

Theme: Jesus fed the multitude as a sign that He is the True Bread of Life, Who came down from heaven so that whoever feeds upon Him through believing in Him would have eternal life.

I. Intro - Multiple Storylines Together

- A. Marvel comic superhero movies - bringing many stories together
- B. Wendell Berry Port Royal fiction does the same thing
- C. Two main storylines in John: 7 signs and 7 I AM sayings
- D. They come together in John 6: 5th sign and first I AM
- E. What do these two things tell us about Jesus - and us?

II. The Sign: Feeding the Multitude

A. The background

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near. John 6:1–4

- 1. Jesus is back in Galilee and a crowd is following
- 2. The crowd is following because they saw signs of healing the sick
- 3. It is near the Passover (important to the sign/story)

B. Jesus tests the disciples

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going

to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to 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?” John 6:5–9

- 1. A huge crowd - “Philip, where can we buy bread?”
- 2. Jesus already knows what He will do - where do the disciples stand?
- 3. “It will take 8 months wages to feed them all!”
- 4. Poor boy with 5 small barley loaves, 2 little fish
- 5. Out in the middle of nowhere, Passover time, huge crowd, how can they be fed? (Like Exodus!)
- 6. The disciples still do not understand how Jesus is being revealed as Messiah to the people

C. The sign: Jesus feeds the multitude

Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). 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. John 6:10–13

- 1. Over 5,000 men - maybe 20,000 people!
- 2. Jesus takes the loaves and gives thanks (eucharist)
- 3. Gives food out, everyone eats all they want!

4. There are even 12 basketfuls of leftovers!

D. The response: make Jesus the king!

After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, 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. John 6:14–15

1. The people recognize what has happened

2. They say Jesus must be the Prophet!

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. Deuteronomy 18:18

- a. A prophet like Moses - the great lawgiver & prophet
- b. This Prophet will speak the words of God
- c. They came to link this Prophet with Messianic age and expect him to exceed Moses and other prophets
- d. Moses had fed the crowd in the wilderness in the Passover story in Exodus - now Jesus had
- e. Elisha had also fed a large group

A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. "Give it to the people to eat," Elisha said. ⁴³"How can I set this before a hundred men?" his servant asked. But Elisha answered, "Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lord says: 'They will eat and have some left over.'" ⁴⁴ Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord. 2 Kings 4:42–44

- 1. Jesus far exceeded this miracle of Elisha
- 2. This was a sign - He must be THE PROPHET!

3. They want to make Him the King!

4. Jesus will have none of this and goes away alone

5. Once again, the people seem to have an enthusiastic reaction to Jesus, but He senses something is wrong and will not commit Himself to them.

III. The Reality: The Lord Who Feeds His People

A. The problem with the crowd: insufficient hunger

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed 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. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." John 6:26–27

- 1. Once again, they see the sign but miss the reality
- 2. They follow just because they have physical hunger
- 3. They are after temporal food that spoils, but Jesus wants to give them eternal food that gives eternal life.
- 4. Physical hunger is good and necessary, but it is insufficient if it does not lead to spiritual hunger.
- 5. Even manna was insufficient and was given to teach the need for a deeper, spiritual hunger
I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:48–51

- a. They ate the manna God provided - and still died!
- b. The manna was given to teach their need for spiritual food that would give true life
He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Deut 8:3
 - 1. God gave manna to teach their need for spiritual food - the Word of Yahweh
 - 2. Manna was a sign to point them to their true need - the Word that comes from God to give eternal life
- c. Jesus is the True, spiritual Bread of life, to which manna was only a pointer.
- d. We only live if we feast upon Jesus, the Word that came from the mouth of the Lord to give us eternal life. (See John 1:1-4)
- e. All physical hunger is meant to point us to our need for Jesus, the Word of God and the True Bread.

B. We feast on the True Bread of Life by believing in Jesus

- 1. "Believe" or "come" (to Jesus) - 14x in this passage!
- 2. The consistent theme is not the physical eating of Jesus but spiritually feeding upon Him by coming to Him in faith

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." John 6:28–29

- a. They are looking for a work to do - God is looking for faith
- b. The whole focus is on believing in Jesus - the One God sent to save us

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. John 6:35–36

- a. Comes to me, believes in Me - parallel, same thing
- b. Believing in Jesus - feasting on Him, never hunger

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 them up at the last day."... ⁴⁷ Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life... ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. John 6:40, 47, 54

- a. The same thing is spoken in parallel in these verses
- b. Each verse speaks of an action and a result
- c. The results are spoken of in the same terms: eternal life and raised on the last day
- d. The causes are also the same: believing=eat & drink

C. Jesus fed the multitude as a sign that He is the True Bread of Life, Who came down from heaven so that whoever feeds upon Him through believing in Him would have eternal life.

D. Two responses to this reality

- 1. The majority rejected this and turned away
On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" ... ⁶⁶ From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. John 6:60, 66
 - a. They liked the sign - but not the reality!
 - b. This was hard to accept; it seemed so unreasonable

- c. Jesus had His place in their lives, but this was too radical! So they turned away - and lost everything!
 - d. This was and is how most people respond to the truth about Jesus.
2. The true disciples embraced Jesus in true faith
- “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” John 6:67–69
- a. Jesus will not change the message to attract the crowds because to do so would be to condemn everyone to eternal death!
 - b. Peter’s brilliant confession!
 - c. The chapter began with the disciples failing a test, but here they pass beautifully. No matter what others do, they cling to Christ in faith!
 - d. I urge you to follow this path!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see what we truly need is Jesus?
- 1. Every sign ultimately points to Jesus Himself as our deepest need
 - 2. Even important things like food are only temporary and are meant to point us to our need for Him
 - 3. Only Christ can meet our truest, deepest needs
 - 4. Every temporary, fleeting thing we chase can never satisfy, even if we spend all we have. But Jesus can fully satisfy and He has paid the price so that all may come!
 - 5. Come and eat and drink the free gift of Christ today!

- B. Feeding upon Christ this week
- 1. We encourage people to fast during this season
 - 2. But if we just skip meals we gain little to nothing
 - 3. Fast from food to feast upon Christ!! Let every pang of hunger point you to Jesus!
 - 4. Fast from other activities to spend extra time feasting upon Christ. They will leave you empty, but He will fulfill the deepest longing of your soul.
 - 5. Ask God to wean you from the empty pleasures of sin and to fill you with Christ and His Word.
 - 6. Let this be a week (and season) of feasting on Christ!
- C. Feasting on the Bread of Life
- 1. We conclude by coming to the Table to spiritually feed upon Christ in faith
 - 2. Confess where we have preferred temporal feasting
 - 3. Cry out for the hunger to always prefer Christ to every temporary feast
 - 4. Let Him feed you with the food of eternal life today

The Lord Who Feeds His People

John 6:1-15
 April 7, 2019
 Communion
 Philippians 4:19

Teaching keywords: Christology; Deity of Christ; Lent; miraculous gifts and signs; faith

May God meet all your needs and satisfy your deepest longings through the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

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