

Water and Bread: Lessons of Life from Jesus

John 6.16-34

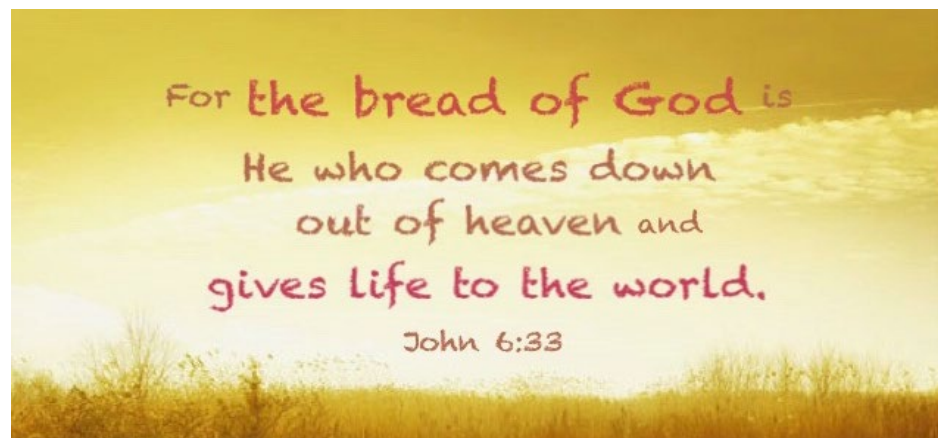
After miraculously feeding a crowd of people, Jesus sent His disciples off in a boat, and got alone to pray. Full disclosure: He was planning a lesson on the storms of life for His disciples, and a lesson on what really matters in life for the crowds who didn't yet believe in Him.

Lesson for the Disciples: Walking on Water (16-21)

- Circumstances are orchestrated by Jesus as a lesson on life
- Jesus gone, disciples alone; it's dark, and a storm is raging
- Jesus comes in the storm, tells them to not be afraid.
- 'Sailing with Jesus': Calms the storm, takes us home.

Lesson for the Crowds: Food that lasts forever (22-34)

- Chasing signs: *Give us a miracle...and free food!* (22-25, 30-31)
- Seeking the things that don't last! (26-27a)
- The 'work of God' that *isn't* a 'good work'! (28-29)
- The 'bread of heaven' that God *gives!* (27b, 32-34)



1. John 6 contains Jesus' famous discourse on the 'bread of life,' but before He can teach this beautiful message, He has to 'set the stage' for it. The first phase was feeding the 5000 (John 6.1-15). He knew this would grab their attention: Free food always brings out crowds! What was their reaction to this miracle (John 6.15)? It's probable the disciples would have been happy for this to happen, too! Is this at all like Christians today? We're happy with Jesus being King when He provides our needs and wants...but what about the other times?
2. This account of Jesus walking on the water is recorded in Matthew and Mark. Read them (Mt. 14.22-33; Mk. 6.45-52). What additional information do we learn that is not recorded in John? What details show how Jesus "choreographed" this situation? Jesus was able to calm the storm; could He also cause it to storm?
3. To get a full picture of Jesus' lesson for the disciples, see Matthew and Mark. What was the disciples' reaction (Mk. 6.51)? What did they say (Mt. 14.33)? If they already believed Jesus was God's Son (they did), why do they now say, "You are *certainly* God's Son"? Have you ever experienced something that caused your faith in God to grow? What does Mk. 6.52 indicate about their faith journey?
4. One of the most common errors among professing Christians today is thinking that they need to do 'good works' to be saved. Have you ever encountered this? What "good works" are often listed as being necessary to get into heaven? The Jews focused on good works, too. How does Jesus confront their confusion in vv27-29? Is eternal life something *earned*, or something you are *given*? On what basis?
5. Compare and contrast the types of "bread" referred to in verses 30-34. What kind of bread do the Jewish people desire? What provision from the Old Testament do they highlight? How does Jesus redirect their thinking from the 'physical' to the 'spiritual'? How is spiritual bread different from physical bread? What 'life' is Jesus referring to in v33? Does this remind you of the water Jesus offered the woman at the well in John 4.13-14?