

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK TWELVE: JESUS IS THE BREAD OF HEAVEN

READING

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. 23 Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. 25 They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” 26 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. 27 But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.” 35 Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6 (NLT)

TEACHING

In the last two weeks, we studied two amazing miracles: Jesus feeding thousands of people with five loaves and two fish AND Jesus walking on the water. Today’s story takes place the very next day. The crowds got into boats and followed Jesus; they were looking for him. You might think that Jesus would be glad that they were so eager to follow him, but Jesus knew that the reasons they were looking for him were not right.

The crowd was chasing after Jesus for two wrong reasons. First off, they hoped to see more cool miracles. They wanted to be wowed and entertained by something supernatural and sensational. Secondly, they wanted Jesus to continue to meet their natural needs – to keep feeding them! In other words, they wanted Jesus for what he could do for them. But Jesus doesn’t want us to follow him because of what we think we can get out of it. When you serve Jesus for your own selfish purposes then you don’t really love Jesus most – you love yourself most! In other words, Jesus isn’t the treasure that you desire most; he is simply the map to help you find the treasure. This isn’t what Jesus wants and it isn’t what you and I need.

In verse 35, Jesus explains using a metaphor. He calls himself “the bread of life.” This means that only Jesus can satisfy and take away our hunger for the wrong things. We should pursue Jesus not for what we can get out of it, but simply because of who he is.

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- What do you like to eat when you are hungry?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who were the crowds trying to find?
- Did the crowd have good or bad reasons for chasing after Jesus?

CHILDREN:

- Why was the crowd chasing after Jesus?
- In this story, what did Jesus call himself?
- What does it mean that Jesus is “the bread of life?”

TEENAGERS:

- Why was the crowd chasing after Jesus?
- Why isn't it right to follow Jesus for what you can get out of it?
- What is a right motivation for following and serving Jesus?

ADULTS:

- Are there any ways in your life that you are following Jesus for selfish reasons?
- What evidence is there that Jesus alone is where you find satisfaction in life?

PRAYER

God, help me to serve you and follow you for the right reasons. Holy Spirit, examine my heart and show me any motivations that do not honor you and any ways that are self-serving. Help me to not live for myself, but to live for you. Thank you for sending Jesus to be the bread of life and the living water—he satisfies the hunger and thirst of my soul. Help me to see Jesus more clearly and to trust him more consistently. Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

In this passage, Jesus' teaching is very controversial and misunderstood by the crowd. On one hand they are offended by the idea that Jesus “came down from heaven. On the other hand, they are disturbed by the thought of eating his flesh. The first part sounds like blasphemy to them and the second part sounds like cannibalism. Jesus didn't always make it easy on his audience. It's interesting to note that Jesus taught in a way that regularly referenced Old Testament Scripture and often included metaphors and stories. Local church teachers and preachers should root their lessons and messages in Scripture while also using colorful language and helpful examples to explain those truths.