

John Ch 6:16-40

“The Bread of Heaven”

The context of this portion of scriptures still finds itself in the wake of the feeding frenzy of the masses to which Jesus ministered in the feeding of the 5,000 (not including women and children). and Don't misunderstand me when I use the words “Feeding frenzy” as if to say there was pandemonium in the *allocation* and *assimilation*, or the *distributing* and *devouring* of the loaves and the fish. We pointed out how carefully, and orderly, and thoroughly the Lord is when He feeds His sheep. But what I mean by that is this particular miracle began to whip up the masses into a mob like mentality.

They were thinking, “We're under Roman bondage sort of like our forefathers were to Egypt, we're out in this field sort of like they were a desert, and this guy (in regards to Jesus) has fed us all this bread as by Heaven sort of like Moses, He must be our deliverer, the One who's come to set us free, and meet our needs.” and Like we said they were so right, but they were just so wrong, He was the guy, He was their deliverer, the One who'd come to set them free, but not from the bondage of Rome, but from the bondage of sin, not to fill their empty stomachs, but to fill their empty hearts. But as usual they missed that implication altogether in the miracle of the multiplying of the bread and of the fish. How it was merely an object lesson pointing to the greater need, the greater emptiness of the starving hearts of humanity. and How He could fill with abundance that seemingly bottomless cavity of the human heart giving them as much spiritual sustenance that they could possibly take in, leaving them completely satisfied, with all the more of His untapped resources by which He could meet their needs left over.

But that lesson flew right over their heads and instead they thought, “Man, we need to make this man our King!” and This sort of a mob-mentality began to take over, and they were going to take Him by force and make Him king. and I'm sure the disciples sorta dug that thought, because if He's the King, we're His official delegates, we're His executive officers (remember they were always arguing about who was going to be the greatest when His kingdom was established) and they were thinking, this might be the day. But Jesus was *in* this world not *of* this world therefore He refused to receive His Kingdom by the people *from* this world. He would wait for the Father to usher Him into that moment, and of course the lesson there for us is how we need to be careful not to be persuaded by the push of the people, but we need to wait for the leading of the Lord.

Now this was evidently quite a stir because though John's account leaves out a few details Matt, and Mark tell us that Jesus immediately made His disciples get in the boat and go before Him to the other side while He dispersed the multitudes. They were liking that idea, things were happening, the moment seemed to be right, and perhaps they were being tempted to follow the sway of the masses and so Jesus separated them from the happening and told them to head on over to the other side. Now apparently they'd waited courteously on the Lord to join them for a while even though He'd told them to go on, and when they realized that He wasn't going to be crossing with them, they went ahead and shoved off. and So we read in vs 16 (and we'll read through vs 21)

Vs 16-21

Now with the help of the other accounts of this recorded in Matt and Mark we're able to glean from this a number of things that are no doubt known by you but will hopefully be refreshing to you. And the first observation that we can readily make with the help of the other gospel writers is that which we've already mentioned and that is that it was Jesus who commanded them to get in the boat and go to the other side.

Perhaps you're thinking, "What does that have to do with anything?" Well, it has *everything* to do with this happening when you realize that a storm was on the way, now do you think for a minute that Jesus didn't know that by sending them out that evening that He would be sending them into a storm? You bet He knew there was a storm coming and that He was sending them right out into the middle of it. and No doubt this purged them of the adrenaline of the day that was tempting them to fall into the sway of the masses (and sometimes Jesus will send us into a storm for that reason, if we're about to head down the wrong path, or take the wrong angle on something, it can be His way of getting our head screwed back on straight and back into the game where it needs to be.) and That's one legitimate way that we could apply this text because storms in our lives have this way of recalibrating us spiritually, and placing our focus back where it needs to be that we might willingly receive Jesus back into that place of control that He needs to be in, in our lives.

But what I want you to realize about this is that things weren't out of control and haywire in their lives at this time because they were somehow in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord. They were in harmony with His perfect will in their lives, following with complete obedience His direction for their lives and yet they were still subjected to tough, and turbulent times. John tells us here that it was dark, and that Jesus had not yet come to them. and It seems like that sometimes, we're following the Lord, obeying what He's told us, yet times seem dark, the storm is raging in our lives, and we just don't sense the presence of the Lord in our lives. Now what is our part in times like that, we've searched our hearts, asked the Lord to show us if we've somehow erred, we're leading our lives in obedience to His Word to the best of our knowledge, but yet the storm only gets more and more fierce, and we just don't sense His presence. What did they do? They kept rowing, the Lord had given them a command, "Go to the other side." and Until the Lord gives me a new direction, regardless of how turbulent the circumstances of my life might be, I'm to maintain my bearing, and continue in obedience to His Word for my life.

Don't be deceived by reading a few vs into thinking it was only a couple of minutes, we read here that they took off at sundown (basically) but Matthew tells us that Jesus didn't come to them until the 4th watch of the night, sometime between 3 and 6 in the morning, so they've been rowing hard against the storm for around 6-8hrs. and They've gotten basically nowhere, they're struggling and straining, rowing hard and maintaining their course all night long and they'd made it about 3-4 miles, about ½ way. But something else we need to readily see and understand is, were they ever truly alone? Mark's gospel tells us that as He was up on that Mt praying and watching that, "*He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.*" Mark 6:48

Or to understand that another way, He was keeping His eye upon them the whole time, they just didn't know it, couldn't sense it. But He was with them as much then as He'd ever been, and there wasn't anything happening in their lives but that He wasn't intimately aware of it and in control. "*For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'*" Heb 13:5 and That's one of the lessons Jesus was trying to reinforce after His resurrection; they would be talking about Him in some way while they thought they were alone. and Then He'd suddenly appear and chime in on the conversation. Thomas said he wouldn't believe until he put his fingers in the print of the nails and the hole in His side. Couple days later Jesus appears to them behind closed doors having never opened the door and said, "Come here Thomas put your fingers in the print of these nails and in My side." and Of course Thomas fell to his knees and said, "My Lord, and My God."

But Jesus was trying to teach them that just because they couldn't see Him physically, that didn't mean He wasn't with them literally. and Such is the case with them now during this storm and such is the case with you and me at any given time in our lives however no matter how it may seem at the moment.

We have this misconception that says if we're doing what the Lord tells us to do that everything should be easy, but that's not true, sometimes things get rough *because* we're doing what the Lord told us. But God in His mercies knows how much you and I can take, where our breaking point is, and though He'll stretch us and grow us, and seek to increase our trust and faith in Him, He's not going to let you get consumed by that storm. and So at just the right moment, Jesus enters the equation and says, "Don't be afraid, It's Me." It's like the call of comfort at just the right moment, "*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" Isa 41:10 and Just when I was about to *give* up, the Lord *shows* up.

Now they could've said, "Thanks, but no thanks Lord, we'll bring this one to shore on our own." But they didn't do that, they received Him willingly and immediately He brought resolve to the situation, they were on the other side. Now I don't know if we'll ever have, "Beaming Technology," but let me just say that Star Trek didn't conceive the idea. The Lord's been about the business of beaming for along time. and We have a rapture of sorts here, they were snatched away from the violent and turbulent happenings about them, and brought on into shore in the twinkling of an eye.

We see in this that when Jesus gives us a command, He will enable us to achieve that command, He told them to go to the other side, where are they? On the other side, and Jesus will bring you on in to the other side to, the other side of that storm, that situation that seems so hopeless, that you've been rowing against for no small period of time, and ultimately He'll see you through to the other side of this life and all the storms will be over, and we'll be forever in His presence. But you guys the key is allowing Jesus to enter your boat, whatever the storm may be that's raging in your life, or in your business, or in your marriage, or whatever, if you don't allow Jesus into the equation you'll be sunk. Receive Him willingly into that scenario, and He'll make the difference.

Vs 22-24

Again on the surface that sounds good, they're seeking Jesus. Isn't that what we all should do? But as with so many things like we spent time speaking about last time (and so to in our seeking of Jesus) it's not so much as what I do, as it is why I do it. Why *were they* seeking Jesus? We'll see that in a second, but as you already know it's not because of who He is to them, but it's about what He can do for them, what they can get from Him. All they know right now is that when they got up the next morning Jesus wasn't there, now they saw Him send His disciples away, but He didn't get into the boat with them, He went up onto the Mt to pray. But now He's not there anymore, and there's no other boats on the other side that could've taken Him across, but they've deduced that if He's not with them, then He must've rejoined His disciples at some point, somehow. So they get into their boats and headed out to Capernaum looking for Him.

Vs25-26

They didn't know about Jesus' walking on the water, the calming of the seas, the beaming over to the other side, that was something that Jesus reserved for the immediate 12. and So they ask Him, "When did you come over here?" But Jesus doesn't concern Himself by dealing with the question of when He came, but rather begins to deal with them about why they came. .

Quite frankly their reason for seeking Him has done anything but improve, as a matter of fact He tells them that it's degenerated even further, there's no spiritual connotations to their seeking Him at all, they're seeking Him purely for some kind of physical and/or material benefit. When He says there in vs 26, "This is the fact, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs," we might think, "Are you wanting them to follow you based upon signs and wonders?" I mean, we've spent all this time dismantling that mentality, and now here He seems to say you should be following Him for the signs.

But the key lies in unlocking this little word "saw," as you may or may not know there are a few different words in the Greek that translate into the English simply as, "Saw." One speaks of a mindless observation, the other speaks of focusing intently, then another still speaks of seeing with the idea of understanding. But we don't have different words for those ideas so we have to say, "I see it, but I don't see it." "I don't get it," and it's due to our inflection or something that we convey what we mean. But in this vs it's the latter of the 3 I spoke to you of, Jesus is saying, "You're not following me because you understood the meaning of the signs" "You may've saw them, but you didn't really see them."

So it's not because you understand the meaning of the signs that you're following me, but because you got a free meal out of the deal, you're into the "wonder bread." Like the Lord told Ezekiel, "*They hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.*" Ezek 33:31

Jesus is here penetrating the surface and getting to the heart of the matter which in reality is a matter of the heart. and It always is, Nicodemus came to Jesus and was all, "Teacher we know you come from God because no one could do the things you do if God weren't with Him." and Jesus says, "Let's sweep that surface stuff away, here's the point, if you want to enter the Kingdom of God you've got to be born again." and Here they're all, "Hey we're seeking after you, when did you come here?" Jesus says, "Let's get this out in the open, you're not seeking Me because you understand who I am, you want to be around Me because of what I can do for you, you're wanting a free meal ticket."

Vs27

Notice all the contrast in this vs, Jesus uses words like, "Labor" and "Give." He speaks of that which, "Perishes," Vs that which, "Endures to everlasting life." That which perishes is that which we labor for, but that which endures to everlasting life is a gift.

Now there's a couple of things we want to notice here, one of which is the fact that Jesus is not saying that we're not to worry about getting a job and working hard. The bible teaches emphatically the opposite, that we're to be providers for our family, we're not to be slothful in our work, but we're to be diligent in our efforts in the work place. Now we don't have time to develop that but as you study the scriptures that becomes very obvious. Jesus is talking here about priorities, and you can labor towards temporal things, or you can labor towards eternal things, and Jesus is trying to lift their minds off of the things of this world and set their minds on things above. Show them the priority in living *for* and pursuing *after* the things of the eternal, as opposed to the things of this world.

In Matt's gospel He put it like this, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* Matt 6:19-20 Doesn't mean we're not to make wise investments for our families or our children's inheritance, but if we can see the value in making wise temporal investments, how much more wisdom in exercised in making eternal investments? and Here Jesus is saying why spin your wheels pursuing things that don't satisfy, the things of this world are like cotton candy, you bite into them and perhaps they tingle your taste buds, but there's no substance, no nourishment, no true satisfaction, at best it's a temporary fix. Like a meal, but I'll hunger again.

The bible says, *“All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied.”* Eccl 6:7 and That's what Jesus is trying to tell them here, you're pursuing Me for a temporary fix, and look how you're willing to labor for that, I want you to have an eternal fix and you don't have to do anything for it, I'll *give* it to you. and That's the other thing we need to see, who is that gives us eternal life, it's Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. and We read here that the Father will vouch for that because He's set His seal on the Son, that mark of genuine authenticity Jesus Christ is the real deal, and He gives us eternal life. The things of this world just don't satisfy, you get the latest greatest gadget, that thing you've been wanting so long that you just knew if you got that, *then* you'd be satisfied. and You were, for about a day, or a week, or a couple of months, then you were hungering again, and that's the way the things of this world are there's only one thing that I can bite into that's going to truly, eternally satisfy (and we'll see that in vs 35).

Vs 28

and That seems to be the question that everyone is looking to answer, “What do I need to do that I might be accepted by God, pleasing to God?”

Vs29

If that's not underlined in your bible it needs to be, it's not about our works, it's about believing in His work. He's done the work, there's nothing *I can* do, there's no labor I can accomplish to gain acceptance by my own merit, or worth. All I can do is trust in the work that Jesus has already done; He couldn't have made it any easier. and He's not saying that we shouldn't serve the Lord, but that our service should be the *overflow of* our faith, not a *substitute for* our faith. You can have works with out faith, but not faith with out works, it's like knowing God's word with no desire to know God, but you can't know God with out a desire to know His Word. So He's not saying that we're not saved unto good works, He's saying we're not saved by any works, other than His work of redemption through the means of the cross; we're to simply believe in Him.

Vs30-31

These guys are relentless aren't they? They're just looking for another meal, trying to manipulate the Lord towards serving their own interests. and They put this spiritual façade over it by quoting scripture and all, people still do this today, try to justify seeking the Lord to serve their own interests by throwing some out of context scripture around to seem real spiritual in their approach, Jesus sees right through that stuff. It's not like He didn't just feed thousands the day before, you see miracles just don't produce lasting faith; they merely wow you for the moment.

Vs32-33

So 1st of all He sets the record straight about this whole, "Moses and the manna" deal and says, "Moses didn't give you anything, it was My father that provided for them and it's still My Father who's providing for mankind today." and Jesus tells them that the manna throughout the Exodus was nothing more than a foreshadowing of Himself, the true bread that would come down from Heaven that would give life and nourishment and sustenance to much more than just Israel, but to the world, whoever would come to Him. Manna satisfied temporally, but the true bread from Heaven, Jesus Christ satisfies eternally. You see manna was God's gift of life to the nation of Israel, but Jesus Christ is God's gift of life to the world.

Vs34

Here's this woman at the well, Nicodemus mentality, they're just not tracking with the Lord, they haven't made the transition from the natural into the spiritual. So look, Jesus is just going to tell them straight.

Vs35

The order of these things could be reversed because He's simply reiterating Himself in multiple ways to emphasize the point, so that there's no room for confusion. Believing in Jesus, and coming to Jesus is the same thing, not hungering, not thirsting carries the same meaning, Jesus is the only true source of satisfaction, contentment, and fulfillment for the heart and soul of man. and As long as you're looking to chew on the thing of this world, or the watering holes of this life, you'll thirst again, you'll hunger again, only Jesus Christ truly satisfies and brings contentment to the human heart.

Vs36

So many think, "Seeing is believing," Jesus would take odds with that; He says they *have* seen, and yet they still don't believe.

Vs37

Is it God's sovereignty or man's free will. It's both, we see divine initiative and human responsibility working together in the process of salvation, does God do the whole thing? Yep, do we have a choice? Yep, how do these things reconcile? Like a hand in a glove, they just go together, and I don't believe anyone (outside of God Himself) fully understands it. All I know is that this vs shows both, whoever the Father gives the Son will come to Him (speaking of election) but yet the one who comes to Me, that is of his own accord, Jesus said He would never ever cast out (speaking of free will.)

Vs38-39

What's our view on eternal security? That you're eternally secure as long as you abide in Christ, you abide in Christ and believe me you're secure, you feed on and take in the Bread of Heaven and He will sustain your life. What a promise to close with, whoever sees the Son and believes in Him, has everlasting life, and He will raise us up at the last day. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."* John 11:25-26

But then He asked that vital question that sets it all off, "Do you believe this?" Do you have faith in Jesus Christ and perhaps you're here and you're listening to all this stuff about Jesus Christ, but you don't know Jesus Christ, you've never received Him into your heart or into your life, you've heard how He's the bread of life, He's the source of living water, He's the resurrection and the life, but it all comes down to this, do you believe this? Are you willing to place your trust and your faith in the person of Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross, is the Father calling you to come to Jesus, will you come to Him? Jesus promises that if you come to Him He'll never, ever cast you out, He'll receive you, He'll forgive you, doesn't matter where you've been, what you've done, God loves you, and Jesus died for you, being crucified for our transgression and raised for our justification. God stands willing to justify you today, but only in Christ. So today if you'll hear His voice, don't harden your heart, today is the day of salvation, receive Jesus Christ into your heart and into your life.