

JOHN

Chapter 6

Note from Kathy

I love reading the account of Jesus feeding the multitude in John 6. You might also look up Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44 and Luke 9:10-17 to get a better picture of the events that day. Matthew and John were written to a predominantly Jewish audience while Mark and Luke seem to have been written primarily to Gentiles (non-Jews). But all four find this miraculous event worthy of recording.

Jesus as Teacher

Of the 90+ times Jesus was addressed directly in the gospels, 60 times he was called Teacher. In John 3:2 Nicodemus says, "We know that you are a teacher who has come from God." In Matthew 7:29 it says, "he taught as one having authority, not as the teachers of the law." This was the word most used by the multitudes and the disciples.

Observation

1. Look at the map of Israel during the time of Jesus on page 16. Where had Jesus been in John 5?

Where is he in John 6?

2. As this chapter opens who is with Jesus?
3. What is Jesus continuing to do?
4. Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. Verse 2 tells us exactly why the crowd was following Jesus. Why were all these people there that day?
5. Jesus saw the need of the crowd that had followed him that day. Read verses 5-13 once again. What truth is Jesus trying to help Philip see concerning every day needs and God's ability to meet those needs?
6. According to verses 12-14, what was the result of this hillside meal that began with 5 loaves and 2 fish?



Sea of Galilee & The Dead Sea

The Sea of Galilee is fed by the Jordan River, as well as with rainfall and springs. It is surrounded by hills of varying heights, reaching 2000 feet. In the Old Testament and in modern times it is also called Kinneret or Lake of Gennesaret. It is a freshwater lake. It is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. At its deepest point the lake is only 150-200 feet deep. It is the lowest level fresh water lake on earth and filled with fish and life. This is also where Jesus found his fishers of men. The Sea of Galilee is 63 miles upstream from the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on the earth's surface, and it is a saltwater sea that is nearly 10 times saltier than the ocean, making it very difficult for anything to grow or live, hence the name Dead Sea. This sea also only receives, it does not have an outflow.

Matthew 16:15-16

“Jesus said, ‘But who do you say I am?’¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”

7. Later that evening the disciples got in a boat and set off across the Sea of Galilee toward Capernaum. What sudden turn of events made their journey difficult?
8. Did these difficult circumstances stop Jesus? What unusual thing did Jesus do? What does verse 19 tell us was the response of his disciples?
9. The next morning the people realized that Jesus and his disciples were gone. What did they do?
10. Jesus is interested in feeding the hunger of their soul, but according to verse 26, what does he say the crowd wanted from him?
11. The crowd asks Jesus to clarify what he is talking about when he says they should do the works God requires. What is the one thing God longs for men and women everywhere to do? There is nothing more important. Highlight or underline this verse in your Bible.
12. The people ask Jesus for a sign. What miraculous sign did they mention God had done for their ancestors? _____
If you would like to read this story, it is found in Exodus 16.
13. Jesus tells them very clearly, “I am the bread of life.” Read Matthew 16:15-16 where Jesus asks Peter, “Who do you say I am?” What was Peter's answer?

Jesus commended Peter for having the right answer. According to John 6:35-40, what is the truth about Jesus that he longs for all to see?
14. Read John 6:35-39 once again. What promise did Jesus make to all those who place their trust and faith in him?
15. In your Bible circle each time Jesus very clearly tells them that he is this bread. How many times in John 6 did you find? _____

16. Fill in the chart with all you learn about the bread of life and those who partake of it. Read John 6:35-51 in your *Bible* and write down all the facts you learn about the bread of God/bread of life and the blessings for those who partake.

The bread of God or bread of Life	Blessings for those who partake

John 6:58

“This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.”

John 6:68-69

“Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

17. Jesus' words caused confusion and much argument among the Jews present that day. Jesus wanted them to see that just as God had provided food for their forefather's physical body, now he was supplying food for their spirit. What was the difference Jesus pointed out in John 6:58 between the manna their forefathers ate and the bread that came down from heaven?
18. Notice who remained with Jesus. Who is Jesus specifically addressing in verses 67-71?
19. I believe we all would agree that what Jesus was teaching that day might be difficult to understand. Why could the 12 apostles and a few others see the truth but not all the people who were following and listening? Read John 6:68-69.

Application

1. When you ask someone today how they have been, you might get the reply, "busy." All too often this answer is given as an excuse for sharp answers or hurried posture. But is a completed checklist really what we are called by God to accomplish each day?

Jesus had very busy days. Remember, he walked everywhere he went. If he had a to-do list it might have read walk 36 miles to Jerusalem and then only a few days later walk 70 miles to Galilee, heal the sick, feed the multitudes and teach those walking with you. Jesus was very busy, but not once is it recorded that he was too busy. What does your to-do list look like this week?

Have you left any margin for the divine appointments God might bring your way?

Are you watching and preparing for these opportunities to help and teach as Jesus did along the way? Why not share with your small group some of your divine appointments?

2. Great crowds seem to follow Jesus everywhere. What are you doing to satisfy the spiritual hunger of those around you today?

Why not start your day with a chapter from the Proverbs; then ask the Lord for opportunities to share a part of it with someone else. Proverbs is a wisdom book. Each chapter of Proverbs is filled with easy to find treasure for your day. There are 31 chapters to this book—which is perfect for one per day. Consider it your spiritual One-A-Day vitamin. If you have an opportunity, share it with your group.

3. Jesus saw the crowds' need for food. How did Philip describe this great need?

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the size of a need?

Perhaps you questioned God when he asked you to be a part of supplying for a need. What did you do?

According to Philippians 4:19 who is responsible to make sure needs are met?

Philippians 4:19

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

4. Andrew offered five loaves of barley bread and two small fish. This might have been enough for five or possibly 10 small sandwiches, but that wasn't near enough for this huge crowd.

Perhaps you or someone you know is preparing to go on a mission trip and needs several thousand dollars. How would you advise them after studying John 6?

5. Jesus was not just interested in the spiritual needs of the crowd that day. He understood the fact that all of us must eat. Has this changed your perspective on God's thoughts toward you?

Do you believe God is thinking about your needs? Does he merely acknowledge your needs, or does he desire to multiply some things for you?

Have you ever followed Jesus' example by taking your paycheck and offering it up in thanks before distributing it? What was the result?

6. Before we leave this thought of God meeting needs, how many meals did the crowd eat that day?_____ Sometimes we think of 3 meals and a snack as our daily need. God knows our real need. We must be very careful when it comes to asking God to supply our needs so we don't confuse them with our wants. As we look around, we can find people who have much more than we have monetarily speaking. We can also find people with far less. What does this kind of comparing do in our heart?

What can we do to avoid discontentment and dissatisfaction?

What guardrail might save us from plummeting into the abyss of discontentment.

7. The crowd followed Jesus. They wanted him to meet their physical needs. Are people really that much different today?

When is it easiest to talk to your loved ones and friends about spiritual things—in times of ease and comfort or in times of difficulty and pain?

Why do you believe this is so often true?

8. Some of those that were there with Jesus grumbled at his words. Jesus told them to “stop grumbling.” What is the very clear word he gives them in verse 44? _____

When someone says they have been searching for God and finally found him, we may understand what they are saying, but this is not an accurate statement. According to verse 44 who pursues who?

How does it make you feel knowing the sovereign God and creator of the universe pursued you?

9. Jesus taught for quite a while on the “bread of life.” It is unfortunate that in their confusion they chose to leave rather than continue pursuing the truth. Can you understand why those following Jesus said that this is a hard saying? How easily do you give up when faced with the deep things of God?

10. Not everyone who was close to Jesus was a true follower. Notice the beautiful word he uses to describe the Twelve—they are his “chosen.” And yet who does Jesus mention here?

What do you know about this man?

There have always been those who in appearance were close to Jesus but their heart was far from him. What are the only two choices one can make when it comes to Jesus?

We cannot know another person's heart. Who is the only person for whom we are responsible?