

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #29

John 6:22-31

I know of a very successful business entrepreneur who was being presented with the fact that he needed to invite Jesus Christ into his life. He was balking at the idea and responded in this fashion - "I have everything I want. I have achieved success in business. I have money in the bank. Anything I want I can buy. Why in the world would I need to turn my life over to Jesus Christ? What possibly could He give me that I do not already have?" The person who was witnessing immediately responded and said - "eternal life." Eternal life is something you cannot earn. Eternal life is something your money cannot buy. Eternal life is only found in Jesus Christ and since your life is ticking away, you had better go to Christ for eternal life.

As one nears death, you will discover you will be less and less interested in what you have and what you have accomplished. You'll become more and more interested in your relationship with God and what you did for God. To have a relationship with God requires a relationship with Jesus Christ.

It doesn't matter how much money you have in the bank or how much food you have in your freezer, you can only get eternal life by coming to faith in Jesus Christ. That is exactly what Jesus Christ taught an entire multitude of people who tracked Him to Capernaum. There is a powerful lesson to be learned and it is this:

IN ORDER FOR ANY PERSON TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE HE CANNOT TRUST IN HIS WORKS , BUT MUST BELIEVE ON JESUS CHRIST WHO IS THE ONLY BREAD OF LIFE WHO IS ABLE TO GIVE ETERNAL LIFE.

I watched a program that dealt with various religions. There were some who believed if they ate certain bizarre things and went through some bizarre ritual, they would have some spiritual encounter that would eventually bring them peace and eternal life. It is all a bunch of nonsense. **Eternal life is not found in any religion , it is found in one Person , Jesus Christ.** And Christ, Himself, makes that point very clear right here in John 6:22-31.

Now this is one of the great discourses in all of the New Testament. John carefully places this in the aftermath of two incredible miracles - 1) The feeding of thousands; 2) The walking on the water. No other person, except God, could do either of these things so what He teaches, in the aftermath of it, is worthy of careful analysis. There are three key narrative parts to this discourse that we want to observe:

NARRATIVE PART #1 – The multitude fed by Christ, looks physically for Jesus Christ.
6:22-25

The multitude that Christ fed had watched Christ's disciples get into one boat and head out, but they also knew that Christ had not gone with them (**6:22**). So they stayed put, thinking Jesus Christ was still in their vicinity. However, the next day, after the miracle of feeding them and after the storm, the crowd realized Jesus and His disciples were gone.

When you have a true ministry of Jesus Christ in your presence and lose it, it leaves a big void. When you have experienced the true power of God, nothing else can replace it. This crowd has all sorts of religious teachers around, but those teachers did not have God's power, for that power was with Jesus Christ and His disciples.

After the miracle of feeding the five thousand, other boats from Tiberias started showing up (v. 23):
1) It is possible they heard about the miracle; 2) It is possible they were business entrepreneurs who thought they could make a fast buck by giving people boat rides to their desired destination; 3) It is also possible that the storm caused all these boats to return to shore. **Observe in John 6:23, that John calls Jesus "the Lord."** This is the first time John calls him this, so the miracle of feeding the thousands and the miracle of walking on water cemented for John the fact that Jesus was God. Apparently this was a major turning point in John's faith.

When the multitude realized that Jesus was not in their area and the disciples did not come back in their boat (6:24), they got in boats and headed to Capernaum. And, according to verse 25, they found Him and according to verse 59 they found Him in the synagogue in Capernaum. **The reason why they found Him is because God permitted them to find Him.**

God is the one who permits people to see things that pertain to Him. Now as you will see, most of these people had no real relationship with Jesus Christ. **Most did not really believe on Jesus Christ, as their only God/Savior.** In fact, we may notice that they identify Jesus as "**Rabbi**" (v. 25), not Lord, not God, not Savior, but Rabbi. They went to a religious synagogue too but had no real relationship with God.

I am convinced that most people who go to church do not have a real relationship with Jesus Christ. They go to religious meetings and religious meeting places, but most do not have an intimate relationship with Christ, anymore than this crowd. There is a big difference between going to church and having a close, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Most of these people had really not even believed on Him. You may do all kinds of physical things that are religious. You may run to religious service after religious service. You may get into a boat and row across a lake to go on some spiritual quest. You may hike up a mountain to try and find God or you may, like Margot Hemingway, sit on the shore of an ocean and commune with seagulls, thinking you are at peace with nature. You may wear strange clothing, refuse to eat or drink certain things or refuse to go certain places. None of that means you have a real relationship with Jesus Christ or God. When a person goes to church they should hear a presentation of powerful truth, but that does not mean one will respond to this truth anymore than this crowd did.

NARRATIVE PART #2 – Jesus addresses the multitude who followed Him. 6:26-29

Notice how this address begins (v. 26) - the "truly, truly" formula. Jesus is stressing that this is dogmatic certainty, dogmatic reality. "Truly, truly" - 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25. This is truth that will never be altered. Now there are three key realities that Christ wants to bring out to this crowd.

(Reality #1) - Your motivation for seeking Me is physical not spiritual. 6:26

They were not following Jesus Christ because they recognized He had just performed a sign of deity, a messianic sign of God that proved He was their King. They were following Jesus Christ

because He had given them a welfare handout in a meal. **The only connection they really wanted with Jesus Christ was that He could give them handouts of food** . I am sure most made this trip to see if He would give them another welfare handout.

In fact, Jesus tells them that their only interest in Him was that their tummies were full. As long as Jesus ran a good social program, they followed Him, but the moment He said you must deal with your sin and trust only Me to take your sin away, they wanted to crucify Him.

I have seen that in ministry and so have many mission agencies. There are people who go to church and go to various missions, not because they want a real relationship with Jesus Christ, but because they want a free handout. They are not interested in being spiritually right with God, they are only interested in what they can physically get, they are just like this crowd.

On several occasions people have contacted the church for a variety of things. One thing I always encourage is that they would come to our church so they could be fed God's Word. I have yet to see one person we helped, show up to a service.

(Reality #2) - Your life should not be devoted to the temporal , but to the eternal . 6:27

There are people who invest their entire lives working for stuff that really doesn't matter. Jesus said, you people are only interested in what is temporal, but you need to get interested in that which is eternal. There are many people right here in this community, perhaps even in this church, who invest hour upon hour on goals and things temporal. This focus will never bring happiness.

That which is eternal is found in Jesus Christ. **God the Father has set His own eternal seal on God the Son** . So if you want to focus on that which is eternal, you must focus on Jesus Christ. A seal was a sign of authenticity and authority. **God the Father has testified both verbally . (John 12:28) and miraculously (6:1-14; 15-21) that His seal sits on His Son.** The verb "has set His seal" is aorist tense in Greek, probably pointing back to the past point in time when Jesus was baptized and the Spirit descended upon Him and the Father spoke from heaven (John 1:32-34). Nothing like this ever happened or will happen to any but Him.

Now I want you to notice the response of this crowd in **verse 28** - what must we do to have this eternal life? What this group is asking is, "What work should we do, what meritorious deed can we accomplish to gain eternal life?"

(Reality #3) - You may only receive eternal life by believing on Jesus Christ. 6:29

John 6:29 is an answer to a direct question and it clearly teaches a faith plus nothing . salvation gospel.

Now keep in mind that these people have just asked Christ what work they must do to get this eternal life. **What Christ says is - you cannot do any work to have eternal life, what you must do is believe in the work of God for eternal life and the work of God is found in Me.** Ladies and Gentlemen, see a very important point from **verse 29** - **salvation is the "work of God" provided for sinful people, not the work of sinful people for God.** All sinful people must do to experience eternal life is "believe in Jesus Christ" the One sent by God to give eternal life.

If Christ would have said to this group - to get life, get back in your boats and row seven times around the Sea, they would have done it. If He would have said, go climb that 3,000 foot mountain, they would have done it. If He would have said, go down to the Lake and be baptized in water, they would have done it. If He would have said, give someone the shirt off your back, they would have done it. **But when Christ said the key to eternal life is to believe in Me, they refused to do that.**

NARRATIVE PART #3 – The multitude responds to Jesus in a physical way, not spiritual way. 6:30-31

Now Christ has just told them that all may have eternal life by believing on Him and they said, “What sign will you do so we can see and believe?” These are the sign seekers. These are the charismatics of their day. The charismatics of our day aren’t much different - let’s hold some meeting and hope we see a bunch of signs and miracles so people will believe. God’s pattern is first you believe and then you’ll see God do some wonderful things. His pattern is first you believe and then you see the Glory of God (John 11:40). This is the way it works.

However this group has got this backwards - first they want to see a great sign and then they say they will believe. Many today do the same thing - “if God would just show me something, then I would believe.” **The proper Biblical chronology is first you believe and then God will show you many things.**

Now keep in mind that Jesus Christ has already performed an amazing miracle for them - He fed this whole multitude from five barley loaves and two fish (6:9). Apparently this wasn’t a good enough miracle.

In fact, **in verse 31**, they downplay that miracle. They said, Moses provided manna in the wilderness for our fathers for 40 years and he was just a man. They start citing their Bible verses to Jesus Christ as support for rejecting Him (Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24-25). Basically they say, you have just provided one meal for us, so why should we believe that you can give us eternal life? Their thinking is, if you are greater than Moses then do something greater than Moses did. Let’s see you do some miracle that is far above what Moses did. **People who do not want to believe in Jesus Christ, typically cite some Bible verse for their refusing to believe in Him.**

However, as one commentator observed - they missed two facts about the miracle with Moses:

- 1) Many of the Israelites who ate that manna did not believe.
- 2) Both Moses and Jesus were doing the miraculous to establish the authenticity of their message. Therefore when Jesus said, I am the only one who can give you life, they should have responded and believed in Him immediately for that was the reason He did the miracles.

What this all comes down to for these people and for us is - Do you believe Jesus Christ is the only one who can give you life?

Our salvation is not our work for God, it is God’s work for us and that work is only found in the Person of Jesus Christ. Believe on Him and you will be saved. Believe on Him and you will be sealed forever.