



# The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 17

John 6:22-29

## I. The Setting

- ❖ John 6:59--*Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum*
  - We jump all the way down to this verse just to point out our location. So our progress through John 6 thus far is as follows...
    - Jesus fed the 5,000
    - Jesus walked on water
    - Jesus is now in the Synagogue at Capernaum and is going to be preaching to them.
- ❖ John 6:22-25--*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. 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. 25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here*
  - They are clearly asking more than, "what time did you get here?" They are asking Jesus, "How did you get here? We saw you on the other side of the sea yesterday, your disciples took the last boat out, and yet somehow you made it over! How did this happen!?"

## II. The Sermon begins!

- ❖ John 6:26--*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*
  - Three things to see in this verse...
- 🎧 **If you ask Jesus the wrong question, you won't get an answer**
  - They asked him, "when did you get here?" Yet, his answer had nothing to do with telling them how and when he had arrived. Jesus is always in control of the direction of a conversation. He is a master of rhetoric. He has a point that he intends to make with them and absolutely nothing will deter him from making that point.
- 🎧 **They were seeking Jesus for the wrong reason**
  - They should have come seeking Jesus because of who he had revealed himself to be. They should have come to worship and bow down. They had an encounter with...
    - ❖ Hebrews 1:3--*...the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature*
  - Yet, somehow they completely missed it. They are so blinded by their own selfish, earthly desires that they missed the glory of God standing right before them. James Montgomery Boice describes these words of Christ as "a sharp unveiling of the crowds unworthy motives for seeking Jesus."<sup>1</sup>
  - Before we get too hard on these guys and start feeling too good about ourselves, we would do well to remind ourselves that we all have this tendency. How often are we guilty of seeking Jesus for what he can do for us rather than seeking Jesus for who he is. This is not to say that

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *John: Volume 2*, p.464



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we should never ask Jesus to meet our needs. After all, it was Jesus who taught us to pray saying...

❖ Matthew 6:11--*Give us this day our daily bread*

- It is only to say that seeking the Lord for our daily bread must never be more important than seeking him for who he is. This is why he begins that same prayer with...

❖ Matthew 6:9--*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*

## Seeing doesn't always mean believing.

- Most of us have heard someone say, "I would believe in God if he would show himself to me." Yet, Jesus is teaching us that this simply isn't true. These people had seen the signs that Jesus performed and had, to some degree, rightly understood the meaning of these signs...

❖ John 6:14--*When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world"*

- In spite of this reality, they still didn't believe. Verse 26 shows us that these people weren't really interested in worshipping the Son of God. They weren't interested in celebrating the coming of the Messiah. They merely wanted their bellies filled again. They chased him all the way across the sea of Galilee to try persuade him to repeat the "bread trick."
- These people saw the wonders of God with their own eyes. They were shown irrefutable proof that Jesus is God and yet according to verse 36...

❖ John 6:36--*But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.*

- ...they remain in their sin of unbelief. Seeing doesn't always mean believing.

❖ John 6:27--*Do not work 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*

- Two things to see in this verse...

## Jesus commands them to get their priorities straight

- This verse is very similar to something the Lord said in the book of Isaiah as well as something that Jesus said to the woman at the well.

❖ Isaiah 55:1-3--*"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant"*

❖ John 4:13-14--*"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"*

- The message of these passages is basically the same. The Lord is saying don't seek to merely fill your belly. No matter how full you get, you will be hungry again and again. Don't seek to merely quench your thirst. No matter how much you drink, you will need



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to draw water again and again. Ultimately, these things cannot satisfy. You MUST NOT make what doesn't satisfy your heart's priority!

- At this point in John 6, the proposed alternative is rather vague. All we really know is that whatever it is that we are supposed to seek. It...
  - (1) Is some kind of food that endures to eternal life (whatever that means!)
  - (2) Jesus is the one who gives this food
- Jesus will fully unpack this for us as the chapter progresses, but right now, this is all he reveals.



#### Jesus affirms himself.

- When Jesus says...
  - ❖ John 6:27--*For on him God the Father has set his seal*
- "The idea is that God has certified the Son as his own agent, authorizing him as the one who alone can bestow this food.<sup>2</sup>" These ideas are being conveyed...
  - (1) Jesus comes with all of the authority of God the Father. "A king's signet seal on a document gives it the authority of the king himself<sup>3</sup>"
  - (2) Jesus is the only way. The Father placed the seal upon Jesus, no one else. This of course is more explicitly stated later in John's gospel...
    - ❖ John 14:6--*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
- ❖ John 6:28--*Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"*
  - Nearly every time the offer of eternal life is made, the hearers respond with a question very similar to this one. We see this time and time again in the New Testament...
    - ❖ Luke 18:18--*And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*
    - ❖ Acts 2:37--*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*
    - ❖ Acts 16:29-30--*And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*
  - This response is so common because we all know intuitively that deals like that aren't free. Surely we must DO something, right!?
  - What makes this even more interesting is that Jesus has lead them to ask this question. These people were working hard. They had chased him down across the sea of Galilee. Seeing this, Jesus responds "if you're going to work so hard, the least you can do is work for something that endures to eternal life!"

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<sup>2</sup> D.A. Carson, *John: Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, "Seal."



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- An astute reader will read this and ask, “why does Jesus cause them to think that they can work and earn eternal life for themselves when they can’t?” My guess is that he is setting them up to be utterly perplexed by his answer.
- ❖ John 6:29--*Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.*
  - Two things to see here...
- 🕒 **FAITH ALONE!!!!** This indeed is one of the most glorious and perplexing truths in all of scripture. They were most likely expecting a long list do’s and don’ts and were told that none are required. There is only one requirement...FAITH ALONE. This of course is not the only place we hear such a message in the New Testament. It is the resounding theme of this gospel and the whole New Testament...
- ❖ John 1:12--*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*
- ❖ John 3:16--*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- ❖ John 3:18--*Whoever believes in him is not condemned*
- ❖ John 3:36--*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life;*
- ❖ John 5:24--*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life*
- ❖ John 6:47--*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.*
- ❖ John 20:31--*but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- ❖ Acts 10:43--*everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.*
- ❖ Acts 16:31--*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household*
- ❖ Romans 1:16--*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*
- ❖ Romans 1:17--*as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.*
- ❖ Romans 3:28--*For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
- ❖ Romans 3:30--*since God is one — who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith*
- ❖ Romans 4:3--*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.*
- ❖ Romans 4:5--*And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,*
- ❖ Romans 10:9-10--*because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified...*
- ❖ Galatians 3:11--*“The righteous shall live by faith”*
- ❖ Galatians 3:26--*in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*
- ❖ Ephesians 2:8--*For by grace you have been saved through faith.*
- ❖ Hebrews 11:6--*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
- ❖ 1 John 5:1--*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God,*



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- FAITH ALONE!!! Could it be more clear!? Could there possibly be a better announcement? These people had been feverishly laboring for mere bread and have just heard that simple faith grants them access to bread that endures to eternal life! Though it may seem impossible to improve upon this news, it does indeed get even better...



**Faith is God's work, not ours.** Even the faith that is required to have access to the bread that endures to eternal life is not our work, it is God's. Jesus said in verse 26...

- ❖ John 6:26--*Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.*
- This truth too, can be found throughout the New Testament...
  - ❖ John 1:12-13--*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
  - ❖ Romans 9:16-- *So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.*
  - ❖ Ephesians 2:8--*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*
  - ❖ Philippians 1:29--*For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,*
  - ❖ Philippians 2:13--*for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
- What an astounding offer. Jesus is saying, the only requirement for eternal life is faith and the Father and I (and the Spirit, but that is another sermon) will take care of that for you. Jesus himself is personally inviting them to know him, believe in him, and live forever. Next week we will examine how they respond to this offer. This week, each of us must examine how we respond to this offer. Is God, even now, granting you the gift of faith to believe in Jesus? If so, I pray that you will repent of your sin, place your faith in Jesus and be saved. If God has already granted you the gift of faith to believe in Jesus, are you living in such a way that your gratitude is evident? I pray that we will never "get over" what God has done for us. In fact, I pray that we will grow more and more astonished by God's gracious gift as time goes by.