

The sixth chapter of John largely contains two things—the miracle of the bread and the message about the bread—now if you remember last week, we examined another miracle (of Jesus walking on the water)—but the clear emphasis of John within this chapter is on BREAD...

I suggest verses 22-27 are a part of the introduction to the sermon—in it John describes the audience and the necessity behind the message—we largely find three things in this passage—Jesus rebukes the people, exhorts the people, and corrects the people...

- I. Jesus Rebukes the People—vv22-26
- II. Jesus Exhorts the People—v27
- III. Jesus Corrects the People—vv28-29

I. Jesus Rebukes the People—vv22-26

1. Before I come to our Savior's rebuke in v26—let me first briefly suggest two things about the people He rebuked (vv22-25)...
2. [a] They were a part of the multitude fed by Christ—last week we learned our Savior sent them away the previous evening...
3. It's now the following day—and the people have returned, no doubt seeking for Christ who they thought remained...
4. They knew that the day before only one boat was present, and that our Savior sent His disciples away in it...
5. Thus—they were no doubt surprised to find our Savior absent—and yet unknown to them, He had left early that morning...
6. Verse 23, which is parenthetical to the passage, we learn that—"other boats come from Tiberias"—which was a city on the Western shore...
7. Why boats from Tiberias were present we are not told—possibly they came as taxis to assist the crowd in crossing...
8. [b] They followed Christ over the sea to Capernaum, v24—"when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus..."
9. Now—this doesn't mean—every person followed Christ by boat—but refers to the more persistent among them...
10. From v59 we learn that the discourse (or discussion) took place in Capernaum, in the synagogue—thus it's possible that when v25 says—"and when they found Him on the other side of the sea"—it means they found Him in the synagogue...
11. Or else, it's possible—that the people found Christ outside the synagogue, and they migrated to the synagogue...
12. Either way—a large part of the Jews who witnessed the miracle of bread, were now the recipients of the message about Bread...
13. V25—"And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when did You come here..."
14. Now—why these people asked Jesus this question is uncertain—they likely were still confused about how He crossed the Sea...
15. But either way—our Savior doesn't answer them but instead rebukes them—He simply comes straight to the point...
16. V26—"Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled..."
17. In other words—our Savior admits that seeking Him because they saw the signs was not, in and of itself, wrong...
18. In fact—this was the purpose of signs—to point the people to Christ—as the eternal Son of God, Savior of sinners...

19. Jn.20:31—"These signs are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name..."
20. The problem was this—these Jews failed to understand that His signs were intended to go beyond the miracle...
21. They saw in Christ a great miracle worker, that could meet all their temporal needs—He could feed them and liberate them from Rome...
22. But they failed to see—their need for spiritual food and spiritual liberation—they sought Him for temporal needs...
23. Lenski—"These people failed to see what was so gloriously pictured to them, the divinity of Jesus, his ability to feed their souls as he had fed their bodies, his Savior qualities as the Messiah sent of God. They had held the wonder bread in their hands, had eaten it with their mouths, but had never understood its true meaning with their hearts..."
24. Now—before I go further, let me point out what I trust is obvious—Christ looks past the outward to the inward...
25. For most people—the fact that this great multitude sought Christ would have been reason for them to rejoice...
26. Look at the large crowds—look at the people flocking to Him teach—surely this must be a very good thing...
27. But—how does our Savior respond—He responds by rebuking the people—He points out their defective motives...
28. Jn.2:23-25—"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man..."
29. J.C Ryle—"They had followed Him across the Lake of Galilee. They seemed at first sight ready to believe in Him, and do Him honor. But He knew the inward springs of their conduct, and was not deceived...The Lord Jesus, we should never forget, is still the same. He never changes. He reads the secret motives of all who profess and call themselves Christians. He knows exactly why they do all they do in their religion. The reasons why they go to Church, and why they receive the sacrament—why they attend family prayers, and why they keep Sunday holy—all are naked and opened to the eyes of the great Head of the Church. By Him actions are weighed as well as seen. *'Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart'*"...
30. Thus—we here learn a rather sober fact—not every man that seeks Christ—seeks Him for the right reasons...
31. [1] Man seeks Christ because of social pressure—that is—he feels pressured by his Christian friends and family...
32. Now—this faulty seeking is most common in churches, where people are pressured to walk an isle or sign a card...
33. The preacher places layers of pressure upon the sinner—equating external acts as the soul coming to Christ...
34. Thus—this country is filled with people, most of which no longer attend church, but are saved because they've walked an isle...
35. My friends—churches are filled with teenagers who demand entertainment—if they're going to stay in church...
36. Because they've been raised in church, they would be too ashamed to cast off all religious affiliation in total...
37. Their consciences would both them too much not to go to church—but deep down—they couldn't care less...
38. This is one reason why churches have limited all commitment and involvement—to only one hour a week...
39. I mean—some churches now offer a Saturday night meeting—so that you can have all day Sunday for yourself...
40. [2] Man seeks Christ because of felt-needs—that is—he seeks Christ for reasons other than salvation from sin...

41. His marriage is in trouble—he's unhappy, lonely, empty—he feels he's missing something, life isn't fulfilling...
42. Thus—he's encouraged to give Jesus a try—come to Jesus and He'll make everything alright—He'll meet all your needs...
43. Now—let me clarify—I am not denying these "felt-needs" are real needs—these are real issues that need addressing...
44. And—neither am I denying that Christ and the gospel speaks to this issues—Christ is not indifferent to them...
45. But—these are not the PRIMARY needs of man, and thus are NOT the primary needs met by Christ and the gospel...
46. [3] Man seeks Christ for carnal benefits—that is—they seek Christ because they are told He will heal them and prosper them...
47. My friends—this is tragically true of many supposed Evangelists who preach in many poor countries in the world...
48. For example—they go to Africa and draw tens of thousands of people to their healing and preaching crusades...
49. And why do you think the greater majority comes to these meetings—because they want to be rich like the Americans...
50. They equate Christ with earthly riches and prosperity—they seek Christ merely for the loaves and the fish...

## II. Jesus Exhorts the People—v27

1. Our savior not only rebuked the people, but He graciously exhorted them—with a negative, positive, and a motive....
2. [1] A negative—"Do not labor for the food which perishes"—that is—do not merely or ultimately work for material things...
3. Obviously, brethren, our Savior is not forbidding manual labor, and the need to work for our physical needs...
4. But—what He is forbidding is this—living life consumed with the temporal things and possessions of this life...
5. J.C. Ryle—"What our Lord did mean to rebuke was, that excessive attention to labor for the body, while the soul is neglected, which prevails everywhere in the world..."
6. Matt.6:19-21—"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also [Neh.13:15-21; Amos 8:4-6]..."
7. Again—our Savior isn't condemning all saving—He isn't saying, it's wrong to save your money in banks or investments...
8. But—what He is saying—don't live for this world—don't live for the temporal things and possessions of this life...
9. V21—"For where your treasure is, there your hart will be also"—what you live for, proves what you ultimately love...
10. [2] A positive—"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you..."
11. Now—I trust by "the food which endures to everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you" is meant Christ Himself (vv32, 33, 35, 41, 48, 55—"For My flesh is food indeed")...
12. Here our Savior exhorts His hearers—"to labor for the food that endures"—bread that eternally satisfies the soul...
13. That is—instead of spending all their energy seeking after the things of this world, seek after that which remains...
14. Matt.6:33—"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you..."

15. The phrase "which the Son of Man will give you"—refers to the salvation that Christ would buy with His death...
16. He gives it to them, in that the gospel is given for all men—He's going to give Himself as a sufficient Savior for all men...
17. This food "endures to everlasting life" instead of perishing—that is—those who eat it—will have eternal life...
18. V51—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world..."
19. Notice—both things mentioned in v27 are reiterated here—Christ gives Himself for the world, and those who eat live forever...
20. [3] A motive—"because God the Father has set His seal on Him"—"seal" here refers to the Father's approval...
21. In olden days kings would put their seal on documents, to verify it came from them—it was officially approved...
22. What our Savior is saying is this—believe upon Me, because I am the only sanctioned Savior of poor sinners...
23. Leon Morris—"Jesus is saying, that God the Father has given his approval to Him...The seal means that God has given His mark of agreement, of approval. It is an error to dismiss Jesus as no more than just another man..."
24. Now—the question of WHEN the Father set His seal on His Son is debated—there are likely three options...
25. [a] From eternity, 1Pet.1:20—"He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world"—He received His Father's seal from eternity past...
26. Thus throughout the message, Christ is said to be the bread that came down from the Father, that is, the Father has given Him, or has approved of Him (vv29, 32, 33, 38, 46, 57)...
27. [b] At His baptism, Matt.4:17—"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am will pleased..."
28. [c] in His miracles, Jn.5:36—"the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me..."
29. The miracles of our Savior were signs that pointed to His true identity, as the Messiah sent and approved of God...
30. John Calvin—"It may be summed up thus: As it is not every person who has the ability or the right to feed souls with incorruptible food, Christ appears in public, and, while he promises that he will be the Author of so great a blessing, he likewise adds that he is approved by God, and that he has been sent to men with this mark, which is, as it were, God's *seal* or *signet*..."

### III. Jesus Corrects the People—vv28-29

1. V28—"Then they said to Him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God"—they obviously misunderstood Him...
2. Our Savior had exhorted them—"to labor (or work) for the food which endures to everlasting life"—that is come to Him for life...
3. But these Jews mistake this to mean—"Do some type of work, that you might earn or receive, eternal life..."
4. In short they asked—what good deeds or works do we need to DO—to have or earn eternal life—what must we DO...
5. V28—"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God"—that is—the works that are pleasing to God...
6. What must we do to be accepted with God—what must we do to earn God's favor—to merit God's acceptance...
7. Lk.10:25—"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life..."
8. V29—"Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent..."

9. Notice our Savior narrows the word "works" (v28) to "work" (v29)—"This is the WORK of God, that you believe...
10. The phrase—"this is the work of God"—can mean one of two things—[a] this is the work that God provides...
11. Faith is the work of God—it's the result of His Spirit regenerating the heart—it's a grace given to poor sinners...
12. Eph.2:8—"For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God..."
13. [b] This is the work that God commands and approves—this is what God requires of man, if he is to have life...
14. Jn.3:16—"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life..."
15. John Calvin—"Those who infer from this passage that *faith* is the gift of God are mistaken; for Christ does not now show what God produces in us, but what he wishes and requires from us..."
16. Now—obviously Calvin believed faith is grace given from God—but he simply did not understand this verse as teaching that...
17. Faith can be viewed as a "work" in that—the soul is responsible to believe, and is NOT passive in believing...
18. But—faith is not a work in that it earns or merits salvation—it's not a work that is rewarded by/with salvation...
19. Rom.4:5—"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness..."
20. That is—it's through faith that the righteousness of God in Christ is obtained—salvation through the grace of faith...
21. [1] Man seeks to earn salvation—man by nature—refuses to come to God as an empty, poor, undeserving sinner...
22. V28—"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God"—what shall WE DO—to be right with God...
23. Put another way—man by nature refuses to seek Christ in the right way (by faith) and for the right reasons (salvation from sin)...
24. Rom.3:11—"There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God"—rightly and really seeks God...
25. My friends—this means without God first seeking man—man left to himself—will never rightly seek God...
26. Not that native man will NEVER seek God—but he NEVER seeks God for the right reasons, in the right way...
27. [2] Man is responsible to believe, v27—"labor for the food which endures to everlasting life" v29—"this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent..."
28. This is a point that constantly needs stressing—Scripture never tells sinners to wait until God gives them faith...
29. Is faith a gift from God, given only to His elect people—YES—but Scripture exhorts every sinner to believe...
30. Thus when our Savior says—"labor for the food which endures"—He means—come to Christ for salvation...
31. Now—there are two general errors that need avoiding—[a] we must do something to earn our salvation, v28—"what shall we do..."
32. [b] We must do nothing for salvation—that is—we think we're Christian simply because we're born in Christian homes...
33. Or else—there are those who rightly understand that faith is a gift from God, and so they wait for God to give it...
34. But—in contrast to these errors, our Savior says—"labor for the food that endures"—"this is the work of God, that YOU believe..."
35. In fact—it's actually not a bad thing to ask WHAT we must DO to be saved—that's actually a very good question...

36. Acts 16:30-31—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? So they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household..."
37. This is what you and I must DO if we are to be saved—we must—"believe in Him whom the Father sent..."
38. This chapter brings these two together—throughout the chapter our Savior points out their need to believe in Him (vv27, 29, 35, 40, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54, , 56, 57, 58)...
39. And yet—throughout the same chapter He makes very clear that faith is a gift that God gives to His elect people (vv37, 44, 65)...
40. Thus—faith is no meritorious work—and the first reason is—it's a gracious gift from God given to His people
41. But—another reason is because of what faith is—throughout this chapter our Savior uses three imageries of faith...
42. [i] It is the FEET of the soul whereby we come to Christ, v35—"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.."
43. [ii] It is the EYES of the soul whereby we look to Christ, v40—"And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him, may have everlasting life..."
44. [iii] It is the MOUTH of the soul whereby we feast on Christ, v51—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever..."
45. Lk.13:23-25—"Lord are there few who are saved? And He said to them, Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door [Lk.11:10]..."
46. Prov.2:4—"IF you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God..."
47. Heb.11:6—"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him..."
48. [3] Christ is really given to all men—our Savior makes plain to these Jews—nothing less than Christ Himself was offered them...