutions to life, fixes that get us by for the moment. He is offering the eternal solution for our soul, water that springs up to eternal life, food that endures to eternal life. He offers a relationship with Him.

*On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.* The culture of that day had engraved stamps that they would push into clay or wax. Everyone's seal was unique. The imprint affixed to a document meant the owner stood behind it. Jesus was saying that God stands behind Him, vouches for Him. He has God's imprint on His life. His words and actions bear the signature of God so listen with all your heart! (John 14:10) If you are spiritually hungry, He's the only place to go. God feeds the world spiritually through Jesus.

<sup>28</sup> *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"* There were debates in Jesus' time about what was the most essential Law. The students of Scripture noticed that the prophets had made statements that seemed to be more concise than the Law. In the Gospels we see people asking what was the most important or essential law. (Mark 12:28) That is really what they are asking here. "How can we please God? What is God asking of us? Give it to us in a nutshell."

<sup>29</sup> *Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."* This is another of Jesus' audacious statements that shocked the hearers. What does God require of man? What can we do to please God? The Pharisees would have said it was to keep all 613 laws. Jesus answered with one simple clear statement. Believe in the One God sent! (Acts 16:31) In that one sentence, Jesus explained atonement. You can never keep all the laws of God. Jesus did it for you and will take your sins. All you must do is believe in Him, God's provision.

That was such an unexpected response that the people must have been asking each other, "What did He say? Believe what? Did you catch that?" When at another time someone asked what is the greatest command in the Law, Jesus told them to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. (Mark 12:30) But here

**Commented [notes10]:** 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' Luke 12:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matt 6:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 4:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. John 14:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** 28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Mark 12:28 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Acts 16:31 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' Mark 12:30 (NIV)

they are asking not about commands in the Law, but how to do what God requires. God requires perfection. The only way to attain that is to believe the One He sent, Jesus, then you will receive His righteousness. There is no other requirement. God places no other demand on you. It's simple but life changing, because your heart changes and you desire to live to please God.

The people understood that Jesus was referring to Himself. Their answer shows they understood. <sup>30</sup> So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? A sign from heaven was considered the ultimate verification that the prophet was from God. The people thought of the signs God gave Moses to verify that to them that God sent him. (Exodus 4:8) But the people are really back to what Jesus rebuked them for earlier.

<sup>31</sup> Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" They are suggesting that Jesus feed them again. Jesus discerned rightly when He said they were just looking to fill their stomachs with another free meal. He told them to work for food that lasts. They asked what God required. He said it was to believe in Him. They asked for a sign so they could believe, the sign of manna. So the conversation came full circle.

There are rabbinical writings from the first century that suggest that when the Messiah comes, He will feed the people with manna like Moses did. (2Bar. 29:8) This was the reason they were so ready to make Him king by force after the feeding of the 5000. Now they are asking Him to do it again to prove they should believe Him. He already did it the day before. What they really want is free food for life.

Actually, it wasn't Moses that gave them the food. It was the Lord. (Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24-25) Jesus reminded them of that because they were looking to Him as a prophet to meet their needs instead of to God who is the real provider. <sup>32</sup> 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. God not only was the One that gave their ancestors manna, and just gave them the food on the mountain, but He is the One that sent Jesus, which is so much more important than physical food. He is an invitation to relationship.

Jesus went on to explain what bread He was talking about. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jesus is the One that came down from heaven to give life to not only the Jews, but the whole world. Manna was just a picture of Jesus. It was a physical expression of what Jesus would mean to them. 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 couldn't live without manna, nor can we live spiritually without Jesus.

John is bringing in these Old Testament types and letting us listen to the words of Jesus to help us see that Jesus meant it when in the last chapter He declared that all the Scriptures were about Him. (John 5:46) Moses was a picture of Jesus just as the

**Commented [notes17]:** 8 Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. Ex 4:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** "And it will happen at that time that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who will have arrived at the consummation of the time."

**Commented [notes19]:** 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. Ex 16:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 15 In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them. Neh 9:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 24 he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. 25 Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat. Psalms 78:24-25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 11 Give us today our daily bread. Matt 6:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. John 5:46 (NIV)

manna was a picture of Jesus. God painted picture after picture in history of what He was going to do through His Son.

<sup>34</sup> "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." "Bread that gives life? OK, give us some." It wasn't that they were just seeing things carnally. They had surely heard references of the Law being compared to bread. They were used to analogies. They preferred the physical gifts of God to a relationship with God.

Jesus had to be very specific and spell it out in no uncertain terms. It was like talking to children. Why do you want gifts when you can have the Giver? <sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. Jesus was declaring that He is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction. He is the bread and water that endures to eternal life. Isaiah 55:1-3b (NIV) <sup>1</sup> "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. <sup>3b</sup> Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.

They were to hear His words so that their soul could live. It's the same for us! When we hear Him say, "The work God requires is to believe in the One He sent," then we must believe if we are to have life. If we are to have our soul fed from the bread of heaven, we must believe and receive so that our soul may live.

This is one of Jesus' numerous "I AM" statements in John. We have already heard Him declare "I am" to the woman at the well (John 4:26) and the disciples in the storm (John 6:20). Now He uses "I am" with a picture to help them understand. Jesus doesn't give us a thing that satisfies our spiritual hunger. He gives us Himself. He is the bread of life!

<sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. Jesus knew they were not receptive to what He said because their hearts were focused on getting something physical. Sometimes we are so focused on having our prayer answered, that when it is not, we aren't able to listen and receive the comfort and direction we so desperately need. They had witnessed the miracles, believed He was the Prophet Moses spoke of, but they didn't do what Moses said. "Hear Him!" (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Whoever does come to Jesus has come because God drew them. (John 6:44) We don't come on our own. We are so focused on the physical that we can't hear spiritually. We would never come to Jesus unless God drew us with His grace and love. God gives us to the Son. Whoever God gives to the Son will never need fear being driven away. We may fall a thousand times, but the Lord will lift us up like stumbling children learning to walk. (Psalm 37:4) He won't drive us away because we are slow to learn. That should encourage us all. I'm sure that after last week's message, we could all see where we need to let the life of Christ be more evident in our lives. Thank God that Jesus won't drive us away because we aren't perfect. He

**Commented [notes24]:** 26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."  
John 4:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 20 But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid."  
John 6:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.  
Deut 18:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."  
John 6:44 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.  
Psalms 37:4 (NIV)

remembers the weakness of our condition. (Psalm 103:14) And I'm convinced that He looks forward to what we will become when we see Him face to face. (1John 3:2)

That's the same way we should see one another as well. We can't demand perfection from others because we know we aren't perfect. So we don't drive others away either, or the church would be empty. Amen? Instead, we encourage one another's growth in Christ. (Hebrews 10:25) It isn't that we ignore sin, but we encourage one another to overcome and grow in Christ. We forgive offenses against us. (Matthew 6:12) We overlook immaturity and look forward to more Christ likeness.

<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. Jesus is the bread from heaven for us because that is the Father's will. He didn't come here to do His own thing, but to do the Father's will. This, too, should be our motto. As Connie asked a few weeks ago, "What on earth are you doing?" Our answer should be the same as Jesus. "I seek to do the will of Him who sent me." Let me make that a simpler contemporary expression. "I am here to do God's will, and to do that I must know Him." This should be every Christian's purpose for living.

<sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. How can Jesus lose none that the Father gave Him? It's by securing our salvation on the cross and conquering death for us. It's only by bringing us into a new covenant made in His blood that we will never be lost. It's only by making an irrevocable contract on God's just terms that we are assured of resurrection. (1Peter 3:18)

<sup>40</sup> 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 him up at the last day." Look and believe! (Numbers 21:8) We've talked about the different ways to describe salvation in the book of John. Here is one more. Look to the Son and believe in Him. Our problem is that we so often look to and believe in our self. We think we can be good enough to pass God's minimum standard to get into heaven. God's minimum and maximum is the same; it's the life of Jesus! That is why we must look to Him. That is why the work God requires is to believe in Him. He is God's provision for our need. He is the bread of life for our spiritual hunger. We can't get through a single passage in John without some kind of declaration that our only hope is to trust in Jesus. He deserves to be Lord of our lives. He is life. He is God's provision for our spiritual hunger and thirst. He is the One that keeps us. He is the One that will raise us. He is the One that justifies us before the Father. He is the One that transforms us, who saves us from our self. He is the One God was pointing to as He ordained history to be filled with types and shadows of Him. He is worthy of all our praise.

In John's vision of heaven written sometime after His gospel, he asked about the people he saw in heaven. Here is what the elder told him. <sup>14b</sup>...they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. <sup>16a</sup> Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. Revelation 7:14b-16a (NIV) And why won't they hunger and thirst? <sup>17a</sup> For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. Revelation 7:17a (NIV) He gives us Himself!

**Commented [notes29]:** 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. Psalms 103:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes32]:** 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matt 6:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes33]:** 18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 1 Peter 3:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes34]:** 8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." Num 21:8 (NIV)