

John 6

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Date: 29 December 2014

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[0 : 0 0] who had been involved in the distribution of the food had kind of missed out on the impact of the miracle. We saw as we're comparing the different gospel writers that in Mark's gospel it tells us that they considered not the miracle because their hearts were hard. Quite extraordinary.

Five loaves, two fish, thousands fed and far more left over at the end than they had at the beginning. And the disciples, it just passed them by. Didn't make an impact. It's quite extraordinary.

We were looking at that last week. That's the danger of a hard heart. We miss out seeing God's hand. And that's true right throughout life. God can be right beside us. God can be working amazing things in our lives. But if our heart is hard as a Christian, then it's passing us by.

We're not getting the impact. We're not seeing things in the way that we should. Ask the Lord for the soft heart so that you will see his hand at work all the time. We miss so many blessings by not seeing.

But anyway, the disciples, remember, they went off into a storm. And again, we suggested that if we are believers and our hearts are hard and we're not seeing the Lord in anything, don't be surprised if the Lord will send you and send me into a storm to bring us to shake our complacency and to bring us back. Because even when Jesus came walking on the water, again, we suggested that. When Jesus came walking on the water, they didn't recognize him. Disciples who'd been with Jesus all the time, they didn't recognize him. And again, we believe that was because of the hardness of their heart.

[1 : 54] We're not able to recognize Jesus when he's close by with a hard heart. But while the disciples weren't sort of bowled over by this miracle, the crowds were. Remember how they wanted to make Jesus king there and then? And Jesus withdrew. And we saw that that word, that actual word, withdrew, means that it's like he ran away. He went in a real hurry because he wanted to get away because he knew their intention to make him king. And Jesus knew that the crown was not to be given to him by the world or by the kingdom of darkness, as Satan was trying to offer him in the great temptation. That the crown was by the way of the cross. And again, we believe that at that point, the devil would have been tempting Jesus as well, saying, hey, you can have it. You can have the crown. They're going to make you king. But if Jesus had accepted the crown from the world, he would not be our king today. He would have not struck a mortal blow, a fatal blow to the kingdom of darkness. It had to be God's way. And so we find Jesus had withdrawn and the disciples had gone across on the boat and then he had joined them walking on the water. And now they're over on the other side. And again, the crowds found Jesus. And because they were so overwhelmed by what he had done, they were coming to him to hear what he had to say. And Jesus begins to tell them, remember, that was one of the last things we looked at last week is we could still see how blinded the Jews were. Because they really were seeking Jesus, not from a spiritual point of view, but from a physical point of view. He'd fed them. He'd given them a free meal. He was somebody who displayed a power and they began to think, hey, this is the prophet that was spoken about. This is a man who's going to deliver us from the tyranny of Rome. This is a man who's going to set our nation free. Let's make him king. But they had no idea that the Messiah's work was a spiritual work. It's a spiritual kingdom.

They were looking purely on the physical. And so when they're talking to Jesus and Jesus is talking to them, at first they're not getting it. They're just not grasping the truth because they're grounded in just the physical. They're not seeing the spiritual at all. And Jesus is saying to them, look, I am the bread. I am the bread of life. And they're asking for a sign. I find that one of the most staggering questions or requests in the Bible. These are the people who were fed, with five loaves and two fish, the thousands. And they're saying to Jesus, right, you do a sign and we'll believe. And Jesus had just performed an extraordinary miracle. But basically they're saying, look, okay, you did that. Moses, our father, he fed our forefathers for 40 years with bread from heaven. They're more or less saying to Jesus, beat that. Can you do that? Are you able? Are you as good as Moses? And Jesus is saying to them, look, actually, all that happened there in the wilderness was a picture of me. Just as this bread was given from heaven by my father, I now am the true bread that has come down from heaven. And at first they're saying to us, evermore give us this bread. And that's why Jesus then says, well, Jesus in verse 35 says, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. And whoever believes in me shall never thirst. And really it is quite an extraordinary statement. This is one of the reasons why I find it quite strange how people will accept the teachings of Jesus. People who believe, they haven't come to faith in Jesus Christ, but they believe really all that the Bible is saying about Jesus. Jesus makes claims that no other person has ever made in this whole wide world. The claims that Jesus makes are quite extraordinary. Can you imagine any person standing up and saying, it doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter your background, it doesn't matter the country you've come from, it doesn't matter your privileges or lack of privileges, it doesn't matter about anything. I will satisfy you in your life and I will take you when you die into heaven to be with me forever. Can you imagine somebody coming on the telly and saying that? You would say to yourself, well, that person's deluded. Because no human being as such can do that. Jesus is making these claims.

And that's why it was C.S. Lewis who was saying that people have a choice with Jesus, one of two. They either have to look at Jesus and say that this is the most monstrous, mad person ever. Or else he is absolutely who he says he is. There is no other alternative.

And when we strip it down, that's really it. Because these claims that he's making are absolutely mind-blowing. Only the Son of God could make claims such as these. And that's why it's madness to believe the truth about Jesus and yet to reject him. Because it's a fearfully serious thing to reject the claims of Jesus Christ. And so that's what we find Jesus is trying to teach these Jewish people.

Look, he says, I am, I am the bread of life. Everything that was shown in the Old Testament, all the symbols and all the rituals, everything has been pointing to me and the fulfillment of all these things. And that's why Jesus is saying, I am the only one who can really satisfy in life.

[9 : 01] You know, that's the person that we need in life. You know what it says? They said to him, verse 34, Sir, give us this bread always. That's what they said. Sir, give us this bread always.

I would hope today that there are people in here, and that's what you're saying. You're looking to Jesus, and you're saying, Lord, I need you. I need you. And you know, that's the great thing about when we receive Jesus. It's for always. It's forever. We don't take Jesus for a wee while. You know, when Jesus comes into a patient's life, do you know what it says? Do you know how it talks about it? It's abiding. When a patient comes to abide, they come to live.

Live there. Jesus comes to live forever. He doesn't come into a patient's heart through the Holy Spirit for a wee while, and then go away. No, it's forever.

And that's why even death can't break that. Death, that awful cord that separates in every other way in life, cannot separate this. This is the one union that cannot be broken.

And that is why Jesus is there for us. You know, no one else, nothing else will ultimately satisfy. And the thing is, we have to come to realize we need Jesus. There are loads of people today in this world who are trying to find happiness out of life. They're squeezing life and trying to get all the juice out of life to satisfy them. And for a while, it does. But it cannot ultimately, because God has made us different to all the other animals in this world. He has distinguished the human race. He has given to us a precious, never-dying soul. He made us in his image. He distinguished us and set us apart from all the other animal world. We have a living soul. That's why humanism is so empty. Humanist teaching is so empty.

[11 : 18] I know people personally who are atheistic. And I must say, I know some people who are the finest people from a human point of view that you could meet. And they are upstanding. They are people of, I would say, of high moral values and people who live in a very good way and are genuinely nice people.

But having said that, there is a fearful emptiness in humanism. Because all you have is the here, the now, the physical. And God has given us a soul. There's a spiritual side to every person, whether they realize it or not. And I believe that that's what's at the restlessness in the whole society. It's because people have turned their back upon God. God has made us for himself.

And unless we find the fulfillment in God, there's going to be an emptiness. And in all the secular teaching and in all the humanistic teaching, there is an emptiness.

Sometimes we see these appalling pictures that come to us of where there's places of famine. And we see people dying from hunger. Distressing pictures.

Can you imagine going to these people who are dying from hunger and saying to them, Oh, I've got a lovely new car I'll give you. I know a celebrity and I can work it so that you can meet him or meet her. They say, I don't care. Just give me some bread. Give me some food.

[13 : 10] Jesus was using the expression, the bread of life, because in these days bread was the essential. Everybody ate bread. Everybody needed bread. Bread was kind of the key to life.

And people who are dying of hunger would say, it's not things I need. I need food. And Jesus says, that's me. You see, it's not a commodity. It's a passion that we need. We need Jesus Christ.

And so, excuse me, Jesus has come. And that's what he says. Excuse me. And very interestingly, Jesus goes on to say in verse 51, if we were to move on to there, and he says, I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. And Jesus here is showing in just in its entirety, who he is and what he's going to do. He says, I am going to give myself. In fact, when you look at it, it's almost, although that's not exactly, that is not what it's teaching, you can almost see a sacramental side to it. Because you can almost see there it takes us on from Jesus as being the broken body. And you can almost hear him then up in the upper room where he's breaking the bread, and he's saying to the disciples, look, take it. This is my body that is broken for you. Again, symbolic.

Of course, we've always got to guard against thinking that in order for a person to become a believer, they have to sit at the Lord's table. Because we've got to be careful here, because I know one or two people who kind of think that the moment you join the church as a member, that that's you coming to faith in Jesus Christ. No, it's not.

There's a difference between the two. It is the gospel is a great call. We go out with the gospel and ask people to come to faith in Jesus Christ, to take Jesus as a bread of life. And when a person does that, when a person accepts and bows under the lordship of Jesus Christ, accepts Christ as our lord and savior, then and only then should they come to take of the broken bread as is symbolized in the communion sacrament. And I would go as far as to say this, you know, there are people who think that you cannot have salvation without the table. That's not true. You can have people who are soundly, people who are born again, people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, who never sat at the table.

[16 : 13] You think of the thief on the cross. The thief on the cross was never at the table. And then Jesus said to him, today you will be with me in paradise. There are people who have had the, who never had the opportunity. I know that there are people who should be at the table. That's a different thing.

And when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, it's our duty. It's a command given to us. Do this in remembrance of me. But we must never put the two together and say, only by coming to sit at the Lord's table can we gain salvation. It is when we receive the salvation that it is then that we ought to go to sit at the Lord's table. But that's by way almost of a digression here. But Jesus says, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. And then Jesus goes on to say, follows it on in verse 37, whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. And I think there we have one of the most wonderful statements in the whole of the Bible.

These are the words of Jesus. Whoever comes to me, I will never, I will never cast out. In order to come to Jesus, I would say the first thing that we need to know is that we need to know we need him. You'll never go to Jesus as long as you feel all right in yourself. You will never go to the doctor when you're feeling in full health and strength. If we go to the doctor's surgery, it's not full of people who are in full health and strength and everybody's saying, ah, you're going and say, how are you today? I'm absolutely fine. And the next person, feeling great. What are you here for? They say, what? Well, people don't go down to the doctor to tell them they're feeling all right.

People only go to the doctor when they're not well. And that's the point Jesus is saying. Jesus elsewhere says, those who are well have no need of a doctor, no need of the physician.

And that's a problem with so many people. When you challenge them with the gospel, people will say, ah, okay, I'm hearing you. But as long as they feel, I'm okay myself. I feel good enough in myself. I'm not perfect, but I feel good enough in myself. They won't go to Jesus. But Jesus is God's provision to us because we're not good enough in ourselves. And if you're here today and you say to yourself, I'm sorry, I just don't get this gospel thing. I believe, I believe in God. I believe in Jesus.

[19 : 00] I believe in Jesus. I believe in Jesus. I believe in Jesus. I believe in Jesus. I believe in Jesus. Because I feel okay. I feel that at the end of the day, God will measure things up and He'll say to me, well, you lived a decent enough life. You see, this is a problem. That's not how it is.

You see, God's holy law is perfect. He demands perfection from us. And not one of us can give that. And that is why God sent His Son into the world to do for us what we couldn't do ourselves.

And God accepts the work of His Son on our behalf, but we have to receive the Son, accept Him, take Him as our own. And if today you do not see your need of Jesus, that has got to be your prayer.

Lord, help me to see my need. Show me today that I need Jesus. Show me today that I'm a sinner that can only be made right with you by accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior. You know this, if you really pray that, the Lord will show you. And it's amazing, once you see your need, you will go to Him. You will ask, what must I do to be saved? Like the Philippian jailer. You remember how that man, you would have gone to work at night, same as any other night. You would have changed shifts with whoever was in you.

Any new prisoners in today? Oh, there's a couple of people. Oh, they've been pretty well beaten up. And you would have gone down to check on them and see that their feet, oh, you've got to make sure that their feet are fast there in the stocks. And he went down, everything was. There's one difference.

[20 : 56] These two prisoners, they were singing. They'd been beaten severely. And yet, they were singing praises to God. That was a strange one. And then remember at midnight, there was the earthquake.

And he reckoned that the prison doors, because they're open, that all the prisoners would have fled. And remember, he pulled out the sword to plunge it into himself, because he knew, see, if you were a jailer, if you were a prison ward, if you allowed a prisoner to escape, it was your life for theirs. You were put to death. So that's why he took out the sword. He knew that's what that's going to happen to him. And Paul shouted out in the darkness, do yourself no harm. We're all here. Remember, trembling, he called for a light.

And he cried out, what must I do to be saved? See, it all changed in a moment. And it can change for you in a moment. And the memorable words of Paul, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ, and you shall be saved. And the same for you, my friend. You today can be saved. Before you go out of this building, you can be saved today. Call upon the Lord, seek him. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. And you come to Jesus accepting Jesus as prophet, the word, his word. His word is a rule for your life. You want to live according to that word, where he is the priest, the sacrifice. No longer are you trusting in your own works, your own merit, your own worth. You say, yes, Lord, I'm trusting in you. He's your king. He's the ruler of your life.

You bow in subjection before him. And so this is what we see. All that the Father gives to me will come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Whoever. Yeah, that's you. Doesn't matter whether this is the first time you hear the gospel or whether you've heard it for 60, 70, 80 years.

It's for you. Doesn't matter what you've done in the past. You might be in here riddled with guilt. And you look back over your life. And you see mess written all over it. Yep. He's there for you.

[23 : 23] Or you may be today feeling quite satisfied in yourself. And yet you know that there's got to be something, something sorted before you die. Well, today's time to deal with that. He's there for you.

Doesn't matter where we come from. Doesn't matter our age. Doesn't matter our background. Doesn't matter. It's worldwide. Whoever. But you've got to come. You've got to come. And that's where we see tying in all that the Father gives me will come to me. And you may say to yourself, okay, where does that leave me?

That leaves you praying to the Father through Jesus. Lord, I can't come myself, but you can help me. And if you pray that, he will. Our duty is to ask for the help, for the grace to go to Jesus.

His work is to respond to that and to save you. That's where the two things come together. Where human responsibility and God's sovereignty meet together. You go to him.

If you, you might say to yourself, I'm trying. I'm trying to. No, stop trying. Yeah, continue seeking. But stop trying. Salvation is a gift. And you don't try and earn. You don't earn a gift. You don't pay for a gift.

[25 : 00] All you do with that gift is you receive it. Go to the Lord and say, Lord, help me to receive you. I want you. Help me to receive you. Give me the faith to receive you. If you do that, guaranteed, if that is your heart's desire, he will do it for you. That's what he says in his word.

He will never cast out. And then we see that this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing or to lose none of those. Isn't that wonderful? Jesus on the great day will never look round at the assembled host. And as the Bible tells us, it's a number that no man can number.

Millions and millions and millions and millions and millions of people will be there. And as the all-seeing eye that penetrates into every heart and extends over all his gathered people, he will never say, oh, so-and-so is missing.

They will all be there. All kept. Isn't that wonderful? That's part of the great work, is the keeping power of Jesus. He will lose none but raise up on the last day. What a wonderful day that is going to be, that resurrection morning. It's like pulling back, the graves will open.

Like pulling off the bedclothes. The bodies will rise. Body which is disintegrated will become more beautiful than it ever was even in this world, where everything will be renewed and made perfect and reunited with the soul. What a wonderful union that will be. Never again to be separated and to be with the Lord forever. Nobody else can give you that bar Jesus. I hope today that you will go to him and discover him to be truly for you the bread of life. Let's pray.

[27 : 17] O Lord, our God, we give thanks for great gospel truths that speak to us about things that, unless it was given to us, we could never work out or understand. We pray that this gospel will not be lost on us and that we will never be ultimately cast away, but that all of us here may have Jesus as Savior. O be with us, we pray. Bless our homes, our families, and all whom we love.

Guide us and keep us in all that we're about. And may your light shine into our hearts and guide us as in the path we walk along. Do us good, we pray, and bless a cup of tea that will be in the hall.

Grant us grace for everything and forgive us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen.