

- ***READ John 6:1-3*** At this point in Jesus's ministry, we find our Lord making His way to the area known as Tiberias. His fame has certainly spread far and wide because we find a large crowd following Him as they saw the signs of His power in His healing of those who were sick. Beginning in **v.3**, we see Jesus going up to sit on the mountain with His disciples, and He takes notice of this great crowd following them and the need for them to eat. What we have following is one of the more well known stories of Jesus with His feeding of the 5,000 here in **John 6:5-13**.
- A meal that began with only two fish and five loaves of bread ended up yielding twelve baskets of leftovers. John records in **vv.14,15** that the people recognized what took place and they sought out to take Jesus and force Him to be king. Jesus, being aware of what was about to take place withdrew Himself to the mountain to be by himself. Around evening, the disciples decide that it is time to leave so they head down to the sea to cross over to Capernaum.
- This might not seem all that weird besides the fact that Jesus was not with them, and a storm came up against the disciples as they rowed along the way. As they are going along, they see Jesus walking on the water coming towards them. Obviously, these men are a little shaken up by what they are seeing, but Jesus reassures them and they receive Him into the boat. Instantaneously, they all find themselves having arrived at their destination. Certainly, Jesus in His miraculous power had transported them across the stormy water.
- Upon their arrival in Capernaum, we find Jesus coming face to face with the crowds who seem to have been searching for Him since He had left them at Tiberias. Let's take a few minutes to break down these verses down before we look at three things that this multitude came to know and understand about Jesus and their searching and needing of Him.
 - **(vv.22-25)** The multitudes search for Jesus.
 - **(vv.26-28)** Jesus rebukes them for their poor motives & they respond by asking what they can do better.
 - **(vv.29-34)** Jesus instructs them to believe and seek the bread of heaven given by God.
 - **(vv.35-40)** Jesus declares Himself as the bread of life.
 - **(vv.41-42)** The Jews grumble and question His legitimacy.
 - **(vv.43-46)** Jesus establishes Himself as the only way to God.
 - **(vv.47-51)** Jesus further establishes Himself as the bread of life.
 - **(vv.52-59)** Jesus reiterates their need to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood in order to have eternal life.

What The Multitude At Capernaum Realized:

I. Seeking Jesus must mean more than simply seeking to have physical needs filled. (vv.25-27)

A. Jesus wasn't sent here to earth to simply fulfill our physical needs.

1. We do find Jesus in the beginning of the chapter taking time to heal the sicknesses that were present in those who He came in contact with, and we find Him doesn't do this quite often throughout His ministry, but that doesn't mean that He came for this purpose. In fact, when these people came to find Jesus again, notice that He, knowing their hearts, rebukes them for coming to Him simply hoping that He might offer them more bread in order to be filled. **(v.26)**
2. These people had their hearts focused not on those things that were eternal and spiritual in nature, but they were wholly focused on physical gratification, and it wasn't just in regards to food, but remember that they recognized Jesus as the promised Prophet and they sought to force Him to be king. **(vv.14,15)** These people wanted some full bellies and to have this powerful man as the one who would restore their people to their deserved glory and prominence. These people were very much focused on earthy things.

3. How often do people view Jesus in the same way today? How often do men in the 21st century see Jesus or His church as nothing more than an entity that can fulfill their bodily needs and desires? Unfortunately, we see this quite often. We see churches that behave more like recreational clubs and well-fare agencies than they do spiritual institutions. We see men and women preaching a false gospel of health, wealth, and prosperity, and we see thousands and thousands flocking to listen to these false teachers.
 4. It isn't that being fed, having fun, or enjoying the blessings of life isn't a good thing...but the problem lies in the fact that there are many who come to Jesus simply because they believe that this is what He is offering to them. They care far more for what temporal gain they can obtain than they do what eternal and spiritual blessings come from seeking after Jesus. Those in this multitude had this mindset, and many today still have this mindset. Jesus rebuked them, and would do the same thing today given the chance.
- B. They realized through the rebuke of Jesus and we must remember that the purpose of Jesus coming and our need to seek after Him is so we might glorify God in His offering of salvation to mankind.**
1. Yes, Jesus healed many people. Yes, He performed mighty deeds that benefitted many, but we must remember that He did these things so that people might believe. They were given as the seal upon Jesus that confirmed Him as being sent by God. *"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."* (**John 20:30,31**)
 2. Jesus is glorified and we are truly helped and blessed when we come to Jesus for the spiritual benefits that He offers. His mission was first and foremost spiritual in nature, and He expects for us to be a people who are spiritually oriented. Now, that doesn't mean that we don't give any sort of attention to physical things.
 3. We know that we are to work for our food and provide for our own. (**I Timothy 5:8**) We know that we are commanded to help those who are less fortunate than us. (**James 1:27**) Yet, let's recognize that these commands are given to us as individuals. It is our responsibility as individual disciples to care for the physical needs of life for ourselves and others, but we know that it is all done through the blessings God has given us. His Son didn't come to die for a welfare system or a recreational club. He came to die for a spiritual body that would help souls to find their way to God in heaven. Jesus very pointedly, in **John 6**, seeks to redirect the focus of these people to get them to realize that their seeking of Jesus was misdirected. He came to bless them spiritually unto salvation, not to fill their stomachs with bread that would only leave them hungry again in a short time.

II. Only through belief in the One sent by God could they work the works of God.

- A. After taking their attention off of their stomachs, Jesus seeks to redirect their focus to their belief in Him.**
1. Notice the way Jesus frames this belief in Him. The multitude asked *"What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"* (**v.28**) According to the popular teaching of our day, you would think that Jesus would say, *"Well, nothing at all because my Father will call you all individually with His Spirit when He is ready."* They would probably jump ahead to **vv.44,45** to try to show that no one can come to God unless He personally draws the individual to Himself. This would mean that there is nothing that we can do in order to do the works of God. We are simply helpless until God comes in and changes our heart to be able to seek Him.
 2. However, that isn't found anywhere in these verses! Instead, what we see is Jesus saying that they could do what was right, they could work the work of God by believing in *"Him whom He has sent."* (**v.29**) Seems to me that Jesus is saying that belief depends upon their decision to

do so, and it depends on them allowing the Father to draw themselves to Him through His ultimate act of love in sending His Son to give His life for them. In fact, let's break down some more false teaching of the day by recognizing that Jesus Himself calls this belief in Him a work in and of itself! This is something that man decides to do based upon God drawing him to Himself.

3. This word "draws" comes from a word that means to woo. Similar to the idea of a man wooing a woman. Men are able to woo women through impressive acts...none of which is better than acts of love, right ladies? Well what act of love has God given to draw all men to Himself? Of course, that answer is the sending of His Son to the earth to die for the sins of mankind. Through this sacrifice and the spreading of this message of love, all men could be drawn to God to believe upon His son and do the works of God that we were all created to do. **(Ephesians 2:10)**

B. In order for them to come to Jesus, they first had to get past the things that were holding them back from this truly belief and following.

1. Notice that these people had a lot of things to get past before they could truly believe in Jesus. They first had to get their minds and focus right. They had come looking for a free meal and a king to rescue them, but Jesus got them thinking in a different direction.
2. However, then we see them a couple of times begin to grumble and argue and think that Jesus's teachings were too difficult. In **vv. 41,52,60**, we see some in the multitude not respond well to the teachings of Jesus. They didn't like Him elevating Himself as He was. They didn't like His language about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They didn't like a lot of these things, and it was these very things that were going to prevent them from believing in Him as they should so that they might be saved.
3. Are we so different some of the time? What things might we see concerning Jesus that we just don't like that cause us to grumble? Maybe we like our intense focus on things of this world. Maybe we would rather the church be set up in a different manner than has been prescribed in Scripture. Maybe there is any number of things about Jesus that just doesn't sit well with us. Those might be real issues in our minds, but at the end of the day, we must humble ourselves and submit to the will of Jesus in full trust and belief. It is only by approaching our faith and belief in Jesus in this manner that we will be able to truly work the works of God in Jesus.

III. Only through consuming Jesus could they be raised on the last day.

A. These people originally came seeking Jesus for a perceived good they they thought He could offer them.

1. Remember from back in **v.14**, *"when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.""* But why would this matter? It would matter because, in their minds, He would return them to glory. They originally came to Him so they could gain this restoration. Then Jesus added that they wanted to find Him so they could do something to obtain some food for their stomachs. **(v.26)**
2. They wanted that temporal resurrection as a people and they wanted the perishing bread that would leave them hungry again, but Jesus had come to offer them something so much better. He had come to offer them not temporal bread, but He had come to offer Himself as the bread of life so that they might live forever.
3. In **vv.30-35,47-58**, we see Jesus trying so strongly to show them that He was that bread which would truly profit them in a way that they couldn't even comprehend at the moment. Their minds were still focused on physical bread and even the manna that Moses had given their forefathers. However, Jesus was offering them something that would last them for eternity, just just a short time like the physical manna, if they would only allow themselves to consume everything that had to offer. They had to fully buy in and commit themselves to Him.

B. Being fully committed to Jesus and consuming Him fully meant that their lives had to revolve around Him in all things.

1. Jesus was demanding that He be at the center of their lives. He said that they had to *“eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood.”* (v.53) Surely Jesus isn't advocating cannibalism, right? To us this seems obvious, but to many present, this was a teaching that they just couldn't handle, and so we see many of them leaving. (v.66)
2. These people were not willing to believe the words of Jesus that *“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him.”* (v.56) They wouldn't accept this level of commitment to this Man even though they had seen Him perform such mighty acts. Will we be like these people? Will we only seek Jesus up until the point of true commitment that demands fully devotion? Will we only be shallow in our belief? Will we only do what, in our minds, is just enough to be saved?
3. If this is our mindset, then let me frankly say that we might as well just do as these people and leave Him all together. Jesus demands that if we are going to gain the advantage of eating the eternal bread of life then we must give ourselves fully to Him in all things. We must give ourselves to Him and consume Him to the point that He truly abides in us...to the point that we behave as Jesus Himself would behave. To the point that it truly seems that Jesus is living in us. (**Galatians 2:20**) This might seem extreme and difficult, but the rewards are well worth the sacrifice...being raised in the last day to eternal life. These blessings are promised to those who will eat the flesh and drink the blood of the One sent to earth by God.

What a swing of emotions these people must have felt as they spent this time with Jesus. They originally come to this mighty man to gain healing and bread, but He ends up demanding that they give themselves fully to Him if they wanted to gain the true benefit of being a disciple of the Son of Man. What about us? Have we come to Jesus acknowledging that He truly is the bread of life who will give us eternal life if we will consume Him fully? Have we gotten ourselves past those walls of doubt and unbelief? Sadly, many of these number rejected Jesus and went away. May we not be of this sort. May we truly believe the words of Jesus so that we might believe unto eternal life with Him in glory. Let's close by giving thanks to our Father for Jesus being our bread of life.

PRAYER *Jehovah God...You have always been a God who seeks to provide for Your people. Even as Israel complained and grumbled against You, You provided bread for their sustenance. Father, we recognize that we have a much greater need in salvation and forgiveness for our sins, and we pray that You would help us to always give the greater attention to those needs above that which is physical and temporary. We praise You and honor Your name for sending Your only Son to be the bread of life for us. May we all be dedicated to the eating of this bread and the drinking of His blood so that we might have life in heaven with You. Help those who have not taken advantage of their bread to see their need for it and to act before it is too late. May all honor and glory be to Your holy name. Thank You Father, and we love You so much for all that You do for us. In the name of our worthy Savior we pray and give thanks... amen.*