

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 7-31-11 AM NOTES
"THE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST"
JOHN 6:1-15
#21 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through John"

"He is not humanity deified. He is not Godhead humanized. He is God. He is man. He is all that God is, and all that man is as God created him."

—Charles Spurgeon

Colossians 1:16b (NKJV) "All things were created through Him and **for Him.**"

"There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person that can only be filled by God Himself."

—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

"If you cannot say, 'Jesus is precious to me,' I do not care to what church you belong or what creed you are ready to die for. You do not know the truth of God unless the person of Christ is dear to you."

—Charles Spurgeon

I. The Multitudes Who Followed Him (vv. 1-4)

John 6:66 (NKJV) "From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

Matthew 14:14a (NKJV) "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them..."

Mark 6:34a (NKJV) "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd."

II. The Missing Faith (vv. 5-9)

Matthew 14:15 (NKJV) "When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.'"

James 1:2-4 (NKJV) "² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the **testing** of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

1 Peter 1:6-8a (NKJV) "⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested** by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love."

1 Peter 5:10 (NKJV) "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you.*"

“[H]ave we learned to spread each difficulty, as it comes along, before God? Have we formed the habit of instinctively turning to Him? What is your feebleness in comparison with His power! What is your emptiness in comparison with His ocean fullness? Nothing! Then look daily to Him in simple faith, resting on His sure promise, ‘My God *shall* supply *all* your *need*’ (Phil. 4:19). Ah! You may answer, it is easy to offer such advice, but it is far from easy to *act* on it. True. Yea, of yourself it is impossible. Your need and my need, is to *ask* for faith, to *plead* for grace, to *cry* unto God for such a sense of helplessness that we shall lean on Christ and on Him alone. Thus, ask and *wait*, and you shall find Him as good as His word.”

—Arthur Pink

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NKJV) “²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

III. The Miraculous Feeding (vv. 10-13)

IV. The Messiah Foretold (vv. 14-15)

Deuteronomy 18:18 (NKJV) “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.”

John 18:33b (NKJV) “Are You the King of the Jews?”

John 18:36 (NKJV) “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’”

“He is the most magnanimous of captains. If there is anything gracious, generous, kind and tender, lavish, and superabundant in love, you always find it in Him. These forty years and more I have served Him, and I have nothing but love for Him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day.”

—Charles Spurgeon’s Last Words in His Last Sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle

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“THE SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST”
JOHN 6:1-15
#21 in Series, “Verse by Verse through John”

The burden that drove John as he wrote this fourth gospel is to give overwhelming evidence that Jesus Christ was not just a special man and a great example to all. He was (and is) deity. Charles Spurgeon described the deity of Christ this way: “He is not humanity deified. He is not Godhead humanized. He is God. He is man. He is all that God is, and all that man is as God created him” [2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles Spurgeon, Page 113]. One of the lines of evidence that Jesus Christ was God become man is the many miracles that Jesus performed. In our text we will see the fourth miracle that John records.

When I have been out in the hot sun for a long time and I am really thirsty, there is nothing better than cool, clear water. For about 30 years, my wife has been baking our bread. She gets the wheat berries, grinds them up, mixes in a few ingredients and bakes it. When I am hungry, there is nothing that satisfies my hunger more than fresh baked bread. Jesus describes Himself in John 4:10 “living water”. In John 6:35, “the bread of life”. I think that the reason God created us to get thirsty and hungry and then to have our thirst quenched by water and our hunger satisfied by bread is so we would have an illustration of what it means to have our deepest needs satisfied by Jesus Christ. After all we are told in **Colossians 1:16b (NKJV)** “All things were created through Him and **for Him.**” Water and bread were created to give us a reminder and an illustration of Jesus and the pleasure and satisfaction only He can give. In John 6:1-15, we see Jesus work a miracle with natural bread (the common kind that the poor ate daily). Then, much of the rest of this lengthy chapter reveals Jesus showing people that this miracle of bread is about Himself because He is the bread of God come down from heaven. Today we will focus on the miracle, and in the weeks to come we will focus on Jesus’ claims to be the bread of life that has come down from heaven. I think that this miracle (the only one recorded in all four gospels) is my favorite because it not only showed Jesus’ power; it showed Himself, the one who is the bread of life.

My goal is that when we finish this chapter you will love and consider Jesus more precious to you than any other person or thing. For those who know about Him, but don’t really know Him, my longing is that you will know by experience what the 17th Century French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) said: “There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every person that can only be filled by God Himself”. That vacuum is filled by this one who is God in the flesh – Jesus Christ. When we come to the end of our study of this fourth Gospel, I believe that many who are deceived in thinking that they savingly know Him will have their eyes opened to see that all they have done is to give mental assent to the existence of a historical character and a historical event that took place on a hill called Calvary and at a tomb nearby. I am praying and trusting the Lord that many will move beyond mental assent to personal trust and reliance upon this historical person who went to a cross for their sin and literally rose from the grave and ascended to the Father to ever live and intercede for us. When that happens, Jesus will be precious to you. You will then understand why others weep as they sing about this one who is our “Rock of Ages”. You will see why some close their eyes and seem as though they are transported into His very presence when they sing, “My Jesus I Love Thee”. You will understand why people are compelled to go to far away places and just down the street to tell others about Him when some of them don’t seem to want to hear. You will begin to understand why some endure persecution and even death to boldly proclaim Him in lands where it is illegal. I agree with Spurgeon when he said, “If you cannot say, ‘Jesus is precious to me,’ I do not care to what church you belong or what creed you are ready to die for. You do not know the truth of God unless the person of Christ is dear to you” [2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles Spurgeon, Page 111].

I. The Multitudes Who Followed Him (V1-4)

There is evidently a sizable time gap between chapter 5 and chapter 6. It was at least 6 months or a year depending on whether the feast spoken of in John 5:1 was the feast of Tabernacles or the Passover. Between the end of chapter five and the beginning of chapter six, Jesus had preached the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, and He also had given the parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13. The size of the crowds following Him had grown exponentially. Jesus and the disciples were physically weary. From piecing together some of the other accounts, it is likely that they had just recently heard of John the Baptist's death. Several of Jesus' disciples had been disciples of John the Baptist. They were weary from travel, teaching, and grief. Jesus took them across the Sea of Galilee for some rest and personal discipling time. From the other gospel accounts we see that as Jesus and the disciples went across the water, the crowds discerned where they were going and ran around the bank to get there even before Jesus and His disciples. You may be thinking, "Isn't that wonderful that such large crowds were following Him?" No, it was not wonderful. They were following Him for all the wrong reasons. They completely failed in their discernment of the person of Christ. They saw Him as an amazing man who could do amazing acts that were unexplainable. They were following Him in hopes that they could see another miracle. They did not love Him or believe that He was God in flesh. They were thrill seekers and just wanted to see Him perform another miraculous sign. We see what happened to this eager crowd a little later when Jesus gave some really hard teaching. **John 6:66 (NKJV)** "From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

Even though Jesus was weary and needed rest and even though He knew that these people didn't really love Him and desire to take up their cross and follow Him, He had compassion on them. **Matthew 14:14a (NKJV)** "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them..." **Mark 6:34a (NKJV)** "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd."

II. The Missing Faith (V5-9)

From the other gospels, we know that Jesus had gone down to the people and was healing their sick and teaching them. It was late in the day and we read in Matthew that the disciples became concerned for the people. **Matthew 14:15 (NKJV)** "When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.'" Jesus uses this as a teaching and faith building moment. He asks Philip a question that was a test. He said, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" We know that this was a test for two reasons: first, we know it because verse six tells us it was a test! Second, we know that Jesus is never in a quandary as to what to do. Someone said, "There is never any panic with God, only plans." Since God is all-knowing, nothing ever takes Him by surprise. Since He is all-wise, He always knows what to do. Since He is all-powerful, He can always carry out what He knows to do. How did Philip respond to this test? Did he say, "Wait, this is the One who turned water into wine"? Did he say, "This is the one who has healed the man paralyzed for 38 years, healed one boy 25 miles away, and single-handedly cleansed the temple?" No, he began calculating: "Hmmm, there are at least 15,000 people. It would take this many loaves of bread just to give each of them a bite or two. At this much per loaf, that would cost us (if we had a place to buy that much bread) about 200 denarii which is about 8 month's wages". Philip did what we so often do; he left the Lord completely out of his calculations! Have you learned to see that life's difficulties (the little nagging things and the devastating things) have been allowed in your life to test, to prove, to teach and grow you? When this truth sinks in it changes the way you look at every trial, every quandary – no matter how big or how small. When you begin to understand that God is sovereign, you realize that there are no "chance" occurrences; there is no such thing as luck. The New Testament is filled with assurances that our trials are tests to prove us and to grow us. They are not tests in the sense that God is wondering how we will handle it. He knows all things already. The tests are for our benefit. They reveal to us where God knows that we are. We read in **James 1:2-4 (NKJV)** "2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith

produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” **1 Peter 1:6-8a (NKJV)** “⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested** by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love...” **1 Peter 5:10 (NKJV)** “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*”. Listen to this word from Arthur Pink: “[H]ave we learned to spread each difficulty, as it comes along, before God? Have we formed the habit of instinctively turning to Him? What is your feebleness in comparison with His power! What is your emptiness in comparison with His ocean fullness? Nothing! Then look daily to Him in simple faith, resting on His sure promise, ‘My God *shall* supply *all* your *need*’ (Phil. 4:19). Ah! You may answer, It is easy to offer such advice, but it is far from easy to *act* on it. True. Yea, of yourself it is impossible. Your need and my need, is to *ask* for faith, to *plead* for grace, to *cry* unto God for such a sense of helplessness that we shall lean on Christ and on Him alone. Thus, ask and *wait*, and you shall find Him as good as His word” [Arthur Pink, “Exposition of the Gospel of John”, Page 290]. May God forgive us for calculating without Christ. Often the way we handle problems is no different from the way an atheist would handle them.

In verses 8-9, Andrew chimes in. His “solution” showed little more faith than did Philip’s. Philip struggled with the scope of the problem; Andrew struggled with the smallness of the provision. They both failed the test! The word “lad” usually referred to a smaller child. This was a child’s lunch. Barley was a course bread that was a staple of the poor. Don’t think of a loaf in terms that we use that today. It was more the size of a pancake. The fish would have been more of what we would think of as sardines. Andrew reported this fact to Jesus, but he couldn’t see how this small amount could help at all with the solution to such a big problem. Let me pause at this point and remind you of a principle that I have shared more times than I can remember. I call it the principle of the glance and the gaze. Christianity is not like some of the world’s false religions that try to deny that problems exist. We readily admit when there is a problem. The question is, “How do we relate the problem to God?” We can choose on of two ways. We can gaze on the problem and glance at God, or we can gaze at God and glance at the problem. Do you see the difference? When our focus is on the problem (as was Philip’s and Andrew’s), the problem looks huge, all-encompassing, insurmountable, and God seems small and even irrelevant. However, when our gaze is on God, we begin to see Him as He is in reality. He is big! He is powerful! In addition to that, He loves us and promised that if we love Him, He causes all things to work together for our good. He assures us that He is with us and will never leave or forsake us. He tells us that His grace is sufficient for us. He says that He will meet our needs as He chooses in the way that is best for our being conformed to Christ and for His glory. God looks big! God is in charge! Our problems are still there, but they are shrunk down to size. Oh, may God enable us to keep our gaze upon Him!

None of the gospel accounts tell us anything about this little boy. Perhaps he had come forward and offered his lunch to Andrew to give to Jesus. Perhaps Andrew saw the lunch and asked him for it. However it happened, he gave all that he had to Jesus. Have you ever noticed how it seems that God delights in using common, even seemingly insignificant things to accomplish His plans? Think with me. What is as insignificant as dirt? Yet God formed the first man from the dust or dirt of the ground. Dirt in God’s hands became powerful. The jawbone of a dead donkey seems mighty insignificant, but in a man named Samson’s hand God empowered him and he killed 1,000 of Israel’s enemies. A smooth stone from a creek bed seems insignificant, but in David’s sling guided by God it was used to defeat the enemies of God by killing their champion and causing the Philistine armies to flee. The world sees a poverty stricken young woman who was a virgin in an insignificant town in a distant part of the Roman Empire and used her to bear the Savior, the Lord, the one who is King of kings and Lord of lords who shall reign forever and ever. In our text, He uses a young boy’s insignificant small lunch to feed 5,000 men plus women and children. When God calls forth those who will be used in His work, He doesn’t call many who the world looks on as important or mighty. Listen to whom He uses: **1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NKJV)** “²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,

are called.²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.” Don’t ever even entertain the thought that God cannot use you for amazing things in His work and to bring great glory to Himself through you. All that is required of you is that you give all that you have to Him in total surrender and trust. As we will see in a moment, this young boy got back what he gave plus more.

III. The Miraculous Feeding (V10-13)

Someone said, “How thankful we should be that God’s blessings are dispensed according to the riches of His grace, and not according to the poverty of our faith” [Arthur Pink, Page 293]. This miracle stands out from most of the other miracles that Jesus performed. In healing the sick and even raising the dead, Jesus was fixing or restoring something that already existed. In this miracle (as in the turning of the water into wine in chapter two) there was creation of what did not exist before. Only God can create ex nihilo (out of nothing). This miracle was indisputable evidence of the deity of Christ.

When Jesus had organized the people (which we see from some of the other accounts), without fanfare or glitz or showmanship, He gave thanks to the Father and began to give the bread and fish to the disciples who distributed it to the seated people. It is interesting that even though the disciple’s faith was lacking, their obedience was not. Why set the people down in an organized way when there was nothing to give them? They didn’t understand, but they obeyed the Lord Jesus. That’s a lesson for us. Even when our faith is weak and we do not understand, obey what the Master says.

As Jesus broke the bread and fish, more appeared. As He distributed it to one disciple, there was more for the next. The amazed people (15-20,000) of them sat on that hillside and watched in amazement as the creator God did His work. They ate bread from barley that never grew, was ground or baked and fish that never swam.

It is interesting that Andrew’s description in verse nine, “what are they among so many” was used by the Lord to give to everyone as much as they wanted and 12 baskets of leftovers were picked up. That is probably because there were 12 disciples and this would be their food the next day. There is an old hymn that says, “Little is much when God is in it”. That could certainly be said of that little boy’s lunch.

IV. The Messiah Foretold (V14-15)

“The prophet who is to come into the world” is a reference to a messianic prophesy given by Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:18 (NKJV)** “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” Probably Jesus’ miraculous provision of food reminded them of the provision of the manna under Moses’ leadership. The people correctly recognized that this miracle was evidence that Jesus was the Messiah (promised one), but they were wrong about what being the Messiah meant. They wanted a “this world” leader who would restore to Israel the glory of the years of David’s reign, defeat the Romans and bring prosperity. What prosperity he could bring – free food for all! Jesus refused their plans and desires. He left them and went up on the mountain alone.

We tend to be very hard on these Jews, but is that not the tendency of all of us. Instead of seeing Him as the one who meets the deepest needs of our lives as we forsake all and follow Him, so many have perverted that to see Him as the dispenser of material prosperity. Jesus was already the King, but not the kind they wanted. Pilate asked Jesus in **John 18:33b (NKJV)** "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered Him in **John 18:36 (NKJV)** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." In other words, I am the King, but not the kind you think. This world and all that is in it is going to perish and His kingdom in this world system is in the hearts of His disciples and on day this world system will fall and He will rule as King in a literal kingdom. He refused to be swayed by other people’s agenda for Him.

CONCLUSION

We do not come to Jesus on our terms; we come on His. He is the true bread of life who satisfies the deepest hungers of our life, but He will not be manipulated to fulfill our agendas. Even today He continues to withdraw from those who seek Him for their own self-serving needs. The words that express what is on my heart right now were the last words spoken by Charles Spurgeon in the last sermon from the church he pastored in London. He died not long after these words were spoken. “He is the most magnanimous of captains. If there is anything gracious, generous, kind and tender, lavish, and superabundant in love, you always find it in Him. These forty years and more I have served Him, and I have nothing but love for Him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day” [Charles Spurgeon Quotes, Page 110].