

JOH 6:22-29 "The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." 28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Our text this morning is in conjunction with the feeding of the multitude and how Jesus had rejected the attitude of the people to make Him the ruler of their rebellion against Rome.

Instead He went up into the mountainside and spent time with the Father. In the meantime He had instructed His disciples to go on to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to the town of Capernaum.

During the night as they made their way there the winds blew up and caused them to get off course as they spent most of the night rowing against the wind and waves. After Jesus spent time with the Father He then went out to meet His disciples as He literally walked on the water which served as His highway to get to them.

Immediately after He got into the boat with them the wind died down and they arrived at Gennesaret which is about two miles south of their original destination of Capernaum.

As we pick up in our text this morning the people who were the recipients of the bounty from Jesus' hands were now expecting to find him in the general area where they saw him the day before. Maybe they were expecting breakfast.

In any event they don't find Him.

JOH 6:22 "The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone."

It seems that there was one boat which brought Jesus and His disciples to the area of the feeding of the five thousand. The people were well aware of this and they were well aware that Jesus did not get into the boat with His disciples as they saw them depart without the Lord.

MAT 14:22 "Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd."

Jesus was still with the crowd while His disciples were departing for the other side of the Sea of Galilee; in this case heading toward Capernaum. The crowds were well aware of where the disciples were going.

This is why they are so surprised not to see Jesus the next morning when they come looking for Him because they knew that since no other boats were in the vicinity He could not have gone to Capernaum via the boat.

Well, if Jesus is no longer in the region of Bethsaida where the crowds were served fish and bread by our Lord then it would make sense to find the miracle worker in the next place they knew He was going, and that is Capernaum.

JOH 6:23-24 "Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus."

Keep in mind that Tiberias is a city on the western shore of Galilee and some of those who were in Bethsaida the day before had sailed the relatively short distance back home to Tiberias. The next morning, expecting to find Jesus, they sail back to Bethsaida.

Discovering that Jesus was not there and knowing where His disciples had sailed they surmise that this is where Jesus was now located and they sail for Capernaum and they eventually catch up with Jesus.

JOH 6:25 "When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

This question really has in it another question. Not only when did He get there, but how did He get there?

They surmised that since there were no other boats and that there is no way He could have walked around the lake in one night that maybe He miraculously transported Himself across the lake.

But what is interesting here is that Jesus doesn't entertain their question with a direct answer. Instead He goes to the heart of the matter and that is why they followed Him across the lake in the first place.

JOH 6:26 "Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."

There are a lot of reasons as to why people come to Jesus, even today. There may be a problem that someone is struggling with and they want a change in their life. They've heard about Christianity and they feel it's time to give it a try. Maybe being part of the church and its people will help me through this time, they think.

Other people come for other reasons. Maybe it's because they want their children to have some religious training and exposure. Maybe it's because they know they're not perfect and being part of the church will help them feel they're doing something to ensure their salvation.

But in the final analysis these are all the wrong reasons for coming to Christ, because all of these reasons only answer a temporal problem, and that has to do with what is going on in their present life which they feel can be fixed by an association with Christianity.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not opposed to someone coming to the church for any of these reasons. If someone walks through our doors here because they think we're giving away tickets to heaven, let 'em come.

All I'm saying is that if the church, be it this one or any other, does not point them to the real reason for coming to Christ then that person may spend their lives thinking they have a relationship with Christ when they don't.

These people who were following the Lord from one side of the lake to the other honestly felt that they were following a prophet and possibly the Messiah, so much so that they wanted to make Him their king.

But the reason they are following Him is not the right reason. The reason is to satisfy an immediate need, again, not unlike how people today come into an association with the church because of an immediate need, not really coming for the ultimate reason which Jesus states in our text.

JOH 6:26 "Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."

It seems that these people understood that a miracle had taken place when they were filled with the loaves and the fish. The problem is that instead of making the connection that it was more important to seek the One who did the miracle, they were only concerned with what the miracle could afford them, and that is physical food.

In their minds the crowd had concluded that good news abounded in this man Jesus. Their gospel included the idea that their future King had the power to deliver them from the hands of Rome. And on top of that this King would make sure they would never go hungry again.

Like that slogan of a Presidential promise so many years before, "a chicken in every pot."

How can you go wrong with that? This is good news. But this is not the gospel Jesus preached any more than it should be the gospel we preach today. We don't preach a gospel of temporal blessings only, but a gospel which deals with eternal blessings which result in eternal life.

It's amazing that these people were seeking the right person, Jesus, but they were seeking for the wrong reasons. Now, as I said earlier, even if someone is seeking for the wrong reasons it doesn't mean they may not later realize what the right reason is and turn their thinking around.

But unless someone gives them the truth as to who this Jesus is, and why He came, they won't feel compelled to do that. And this is what Jesus Himself is about to do. He's about to expose their

carnal reasons for seeking Him and give them the real reason for seeking Him.

JOH 6:27 "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Now, what Jesus does here is similar to what He said to the woman at the well. Remember, her desire was to get the water from Jesus which would alleviate the need to keep going back to the well. She had taken a spiritual truth and put a carnal spin to it.

JOH 4:13-14 Jesus [said], "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

She thinks this is a great deal. But she has missed the point that Jesus is using a comparison between physical water which satisfies and sustains life, and spiritual life which can well up within a person as the Giver of that water satisfies for eternity.

And now, Jesus says to the crowds who followed Him to Capernaum that they're seeking after the wrong food which satisfies and sustains life and shows them how they must seek a food which produces eternal life.

Jesus says to them, don't work for a food that spoils. He does not mean to say that we should all quit our jobs and not worry where we get our food. What He means is that no one should work or enslave themselves to anything earthly which will only produce death.

But rather, if you're going to work for anything, work for that which will produce eternal life. And He's not saying that we can work our way to heaven. He's only using this language to make a point that we will put our effort into those things which we deem important. And if eternal life is important to us we will make the effort to find it.

And now, Jesus is going to tell them where to find it, and that is in Himself. Let's look at verse 27 again.

JOH 6:27 "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

The Son of Man is a reference to Jesus and this crowd would have known whom Jesus was referring to. In other words, Jesus is saying that seeking to fill your bellies with bread and fish might satisfy your physical needs but I didn't come into the world to accomplish this. I came into the world to accomplish spiritual life unto eternity. And if you want it you must seek the One who offers it as a gift, and that is Me.

And as if to drive His point home Jesus then adds, "On him [the Son of Man], God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Jesus now invokes the name of God the Father. In this one sentence Jesus makes Himself equal to the Father in authority, and identifies Himself as one sent from the Father who is on this planet with a mission to give this life to those who seek the Son.

The Father has placed His seal of approval on the Son. And we know that this was actually accomplished at the beginning of the earthly public ministry of Jesus at His baptism.

MAT 3:16-17 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

In other words, 'it is My Son who is accomplishing My will and it is Him who will accomplish it to the end. I've put My seal on Him, My stamp of approval.'

What this tells the crowd is that they need look nowhere else for their salvation. But they must understand what this salvation is all about. It is spiritual in nature, not carnal.

Well, these people seem to be interested in what Jesus has to offer, but like so many people they have their own way of approaching this life.

JOH 6:28 "Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Keep in mind that most of these people would have been Jews. They were already trying to do the works of the law. And so, they're question is basically asking what must we do above what we're already doing to get this life?, as if they could somehow do more works to get to heaven.

By the way, this should have been a red flag to these people in one sense. If the law couldn't get you to heaven, which you could not keep perfectly anyhow, then how in the world could they have done anything in addition to the law to accomplish that?

But Jesus does not have any type of work in mind that man could do to earn any favor in the eyes of God. In fact, the work which Jesus proposes is really no work at all in the spiritual sense.

JOH 6:29 "Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Now, I'm sure that many of these people are scratching their heads at this point wondering, what kind of an answer is that? I'm sure in their own minds they are waiting for an answer like, "make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and offer your first born child." Or, "stand on your head until all the blood rushes to your head, and then run in circles until you fall down."

I'm amazed at what people will do in the name of religion or spirituality, or in many cases in the name of Christ. They'll go to far off lands and pray at the shrines of dead saints, or climb tall stone stairways on their bare knees to earn some sort of favor with God.

There are people in certain areas of South America who each year will voluntarily be nailed to a wooden cross so as to find some sort of penance for their sin. In many cultures religious practices involve flogging and all sorts of abuses to their bodies to show their allegiance to their gods.

It's amazing that people would rather put themselves through all sorts of odd and hurtful behavior than come to God the way God wants us to come to Him.

JOH 6:29 "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

In other words, there is no work you can do to come to God. And again, it's not as though Jesus is saying that employing faith in God is a work of man. He is simply saying that all men everywhere are required to put their faith in the One whom the Father has sent if they would see God and be with Him forever.

Jesus could not make it any clearer or any more simple. And in this statement our Lord Jesus has also stripped away the one thing

these Jews have depended on for so many years for their salvation, and that is the Mosaic Law.

In this one statement, Jesus has made the law of no effect as it relates to salvation. Now, obviously, the law was of no effect for salvation from the day it was given on Mount Sinai, but Jesus is simply driving the point home as to where they must look; and it's not Moses, it's the Son of Man who is the Son of God.

But what should not be lost on us here is that this is not a request for these people to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah that they might receive eternal life. This is a command.

And as with any command it leaves no one off the hook when it comes to man's responsibility to stop trusting in self and good works to get you to heaven. In fact, the same John who wrote this gospel is the same John who wrote the first epistle with his name which addresses this concept of God commanding mankind to make a choice for Christ.

1JO 3:23 "And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us."

No one in this world is exempt from this command from our very Creator. If we want to be with our God forever in His presence in Paradise on the new earth then we must obey this command which doesn't seek anything from us but faith.

It's a gift that God extends to us through His Son. And it is a gift which Jesus is offering to these people who have followed Him to Capernaum. He's trying to correct their wrong thinking as it relates to the Kingdom of God and how one can be a part of this Kingdom.

These Jews thought they were already part of God's Kingdom simply because they were born Jews and because they had the Law of Moses. But our Lord graciously and lovingly shows them the truth in Himself.

This is what we have been called to do. We have been called to dispel the darkness of ignorance with the truth. And the truth is that no one can work their way to heaven. We've heard lots of information about religion in these past few months, especially as it relates to the Muslim world.

And we've heard leaders in the highest positions in this country, and other countries around the world, say that Islam is a legitimate

religion along-side Judaism and Christianity. And the point is to make all religions on an equal par so as to bring all peoples together under one umbrella of spirituality, unity and peace.

God recoils at this idea. Now, I don't mean to suggest that somehow one group of people is better than another because of their religious affiliation. But what I mean to say is that if there is one truth from God as it relates to eternal life, then how are we being loving to people to say their particular brand of religion is just as good as someone else's?

The truth matters. And God has proven Himself in one way and that is through His Son who gave His life as a ransom for our sin, and then who rose bodily from the dead three days later.

What other religion in the world can claim such a thing? Where is Mohammed today? He's buried six feet in the ground in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Where is Confucius? He too is buried in the ground having turned to dust. What about Moses, regarded as the one responsible for bringing Israel out of Egypt at the command of God?

We know that He's buried somewhere between the Sinai desert and the east side of the Jordan River. In fact, we're told that Satan evidently wanted the body of Moses for whatever reason.

JUD 1:9 "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

The body of Moses is somewhere in the ground, which brings us to the point. If all of these religions in the world today have as their religious icons people who are dead, then what does this say about the validity of their leaders along with their destinies?

There is one person born into this world who did not claim to be only a prophet, or a leader of a religious movement, or a holy person whose life must be followed as an example if you are to attain heaven.

This person claimed to be God Himself. This person claimed to come from the throne of God the Father, which means He did not originate anywhere on this planet but who always was and is and will always be. In other words, this person is eternal and thus cannot be anyone other than God.

And of course, unlike all of the other men and women who have claimed to be God's spokesperson or Messiah, who are still in the grave, thus disqualifying them as Savior, Jesus Christ not only proved Himself in this earth as He did signs and wonders no mere man could do, He also predicted His own death and resurrection from the dead.

In fact, as Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration with three of His disciples He made this statement to them; Peter, James and John.

MAT 17:9 "As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

And so, Jesus clearly announced what was going to happen before it did and so as to drive the point home in this very chapter of Matthew, chapter 17, He says it again, this time with all of His disciples.

MAT 17:22-23 "When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. 23 They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief."

They only keyed in on the death of their Master. They didn't grasp the resurrection part, really until after our Lord's resurrection.

MAT 28:5-10 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

And see Jesus they did. For forty days the disciples and followers of Christ met with Him, had meals with Him and sat at His feet as He taught and explained about the Kingdom of God. They were witnesses of His resurrection from the dead. This is what Luke records for us in Acts.

ACT 2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he made the point that over 500 people saw the risen Lord at one time.

We don't believe a myth. We don't place our faith in some mystical unprovable teaching. We place our faith in a person who told us He was God and Savior and then went on to prove it by raising from the dead and showing Himself alive to many many witnesses.

These same witnesses have written it down and we have it in the form of the gospels and epistles of the word of God. And so, what is the work God commands from all people? Just believe that what Christ did for us happened and that He is who He says He is; our Creator, God and Savior. There is no other. And we need to love people with this truth. Peter put it this way.

1PE 1:3-5 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."