

The Bread of Life - part 1

Two studies ago Jesus fed more than twenty thousand men, women, and children using only five loaves of bread and two fish. As Jesus broke off pieces, the bread and fish were replenished until everyone was full. The experience was so incredible that the people wanted to make Jesus king and to do so by force (John 6:14-15). In response, Jesus commanded that His disciples get into a boat and sail out onto the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:22). It appears that the disciples had agreed with the massive crowd and complicated the situation. Then Jesus was able to send the crowd away (Mark 6:45) and seek solitude up on a mountain (John 6:15). While Jesus was praying on the mountain, the disciples were out on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a great storm that threatened their lives. Jesus saw them in the dark, stormy night even though they were 3-4 miles (3.7-5.6 km) away. Yet, Jesus waited some time and then went to them. He rescued them from the storm and danger. But when the waves became calm and the winds instantly stopped, only then were the disciples astonished (Mark 6:51). What about the feeding of so many people? Wow, what shortsightedness! The scriptures say that the disciples' hearts were hardened. They had not learned from the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. When we come to this study, their boat has arrived on the west side of the Sea of Galilee and landed on the coast of the city known as Gennesaret, which is south of Capernaum. I wonder what the disciples thought about the events that followed?

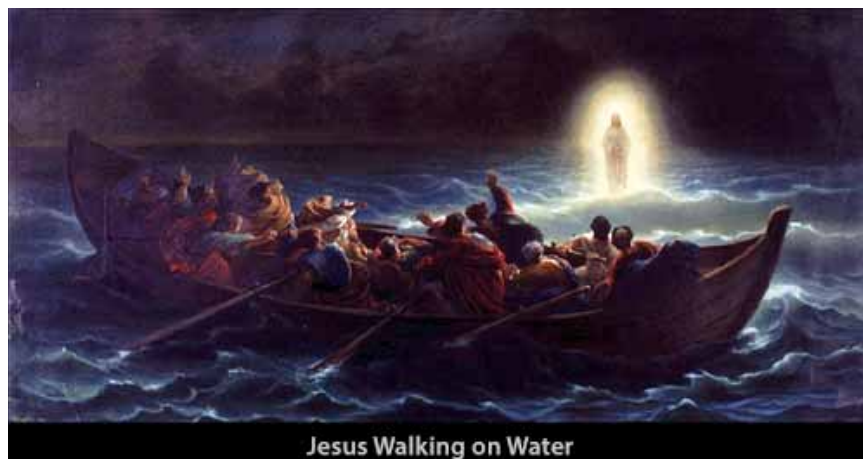
ALL TIED UP. After the boat was tied up, the disciples got out of the boat and had probably hoped for some rest. But peace, quiet, and an opportunity for rest were elusive since the gospel of Mark tells us that immediately a crowd of people recognized Jesus and came after them as soon as they got out of the boat.

When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was. (NASB) Mark 6:53-55

The crowd did not walk but ran to them. They ran

around the country telling others where Jesus was located. So even more people came: sick people and people on pallets. No matter where Jesus went, the people knew He was coming and they lined the streets of villages, cities, and the roads in the country waiting for Him to come.

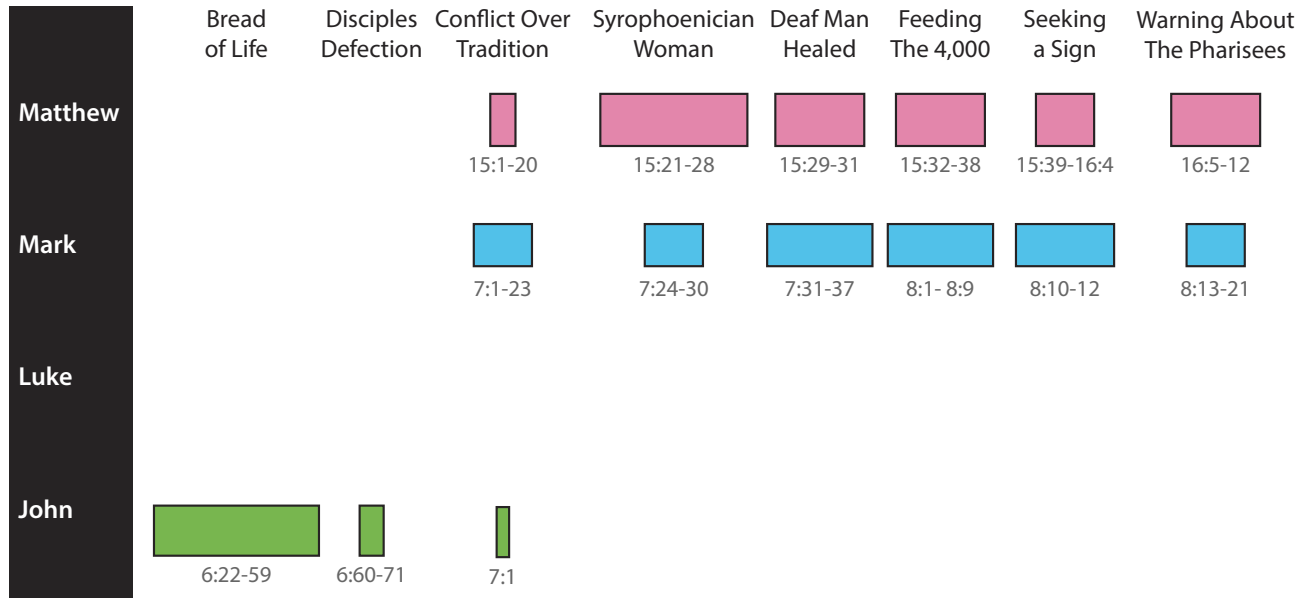
Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured. (NASB) Mark 6:56



The gospel of Matthew says that the people pleaded for the opportunity to touch His cloak so that they could be cured, and those that did were instantly healed.

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry Outside of Galilee - Mid A.D. 32



... they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured. (NASB) Matt. 14:36

What a scene - people lining the streets and probably with arms outstretched. Some crawling, others running, touching and then racing back and a few others pleading for help. Men, women, and children were desperate to be healed by One they did not know. Jesus probably stopped on occasions and took time to personalize the healing.

The popular belief of that era was that power flowed from a person into their clothes. This explains why they wanted to touch the tassels on His clothes. There was no healing or prayer service. The gospels do not tell us that anyone was slain in the spirit. Jesus just walked and people were healed if they touched Him. It was wonderful! The scene must have been incredible. If this had occurred today, He would be on television and reporters would be seeking interviews. I wonder if Jesus would allow Himself to be interviewed?

THE LEFT BEHIND CROWD. While all of this was occurring at Gennesaret, the men and women at Bethsaida were

trying to determine where Jesus was residing. They could not find Him.

The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone. (John 6:22)

The crowd knew that the disciples had taken the only boat and left the previous evening. They knew that Jesus did not go with them. They had assumed that Jesus would still be there, somewhere with them but they could not find Him. When some other boats arrived that morning, some of the people got into them and went to the city of Capernaum, Jesus' headquarters, in an attempt to find Him. They did not know that Jesus and the disciples were in Gennesaret.

THEIR STOMACHS. After arriving in Capernaum, they eventually found Jesus in Gennesaret. When they found Him, they asked a curious question, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?" (NASB) John 6:23-25

They were trying to determine how and when Jesus arrived at Gennesaret. But Jesus did not answer their question. Instead, His reply revealed the true desire of their hearts. He skipped to the real issue.

Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. (NASB) John 6:26

They were not interested in Jesus, nor were they interested in His signs. They were interested in only themselves - their stomachs. What they could get out of Jesus. That was the issue. That describes the motivation of many people. "What can I get?" Sadly, that describes the attitude of some spouses in marriages today. It is one thing when children and teenagers act that way. We understand their immaturity. It is quite another thing when adults behave like adolescents. Just like these folks, people are still seeking Jesus for healing, to be rescued at sea, to have their marriage fixed, or to be saved from death when they are in a fox hole in the midst of war. We are selfish people at times. Are we not? Do you love Jesus because He is Jesus or because of what you can get out of Jesus?

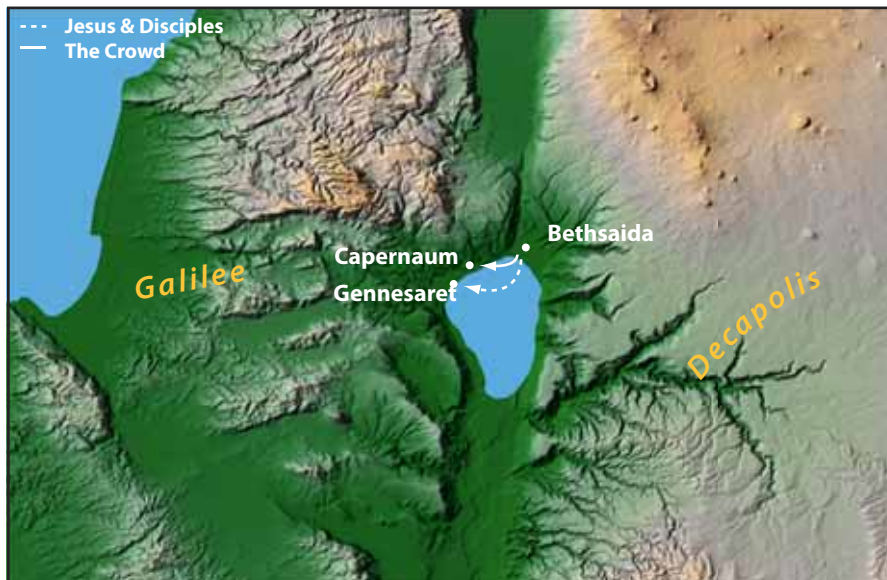
The crowd and the disciples missed the message of the

miracle of the feeding of so many people. Some today read the gospels and miss the message too! They miss Jesus because they are too preoccupied with themselves. John 7:31 says that many that day believed in Jesus,

But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" (NASB) John 7:31

But we find that they rejected Jesus anyway,

But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. (NASB) John 12:37



The purpose of the signs was to help them discover who Jesus truly was. They just missed the truth.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that

you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (NASB) John 20:30-31

They missed the message of the signs, especially the sign of the feeding of so many people from only two fish and five loaves of bread. The message was about the very nature and person of Jesus. Did they think that He was like them but with special powers? If so, they missed the truth.

THE ETERNAL FOOD. Then Jesus dropped a spiritual fishing line with some spiritual bait,

Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which

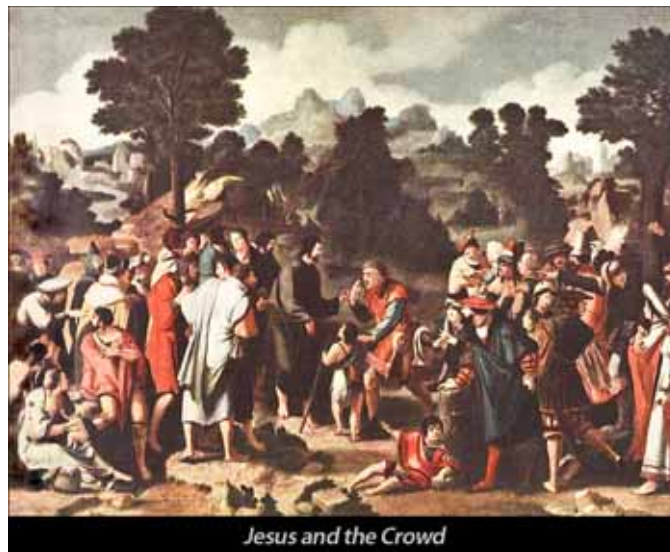
endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal. (NASB) John 6:27

Do not seek the food of this world! Instead, seek the food that lasts forever. Oh, by the way, only the Son of Man was and is able to give this food. What a perfect fishing expedition! Jesus dangled the fishing hook with the spiritual bait and they bit. They wanted it.

Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" (NASB) John 6:28

"What shall we do to get this special food?" they asked. What work must we perform? Jesus answered,

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (NASB) John 6:29



Jesus said, "Believe in Me!" That is the only work anyone can and must do to gain eternal life. Jesus' message was that there is nothing to do but believe. Believing is not a work. These are Jesus' words and not some theologian, priest, pastor, or teacher. Then the crowd asked a question that revealed how truly spiritually blind they were.

So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.'" (NASB) John 6:30-31

They wanted a sign as proof that He spoke the truth. They asked, "What signs do you show us? Moses gave us manna!" What do you do? Did they miss the message of the feeding of the massive crowd? Yes they did! Also, they appear to be

irritated by Jesus. They did not want to hear about believing. They just wanted what Jesus could give them.

So, Jesus replied with a rebuke.

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." (NASB) John 6:32-33

He tells them that Moses did not give them the manna - the bread that came out of heaven. They were wrong! It was Jesus' Father who provided the manna and it is the Father who gives eternal spiritual life. Now they are interested.

Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." (NASB) John 6:34

They were not truly interested in spiritual things. They just appear to be interested. They wanted only the special bread that Jesus was talking about and so Jesus told them where and how to get it.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. (NASB) John 6:35-36

Jesus promised them bread and water that satisfies. Jesus' statement is strong. He emphasized the fact that He was and is the Bread of Life. The Greek text reads, "I, I am the Bread of Life!" He emphasizes the fact that He was and is the Bread of Life by using the emphatic first pronoun before the first person verb - "I." Only He was and is the Bread of Life and no one else qualified. There are not many ways to

God! Then He made a sobering statement.

“You have seen Me, and yet do not believe.”

They had already seen Jesus perform miracles and the fact that they wanted another sign was only proof that they had rejected the earlier signs. He was nothing more than a magician to them.

This reminds us that some today want a sign in order to believe. Some are always seeking signs. Some are doubters looking for proof. There are people who are always looking and never coming to the truth. Some have read about the miracles, signs, and wonders in the pages of the gospels and still want proof. Unfortunately, they are like the crowd. One, two, or three signs are not sufficient, and in fact none will ever be enough - just like the crowds in Jesus’ day. Some are doubters who reject all evidence of proof and others reject truth because it does not conform to their desires.

DOING THE FATHER’S WILL. Then Jesus makes a surprising statement - surprising that He said it to them.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (NASB) John 6:37-38

He said that those whom God the Father has given to Him will come to Him. That is, they will believe in Him and Jesus will not reject them. Why? Because Jesus was committed to doing the Father’s will. Who are these people? The answer is revealed in the next verse.

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. (NASB) John 6:39

When Jesus said that he would raise them on the last day,

he communicated two thoughts. First, He has the power to resurrect anyone He desires at the end of time. That thought reveals the second one - Jesus is talking in a spiritual sense. He is talking about those who believe in Him. Remember - the work of God is that we believe in Him whom the Father had sent (John 6:29). And whom did the Father send according to Jesus’ statement? It is Himself. The Father sent Him - Jesus. He is the One whom we must believe. If we do, we belong to Jesus.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. (NASB) John 6:40

Those who believe will have eternal life and we will live for eternity with Him - our Lord, God, and Savior.

CONCLUSION. Jesus promised that those who believe in

Him will have eternal life. In verse 37, Jesus said that He will not cast out those who believe in Him. The

Some are doubters who reject all evidence of proof and others reject truth because it does not conform to their desires. So, they reject Jesus!

Greek word that Jesus uses for “not” is a double negative in the Greek. This is a very strong statement in the Greek language. It is a very strong promise. Then when Jesus said in verse 39 that He would “not lose” any, He used the Greek word APOLLUMI. It means “to not lose something that one already owns.” Jesus has told us that those who believe in Him belong to Him, and He does not lose anyone who belongs to Him. No accident, no act of negligence, or external force can take us away from Jesus, and that includes you - yourself. You could not remove yourself if you wanted to. But this is true only of those who believe in Him. Do you truly believe in Him or are you looking for more signs, more wonders, and more miracles - just like the crowds?

Jesus is the spiritual Bread of Life. Only He - no one else - can forgive your sins and give you eternal life. Just tell God that you believe and want your sins forgiven.

For a discussion about man’s choice and God’s choice in salvation, please read “[Predestination and Free Will](#).”