

Welcome to Cornerstone! If you're new here, my name is Kyle Manning, and along with Tony at our March St. location, we are your campus pastors. Our lead pastor, Tim Ackley, is currently on sabbatical, and we're praying for him and Denise to receive much-needed rest.

We are in a series titled 'Life in His Name,' where we are examining the Gospel of John. This series will continue throughout the summer, delving into the themes and teachings of John's Gospel.

The key verse found in John's gospel and this series is **John 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."** This verse highlights John's purpose—stirring belief in Jesus, which leads to life.

Before we dive into today's passage discussing, 'Jesus, the Bread of Life,' let's reflect on what scripture says about belief. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."** Belief is a gift from God, making Him entirely responsible for our salvation. As Ephesians 2:1 states, we were 'dead in our trespasses and sins' and needed to be resurrected by grace through faith.

Throughout this series, we will look for spiritual vital signs that God is filling our hearts with belief and giving us new life. Whether you're new to faith or have been walking with Christ for a lifetime, my prayer is that today we will check your spiritual pulse. In exploring 'Jesus, the Bread of Life,' we will see how He is not only the giver of life but also the sustainer. Have you experienced this sustaining power in your walk with Him?

If so, let's stand for the reading of God's Word. Read **John 6:1-15**

So let's briefly discuss where we've been up until this point. In the prologue of John's gospel, we are introduced to Jesus, one member of the Trinity, who is responsible for all creation. John 1:3 says, **"All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made."** From the opening of John's gospel, we are introduced to Jesus as God in the flesh.

Then, we are given a picture of what He came to do when John exclaims, **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)**. After His baptism, He begins calling His disciples and reveals His glory by performing His first miracle at a wedding in Cana, turning water into wine to commission His ministry.

From there, we encounter the first of three Passovers that John notes in his gospel account. Keep in mind that the Passover is the ultimate illustration of what Jesus came to do. At this first Passover, Jesus refers to Himself as the real temple to which the earthly temple pointed, culminating with Him saying in **John 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."** He was not speaking of the actual temple but alluding to His own death and resurrection.

After an incredible encounter with Nicodemus, where Jesus said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."** (John 3:5), Jesus then implies that He is the Messiah, the deliverer and savior of His people.

After His encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus deliberately goes to Samaria—a place no Jewish individual would dare be seen—and speaks to a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, hinting to her that He is the living water. Finally, we heard last week, Jesus has the same authority as the Father, being the giver of life. Don't tell me for a second that Jesus never claims to be God because these passages are chock full of references to Jesus' deity, we just need to be spiritually alive to see it and I pray that all of these messages are like a spiritual defibrillator, shocking your heart back to life.

In today's familiar passage, we encounter the second Passover mentioned in John's gospel. Along with it, we are given another opportunity to believe in Jesus. Here, we see a major shift in Jesus' ministry. Whereas He previously spent much of His time ministering to the crowds, you are going to see Jesus shift His attention mainly to His disciples.

Another important detail is that all of the gospels contain this account of Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. It can be helpful for us to pull details from all of the gospel accounts to build a better understanding of what happened. However, John decidedly takes a different approach than the other gospel writers, as we will see. Consider the importance of this particular miracle, especially if each gospel writer included it in their account and if God saw fit for it to be so prominently featured in His Word. With that in mind, it warrants thoughtful consideration.

First, I want to address the obvious points so that we can get to the deeper, more significant meaning of this text and John's reason for including it here. If we follow the timing of this miracle with the other gospels, this would've been right after Jesus had sent the disciples out on a missionary journey of their own, two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits and to heal every disease and affliction. You can read about it in Matthew 10, Mark 6, and Luke 11. This also corresponded with the time frame when John the Baptist was beheaded.

So, to take some time away, recoup, and spend time with His disciples, Jesus takes them to the countryside. It says in verse 1 of chapter 6, “Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.” (Golan Heights). However, after causing quite a stir, word apparently gets out about their location. Before they even ‘unpack their bags,’ we are told in verse 2, “a large crowd was following Him, because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick.” Jesus and the disciples hardly had time to catch their breath, and now they are being mobbed.

This is where the motivation for ministry surfaces. We are told in Matthew’s gospel, “When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36). This is a teaching moment for Jesus’ disciples—how will they respond to such a great need?

Michelle Negron says, “Every Christian is like a tea bag; you don’t know what’s inside until you’re in hot water.” To tie off the point, every moment of our lives as believers could provide a ministry moment. Be reminded of Christ’s compassion for you as a motivation to show compassion towards others who are lost.

With that in mind, let’s get to the real significance of John’s reason for including this miracle in his gospel account and let’s prayerfully ask that God would stir up belief in His Son.

After assessing the situation at hand and huddling with His disciples as the crowds press in closer, Jesus takes the opportunity to test Philip, who would’ve been a local country boy. Jesus asks, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” Unfortunately, Philip utterly fails the test, much like we would and do on a regular basis. Philip responds in verse 7, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” Two hundred denarii equate to eight months’ worth of wages, and that would not have been enough for everyone to get even a mouthful.

Fortunately, Andrew—Peter’s brother, go figure—chimes in and says in verse 8, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” I can almost see Peter elbowing his brother in the side and telling him to be quiet as Philip is relieved that Andrew bailed him out of hot water. Whatever occurred, Jesus had compassion on His disciples just like He did the crowds. He takes control of the situation, instructing the disciples to have the people sit down.

This is where we are told just how large the crowd is, which totals 5,000, not including women and children. Conservative estimates could’ve been between 15,000 and 20,000 people. It’s in

this moment that Jesus once again reveals something about Himself that John uses to stir us to belief. If you see it, perhaps your heart may even skip a beat.

Imagine the scene with me as the eyes of thousands of men, women, and children are all fixed on Jesus. For such a large crowd, there's a quiet in the air, waiting to see what Jesus is going to do. He took the humble barley loaves, and when He had given thanks, verse 11 says, "He distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted." This crowd, wandering in the desert like sheep without a shepherd and having no way of providing for themselves, is reminiscent of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness and God providing for them manna from heaven.

Jesus is doing a callback from the Old Testament that should've been obvious to everyone watching. But if you don't have the eyes to see it, you'll miss it.

What John wants us to see during this Passover is that Jesus isn't just another prophet—He is **the** Prophet. He isn't like Moses; He is greater than Moses, just as He is greater than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the giver of life, the living water, the Messiah, the temple of God. He is glorious; He is the Lamb of God, God in the flesh who has come to take away the sins of the world. By believing in Him, you can have life in His name.

Sadly, this crowd didn't get it. After everyone had their fill, there were enough leftovers to fill 12 large baskets—one for each tribe of Israel, illustrating how God is able to provide for all the needs of all His people. Instead of recognizing who Jesus was and worshiping Him at His feet, they swarmed Him with the intention of forcing Him to be their king.

They wanted a savior they could understand and control, a savior who could provide for them according to their own desires. They could not see their desperate need. Just as Moses led the Israelites in the Exodus, Jesus is leading a new Exodus—from the effects of sin and death. The crowd missed this, and like Moses, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain to be by Himself (John 6:15).