Sunday, January 17, 2021

**Lesson:** John 6:25-40; **Time of Action:** 29 A.D.; **Place of Action:** Capernaum

**Golden Text:** “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29).

**I. INTRODUCTION.** Some of Jesus’ claims cannot be understood by unbelievers. For example, what does it mean to them that Jesus claimed to be the Light of the World? Until an explanation is given, the symbolism will not make sense to many. The same can be said of His claims to be the Door and the Shepherd. This week’s lesson is about Jesus’ claim to be the Bread of Life. As usual, Jesus’ claim came within the context of a normal conversation.

**II. THE LESSON BACKGROUND.** The purpose of John’s Gospel was to present Jesus Christ as the Son of God (see John 20:30-31). As a result, he omitted many of the events in Jesus’ life that he felt were not needed to help him fulfill that purpose. John chapter 5 opens with the healing of the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda and chapter 6 opens with the feeding of the five thousand. But between those two events, many other things happened, some in Luke 6:1-9:10.
and Mark 3:1-6:30. During that time, Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew chapters 5-7) and gave the parables of the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew chapter 13). So, the immediate background for our lesson text was Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand (see John 6:1-14) which was a miracle reported in all four Gospels (see Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:12-17). Prior to feeding the multitude, as Jesus was ministering in Galilee, He welcomed the Twelve Apostles back from their preaching tour (see Luke 9:1-6,10) and sought to take them aside for private rest and instruction (see Mark 6:30-32). To do that, they all crossed the northern end of the Sea of Galilee to a place called Bethsaida (see Luke 9:10). When the crowds saw Jesus and His Disciples leave heading to Bethsaida, they followed them around the shoreline on foot (see Luke 9:11). Jesus, feeling compassion for the people taught them all day (see Mark 6:34). Toward the end of the day, Jesus consulted with His Disciples about how to feed the crowd, but they had no ideas (see John 6:4-7). But Andrew, one of Jesus’ disciples found a boy with five barley loaves of bread and two fish, which would be all Jesus would need (see John 6:8-10). After the crowd of about five thousand men besides women and children were seated in an orderly fashion (see Mark 6:39-40), Jesus gave thanks and then distributed bread and fish to the disciples and they gave it to the people until everyone was full and there was still much left over (see John 6:11-13). When the people saw what Jesus did, they said among themselves “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” (see John 6:14) referring to the Prophet greater than Moses whose coming Moses had prophesied (see Deuteronomy 18:15-18). At this point, Jesus perceived that the people would come to try to make Him a king, He
went into a mountain alone. Later that evening as His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee toward Capernaum, a storm arose over the sea. Midway through the sea, they saw Jesus walking on the sea toward their boat causing them to be afraid (see John 6:15-19). But Jesus said to them “it is I; be not afraid” (see John 6:20), and then Jesus entered their boat and immediately the boat landed on the shore (see John 6:21). The next day, since Jesus had made a great impact on them the people came looking for Him but they couldn’t find him. They noticed His disciples in a boat crossing the sea, but Jesus was not with them. So they gathered in boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus (see John 6:22-23). Capernaum was a city on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee and was the center of Jesus’ ministry after He left Nazareth (see Matthew 4:13). This is where our lesson begins.

IIII. THE PEOPLE LOOK FOR JESUS (John 6:25-27)

A. Finding Jesus (John 6:25). Our first verse says “And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?” Sure enough Jesus was in Capernaum, and when this large group of people “found him on the other side of the sea” they asked Jesus, “Rabbi (or teacher), when camest thou hither?” In other words they were asking Him, “When did you get here?” We may also assume that they also asked Him how He got there. They knew that He hadn’t gone with His disciples (see John 6:15-17), and they
knew that He had retreated from the crowd to be alone (see John 6:15), but they had no idea how He made it from Bethsaida to Capernaum overnight when there were no boats available. Was that another miracle? For sure!

B. Hearing Jesus (John 6:26-27).

1. (vs. 26). This verse says “Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” When “Jesus” began any statement with “Verily, verily, I say unto you” or “truly, truly I say unto you,” He was about to say something very important, so the people needed to pay close attention to what He was about to say. In this case, Jesus was about to expose their inner motives for looking for Him, because He knew their hearts. He knew they were seeking Him in order to see what else He would do for them. So Jesus continued to say to the crowd, “I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” Jesus was saying that it wasn’t even the miracles He performed that they wanted, but instead they wanted the free food! The miracles John recorded were signs proving that Jesus was the Son of God (see John 20:30-31), the Messiah, but they missed the whole point.

2. (vs. 27). This verse says “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father
sealed.” When Jesus used the word “labor,” the people misunderstood it to mean that they had to “work” for salvation. They completely overlooked the word “give.” Because of their legalistic religion, the Jews thought that they had to physically “do something” to earn eternal life. Jesus made it very clear that the only “labor” or “work” that was necessary was to believe in the Savior. When people believe in Jesus Christ, they are not performing a good work that earns them salvation. For sure, there is certainly no credit given for believing. What’s important is what God does in response to our faith (see Ephesians 2:8-10). Jesus was saying to this crowd “Don’t labor or work for food that won’t last, but labor for food that will last forever and leads to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for God the Father has put His seal on Him.” Jesus was telling them that they needed to be looking for spiritual food instead of physical food. He explained that spiritual nourishment as opposed to physical nourishment “endureth” or lasts forever. This kind of nourishment comes only from the Son of God, who is here called “the Son of man,” the One that “God the Father” has authorized to give it to those who believe in Him. The name “Son of man,” is based on the great Messianic passage in Daniel 7:13. Jesus uses this name about eighty times in Scripture to refer to Himself. It is His name as the representative Man as indicated by I Corinthians 15:45-47, just as Son of David is distinctively His Jewish name, and Son of God is His divine name. With His response in this verse, Jesus points to the spiritual meaning of the miracle of feeding the multitude, which is to set God’s seal of approval on His ministry and to identify Him as “the Son of Man,” the promised Messiah.
IV. THE PEOPLE ASK: “WHAT SHALL WE DO” (John 6:28-31)

A. Asking what to do (John 6:28-29).

1. (vs. 28). This verse says “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” Since Jesus used the term “labor” which means “to work” in the previous verse, it appears that His listeners thought He meant that there were certain things they needed to do in order to have the spiritual nourishment He spoke of. So, “they said unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” In other words, they were asking Jesus “what does God want us to do so that we are doing what He requires?” These people had the idea that they would gain salvation by earning it through their “works” or deeds. They thought that if they could just prove themselves worthy of being accepted by God, they would be alright. That’s still a common belief today. There are many people who believe that when they face God, their “works” in life will be examined; if their good ones outweigh the bad ones, they will get into heaven. But it doesn’t work that way!

2. (vs. 29). This verse says “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” In response to the people’s question in the previous verse, “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” In other words, Jesus was telling
them that the only “work” expected of them was to “believe” in Him. This is not the kind of “work” that we usually think about that involves actually doing something, but instead it’s a matter of responding to God’s offer of salvation. There is no activity that man can do that will merit or earn salvation and eternal life. In John 5:24, Jesus had already said “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” Jesus was sent by God the Father in order to provide salvation for people (see Luke 19:10). The only requirement for receiving the salvation Jesus offered was belief. It is simply a matter of believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that His death provided all the payment needed for us to inherit eternal life.

B. Asking for a sign (John 6:30-31).

1. (vs. 30). This verse says, “They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?” Evidently these Jews understood that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah when He said what He did about believing in the One whom God had sent (see verse 29). Jesus was saying that He was the One sent by God, so they asked for some kind of sign as proof of His Messiahship when they said to Jesus “What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?” What’s ironic is that the people had just seen Jesus miraculously multiply five loaves of bread and two small fish in order to feed thousands of people. So how could they not see that a “sign” had
already been given? Why would they ask for something else? But are they any different from many people today?

**2. (vs. 31).** This verse says “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” Now we see that the Jews were trying to minimize the miracle of feeding the multitude by comparing it to what Moses had done in the wilderness by God’s power. Through that miracle, their “fathers did eat manna in the desert.” Through Moses, God had provided “manna” for more than a million Israelites for most of the forty years they wandered in the wilderness or “desert.” To them, Jesus had merely fed several thousand people once. Undoubtedly, they thought that if Jesus was really the Messiah He could do better than that! Surely He could do better than Moses! The people even quoted Scripture to prove their point when they said “as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (see Nehemiah 9:15; Psalms 105:40; 78:24). The people may have also been making the comparison that Moses had provided “bread from heaven,” while all Jesus did was give them earthly “bread.” It seems that in spite of the fact that Jesus was performing miracles, the people still had preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would be like, and He would have to meet their expectations! We hear many ideas about Jesus today that are far from the truth, and Satan uses those ideas to keep people from coming to Jesus for salvation. It is so important to know that our understanding about Jesus comes from God’s Word and not from other people’s ideas or opinions.
V. THE PEOPLE ASK: “MAY WE HAVE THE BREAD?” (John 6:32-34)

A. The Bread Moses gave (John 6:32). This verse says “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” Jesus quickly informed the people that their thinking was wrong. He said to them “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” Again, Jesus uses the words “Verily, verily” meaning “truly, truly” indicating that they needed to pay close attention to what He was about to say (see verse 26). The people needed to hear that it was not “Moses” who gave the Israelites “that bread from heaven.” When the manna was first provided, “Moses” said to the people “this is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat” (see Exodus 16:15). Then Jesus makes a contrast between the manna or the “bread” that came “from heaven” during “Moses’” day and “the true bread from heaven” that was now available to them. “The Father” had sent the “bread” in “Moses’” day, but now He had sent a different kind of “bread” and it was a Person. The biggest difference between these breads is that the one sent during “Moses’” day only satisfied physical needs. But “the true bread” would satisfy spiritually and eternally.

Note: The physical provision described in Exodus 16 was a picture of the spiritual provision coming from Jesus Christ. Jesus was pointing out to His audience
that there are two kinds of food: one for the body, which is necessary but not the most important, and one for the inner man, the spirit, which is essential. The people didn’t need food; they needed life which is a gift. Physical food only sustains life, but Jesus gives eternal life. This brings to mind the words of Isaiah 55:1-3, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”


1. (vs. 33). This verse says “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” As Jesus continued to speak about the “true bread of life” (see verse 32), He plainly said to the people, “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” The phrase “the bread of God” is the same thing as the “the bread from heaven” mentioned in verse 32, but Jesus makes the phrase personal by pointing it to Himself. He was revealing Himself as “the bread of God,” the Messiah, the One whom God sent “from heaven” to give “life to the
world.” This simply means that Jesus provides eternal life to those who are dead in their trespasses and sins (see Ephesians 2:1). They are chosen not only from the Jews but from the whole world (see John 3:16). Jesus is not teaching universal salvation; He is teaching that His saving work is universally relevant and appealing to the entire world. However, only those who accept Him as LORD and Savior by faith will receive salvation and eternal life (see Romans 10:8-13).

2. (vs. 34). This verse says “Then said they unto him, LORD, evermore give us this bread.” It is obvious from this request by these Jews that they didn’t comprehend what Jesus was saying about Himself, for they asked Him to “evermore give us this bread” which means that they wanted Jesus to keep on giving them that “bread” from that time on. They thought that if they could have the “bread” that Jesus was talking about giving to them, their lives would be much easier. Note: This dialogue between Jesus and the crowd began with them seeking Jesus and then seeking a sign. But now they began to seek the “true bread” (see verse 32) that Jesus talked about. But like the woman of Samaria, they were not ready for salvation. She wanted the living water so that she wouldn’t have to keep going to the well. The crowd wanted the “bread” so that they wouldn’t have to toil to maintain life. Unfortunately, there are people today who still only want Jesus Christ for the benefits He can provide.
VI. THE PEOPLE AND THE BREAD OF LIFE (John 6:35-40)

A. Divine nourishment provided (John 6:35). This verse says “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Jesus finally had to make clear statements for them, and He began by identifying Himself saying “I am the bread of life.” This is the first of many “I am” sayings spoken by “Jesus” in John’s Gospel (see John 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1) and are not found in any of the other Gospels. The expression “I am” looks back to Exodus 3:14 where God identified Himself as “I am” when Moses wanted to know His name. Therefore, when “Jesus” says it, the implication was that He was claiming to be deity. If the people didn’t understand what “Jesus” had been talking about up to this point, there could be no doubt about it now. They needed to understand that He was not referring to physical “bread” but to the spiritual provision He would give them if they received Him into their lives. Therefore, He said “he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Both the “hunger” and the “thirst” that Jesus mentioned are spiritual longings that can only be satisfied through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Anyone who has that longing in their soul today can have it met by receiving Jesus as your Saviour.

B. Unbelievers and believers distinguished (John 6:36-37).
1. (vs. 36). This verse says “But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.” The Apostle John does not tell us exactly what Jesus was referring to when He said “But I said unto you.” However, He may have been referring to His comments in verse 26. It seems that He is reminding this crowd that at some point He had said to them “ye also have seen me, and believe not.” To “see” Jesus meant not only to look at Him, but also to observe His mighty works. The Galileans had participated in one of Jesus’ greatest miracles, the feeding of a multitude; yet they had the unmitigated gall to ask Him for still another sign (see verse 30) which also seemed to be the practice of the Pharisees (see Matthew 12:38-39; Matthew 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-12). They saw Him and His miracles, and heard Him preach, and yet there were those who didn’t believe in Him. Faith does not always come from sight. In fact, it rarely ever does (see Romans 10:17). The soldiers were eye-witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection but instead of believing in Him, they took a bribe to lie and say that His body was stolen (see Matthew 28:10-13). This is just one example of how difficult it is to bring people to believe in Jesus Christ.

2. (vs. 37). This verse says “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Certainly, there were some in the crowd who believed that Jesus was who He said He was, but many didn’t. But the truth is that even if a great number of people don’t believe, that does not mean that God’s purpose in sending His Son has failed. For Jesus said here: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” This means that by the Spirit’s convicting power, “the Father”
draws people to the Son and Himself. Some will come, but sadly some won’t. Those that God draws and “giveth” are His gift to His Son. Whoever God “giveth” to His Son to “come” to Him, Jesus said “I will in no wise cast out.” In other words, when people “come” to Jesus in faith, they are assured that He will receive and keep them. Note: The grace or favour of God is expressed here. As sinners, we have reason to be afraid that Jesus might “cast” us “out” or refuse us. When we consider our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come to Him, we may rightly and justly expect Him to turn away from us and shut His doors to us. But because He is full of grace and mercy, Jesus removes those fears and assures us that He “will in no wise cast (us) out.” He won’t reject those who come to Him in faith even though they are sinful.

C. God’s will clarified (John 6:38-40).

1. (vs. 38). This verse says “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Jesus went on to explain why He would not cast out those who came to Him. It was because Jesus didn’t come to do His “own will” but “the will” of His Father who “sent” Him “down from heaven.” Earlier in this conversation, Jesus referred to His heavenly origin (see verse 33), but now He stated it clearly saying “For I came down from heaven.” Of course, this claim was bound to elicit an angry reaction from His critics (see John 6:41-42). Nevertheless, Jesus’ claim was true. The reason He came to earth was to do His Father’s “will” (see John 4:34; 5:30).
Jesus’ “will” was so intertwined with His Father’s “will” that it never even occurred to Him to disobey. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, when facing the horrors of the cross, Jesus surrendered to God’s divine plan (see Matthew 26:36-39, 42, 44).

2. (vs. 39). This verse says “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” As we’ve seen so far, Jesus’ audience had difficulty understanding many of the things He had said during this conversation with them. Therefore, to be clear again, He told them what the Father’s “will” included. Jesus stated one aspect of it when He said “this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.” In other words, Jesus was committed not only to receive, but also to eternally preserve or keep every person “the Father...hath given” or drew to Him. Not only would Jesus forever preserve or keep those whom the Father gave to Him, He also would “raise it up again at the last day.” Of course, this refers to the resurrection of the body when Jesus returns to rapture the church (see I Corinthians 15: 51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-17). The point Jesus is making is that the “Father’s will” is more than making an offer to lost sinners. Jesus will also, at last “raise up” all those who are given to Him by the Father and He will not “lose” even one from that group (see John 10:27-29). As believers, we should be truly grateful that God graciously perseveres with our errors while still ensuring our eternal salvation.
3. (vs. 40). Our final verse says “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Here Jesus repeated the teaching He had just given. This repetition indicates how important it was to Him and how committed He is to His own. But there is one difference in emphasis. In verses 37 and 39, Jesus referred to His own as those whom the Father had given to Him. Now Jesus called His own “every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him.” So, the ones whom the Father gives the Son are the same as those who believe in the Son. **Note:** *Jesus is explaining that salvation involves both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. In other words, both man and God play a part in salvation. The Father gives men and women to the Son (see John 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24), but these men and women must come to Him, that is, believe in Him. Jesus assured His listeners that nobody who came to Him would ever be lost, but would be “raised at the last day” (see John 6:44, 54). Even death can’t rob us of our salvation (see Romans 8:35-39; I Corinthians 15:54-58)! As God’s people, we can rejoice that from eternity past to eternity future we have been and will be in the loving embrace of God. Both the Father and the Son have committed themselves to bringing their good work to completion.*

**VII. Conclusion.** God has created us with physical and spiritual needs. We have both physical needs (food, clothing,
and shelter) and spiritual needs (forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, and more). Often, however, our focus is on emphasizing our physical needs over and against our spiritual ones. Finances, shelter, and clothing sometimes eclipse our need for the gospel of Jesus Christ—that gospel which tells us that Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life.