

John 6

Feeding the Five Thousand; The Storm at Sea;
Teaching the Multitudes; The Bread of Life;

Day 1

Read John 6:1-21

Feeding the five thousand

1. (Picture the events described in 6:1-4. Ask the 5 “W’s”: Who is involved? What is happening? When, where and why is it happening?) What kind of atmosphere seemed to be surrounding Jesus’ ministry at this point? (Compare Mark 6:31)

2. How did Jesus “test” His disciples? 6:5,6 Why do you think He did this?

Optional Digging Deeper

What other details about Jesus’ response to the crowds do Mark 6:34 and Luke 9:10,11 record?

For Your Information: “If the feast mentioned in 5:1 was the Feast of Tabernacles, the time interval is not likely to have been less than six months [between 5:47 and 6:1]. The Jews observed both Hanukkah and Purim in the interim, but neither required people to travel to Jerusalem. During this time, the Lord continued to minister in Judea and Galilee. As Jesus healed the sick and proclaimed the good news, multitudes began to follow. In fact, they didn’t merely follow; they relentlessly dogged His every movement. The Lord took the disciples to a ‘secluded place’ somewhere in the wilderness east of Bethsaida (Luke 9:10) (‘Up on the mountain’ is better translated, ‘into the mountains.’) But still they couldn’t escape the crowds. The Lord knew the vast majority sought Him for selfish gain and nothing more; nevertheless, unlike His disciples, He felt compassion for them even when they became a nuisance.”
– Charles Swindoll (131-132)

“This sign is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels...Matthew and Mark indicate that this miracle followed closely on the heels of the death of John the Baptist...(Mark 6:20-28). Luke indicates that the miracle followed the return of the disciples from their missionary labors (Luke 9:10).”
– Mike Calvert

3. Although Jesus had asked “where,” how did Philip answer the question? 6:7 What adjectives would you use to describe his perspective? (One denarius = a day’s wage. See Matt 20:2)

4. Where did Andrew look for a solution? 6:8,9 What was his estimate of the situation?

5. What would have been a good answer to Jesus’ question (6:5)?

Food for Thought: “That which God intends to do through us will be accomplished on the basis of faith in His power and sufficiency. His kingdom-work is a faith-venture. Anything else simply will not please the Lord or fulfill His will.” - Mike Calvert

6. How did Jesus perform the miracle of multiplying the food? 6:11 (*If there were five thousand men, how many people in total might there have been?*)

- How sufficient were Jesus' provisions? 6:12,13

Food for Thought: "Imagine the scene. [Jesus] broke one lunch into two, then again, and again, and again. He divided the lunch many thousands of times over a period of hours, assuming He worked alone...Never gauge the size of a challenge in terms of our capability. What we have to offer is never enough. God never calls us to provide; that's His responsibility. Instead, He calls us to commit whatever we have – even if it's no more than a sack lunch" – Charles Swindoll (134)

7. How did the people respond to the miracle? 6:14,15a (Cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

- How did Jesus deal with this popularity? 6:15 (Compare Matthew 14:23; Cf. 18:36) *Consider: What kind of sway could Jesus have exerted over the people?*

For Your Information: "Christ was at the zenith of His popularity, and the temptation to take the kingdom without the Cross must have been great (see Matthew 4:8-10). The parallel passages say that He went to the mountain by Himself to pray (Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:46). Here is our greatest resource in times of testing." – The Nelson Study Bible (1771)

8. List the words (6:16-19) that describe the situation the disciples found themselves in that night? e.g. "dark, alone..." (See more information in Mark 6:45-52.)

Food for Thought: "Matthew 14:25 tells us that this happened in the fourth watch of the night, sometime between three and six in the morning. So, they rowed hard for perhaps six to eight hours, and had only come a little more than half way across the lake (three or four miles)." – David Guzik

9. With what assurance did Jesus calm the disciples? 6:20 (Compare Isaiah 41:10)

- Why do you think Jesus *waited* to come out to them? (Mark 6:48 says that "he saw them straining at the oars.")

10. What other miraculous thing happened? 6:21 (See also Matthew 14:28-33; Mark 6:51,52)

Optional Digging Deeper
Fill in information about the 4th and 5th signs on the chart "Signs in the Gospel of John."

Food for Thought: "The disciples had just seen Jesus turn down an offer to be king; they might have thought that this was why He came... Despite that disappointment, Jesus came to them full of majesty and power, reminding them that He is still quite in charge even though He won't receive a king's throne based on popular opinion." – David Guzik

"Like the disciples, we can trust His word, 'do not be afraid'. He will be with us as we go through the storms of life – whether these storms involve a lack of money, or food, or health, or wars raging around us, or any other calamity." – Africa Bible Commentary (1263)

Applying the Word: “[God] calls us to commit whatever we have - even if it’s no more than a sack lunch” - Charles Swindoll

Do you have any situation in your life that seems impossible to meet? What part of it can you give to the Lord today?

Day 2

Read John 6:22-36

The multitude seeks Jesus

11. Why were the people questioning Jesus about His arrival at Capernaum? 6:22,25 (Read Mark 6:54-56 to see details about Jesus’ ministry to the people.)

12. (Mark the contrasts shown by the word “but” in 6:26-27.) What was Jesus saying about their motives for seeking Him? 6:26

- What did Jesus want their focus to be? 6:27

For Your Information: “God has set His seal”: “A seal was a mark of ownership and a guarantee of the contents. They should have confidence in Jesus because God the Father has ‘guaranteed’ Him.”
- David Guzik

13. What focus did the people have when it came to being right with God? 6:28

- What focus did Jesus give? (Note the change in tense from “works” to “work.”) 6:29 (See Romans 10:4)

Food for Thought: “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” “They expected to find that way as other sinners commonly do-by their works. The idea of doing something to merit salvation is one of the last that the sinner ever surrenders.”
- Barnes' Notes

“Believe in Him: How would you feel about a child that obeyed you perfectly but did not trust or love you? God wants our obedience to Him to grow out of a relationship of loving trust.”
- David Guzik

The Bread of life

14. How were the people still challenging Jesus? 6:31

- How did Jesus correct them? 6:32

15. How did Jesus relate Himself to the Father? 6:32,33

Optional Digging Deeper

What did God want to teach the Israelites by feeding them manna (6:31)? Deut. 8:2-3

- What “bread” do you think the people wanted? 6:34 (Cf. 4:15)

For Your Information: “Jesus contrasted physical food, which is the result of work and perishes quickly, with spiritual food, which comes by grace and lasts forever. Both are necessary, for they fulfill two legitimate human needs; life cannot continue without either. Our fallen, fleshly nature, however, craves one to the exclusion of the other...Jesus challenged the crowd to stop working for food that perishes and to devote equal passion to fulfilling the hunger of their souls.” - Charles Swindoll (142)

16. Summarize the focus the people had versus Jesus’.

People’s focus/attitude	Jesus’ focus
6:26 <i>Looking for Jesus to meet their physical needs</i>	6:27
6:28	6:29
6:30.31	6:32,33 (See Exodus 16:13-15)

17. In 6:35 list: (Cf. 4:14)

- The “I Am” statement:
- Conditions to receive:
- The promises given: (*Compare Isaiah 55:1-3*)

Optional Digging Deeper

Fill out the first “I am” statement on the chart: “I am” Statements in John.

18. The people had asked for a sign that they might “see and believe” (6:30). What did Jesus rebuke them for? 6:36 (*Consider what they had seen.*)

Food for Thought: “The men said earlier that, for them, seeing was believing. After they had been given a sign [6:11-14], they asked for a sign. Having seen Jesus, they refused to believe.” - Charles Swindoll (144)

Applying the Word: Consider the kinds of pressures that Jesus faced in his ministry. In what way would you like to become more Christ-like in dealing with stress and/or people?

Day 3**Read John 6:37-59****The Father's will/the people's grumbling**

19. List the other promises that Jesus made as the "bread of Life".

- 6:37
- 6:39
- 6:40

Food for Thought: "As the 'bread of life' Jesus is the sole source of true spiritual satisfaction. The gift of salvation is lavishly given, and is sufficient to save all who come to Him in faith."
– Mike Calvert

20. What claim did Jesus make about his origins? 6:38a (See also 6:46)

- What was the motivation for all that Jesus did? 6:38b (Cross-reference 4:34; 5:30):

21. What is the Father's will? 6:39,40 (*How secure is our salvation? John 10:28,29*)

22. Why did the Jews grumble at Jesus' words? 6:41,42

23. What kind of understanding do we need? 6:44

- What understanding did Jesus have? 6:46 (Cf. 1:18; compare Matthew 11:27)

24. What "belief" is Jesus calling for in 6:47,48?

- What was Jesus saying to people who claimed to know God but rejected the Son? (Compare John 8:42; 15:23)

Optional Digging Deeper

Compare the "grumbling" of the Israelites under Moses: Exodus 16:2-4; 17:3-7; Numbers 14:1-4; 27-30

Living Bread

25. Mark the word "bread" in 6:32-58. What difference did Jesus point out between the manna and the bread that He offered? 6:49,50

26. How was this bread made available to man? 6:51 (Compare Hebrews 10:19, 20)

27. What did Jesus mean by “eating and drinking” (6:53)? (Compare 6:35)

- What did the Jews think Jesus meant? 6:52

28. How did Jesus use the ideas of drinking and eating in:

- John 4:32-34.
- John 7:37-39

Optional Digging Deeper

For other examples about eating see Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8; Ecclesiastes 5:10.

29. List the things that Jesus said this “eating and drinking” will lead.

- 6:54
- 6:56
- 6:57b
- 6:58b

Optional Digging Deeper

Mark the words “come, believe, eat, and life” in 6:35-58. How are they connected?

For Your Information: “The metaphor of eating and drinking was common in Jesus' day, and pointed to a taking within one's innermost being...Faith in Jesus is not compared with tasting or admiring, but with eating. We must dig in! Jesus says that we must have Him within us, and we must partake of Him.”
- David Guzik

“The greatest stumbling block to Israel's belief in Messiah, Jesus Christ, was His death. A dead, blood-splattered Messiah just doesn't fit the Jewish concept...That's why Paul in Acts 17 when he was preaching to the Christians at Thessalonica for three Sabbaths said this, ‘he reasoned with them’ why Jesus had to...suffer and die. They didn't understand that shed blood, and Jesus was saying to them, ‘Not only do you have to accept My person, My flesh, you've got to be ready to accept My bloodshed.’ When He said ‘Drink My blood,’ He wasn't talking about literally drinking His blood, He was saying to them, ‘You've got to be willing to accept My shed blood for you.’”
- John MacArthur

“Our Savior meant there must be a deep partaking of Him. How do we do that? We must live depending on Him as the bread of life.”
- R. Kent Hughes (208)

Applying the Word: How would you explain what it means to “hunger and thirst” for Christ or “eat and drink” of Him? What things in your life make you hungry for Christ?

Day 4**Read John 6:60-71****Many disciples desert Jesus**

30. How did Jesus' teaching affect the disciples? 6:60 (*Compare the disciples in 6:60,66 with the 12 disciples in 6:67. See also Luke 6:13,17; 10:1*)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**difficult/hard**" Strong's #4642 *skleros*; dry, i.e. hard or tough (figuratively, harsh, severe)
– Strong's Concordance

"The Greek word implies 'harsh,' that is, hard to accept, not hard to understand." – John (Life Change Series) (81)

- What would challenge the disciples even more? 6:62

For Your Information: "The claim that He is the bread of life is a small one compared to the claims He can make from eternity...He went on to remind the disciples that His words have a heavenly origin and must be understood in a heavenly context."
– Africa Bible Commentary (1265)

31. How do we obtain life? 6:63 (*Compare 1:4; 1 Peter 1:23*) *What do you think it means that Christ's words are spirit and life?*

- What doesn't give us life? (Cf. 1:13; Compare Galatians 5:4; Ephesians 2:8,9)

For Your Information: "**Life** Strong's #2198 *zoe*; refers to fullness of life, a blessed life, a life that satisfies and can be lived as God intended for it to be lived because we are now united and identified with the life of Christ. He is now our 'life' source (Colossians 3:4) providing the potential for this new, full life. His life now operates in us as a motivating, energizing, pulsating principle of existence that has the potential to transform every believer's life."
– preceptaustin.org

32. What was Jesus' explanation for the disciple's unbelief in Him? 6:64-65

- How would you explain why many disciples withdrew/turned back (6:66)?

For Your Information: "John made clear that the defection was no surprise to Jesus. The unbelief of the disciples had been evident to Him from the very first, and His difficult utterances had been spoken for the avowed purpose of disclosing their true position."
– Merrill C. Tenney (123)

33. Although the Father may not "grant" (6:65) or "draw" everyone (6:44) to Christ, underline whom God desires to save.

- 1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. NIV
- 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. NIV

34. What emotion do you hear in Jesus' words in 6:67?

35. What were Peter's reasons for following Jesus?

- 6:68 (Compare 6:63)
- 6:69

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**Know** *ginosko* NT:1097 signifies 'to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand,' or 'to understand completely'...In the NT *ginosko* frequently indicates a relation between the person 'knowing' and the object known..."
- Vine's Expository Dictionary

Food for Thought: "Once Jesus effectively discouraged every fleshly motive for following Him, many stopped following... Peter does much in the gospels to make us sigh; but here, as he speaks for the twelve, he shines brightly. His focus is where it should be—that Jesus has the words of eternal life, not 'You have the bread that fills our stomachs.'" – David Guzik

36. Following Peter's declaration, why do you think Jesus revealed the truth about Judas? 6:70,71
(Why do you think Jesus continued to allow Judas to be His disciple?)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**devil**" *diabolos* Strong's 1228, "an accuser, a slanderer" (from *diaballo*, "to accuse, to malign")
- Vine's Expository Dictionary

37. Summarize the reactions of the different groups in Chapter 6 to Jesus' teachings.

The multitude: 6:2,15, 26	
The Jews: 6:41,42,52; 7:1	
The disciples: 6:60,61,66	
The twelve disciples: 6:68-71	

Applying the Word: How would you state your reasons (besides eternal life) for following Jesus?