

John 6 vv.22-71

The disappointment of those Jews who had been ~~fed~~ fed by Jesus was great. They had wanted to make Him king, if not by fair means, then by foul means. If He would not willingly agree, then they would crown Him by force and proclaim Him as their prince and ruler. But, nothing had come of all their fine plans.

Jesus had sent the people away and when darkness fell they were not able to find Him. Yet many of those Jews remained in that district that night, hoping to find Jesus the next morning, and that perhaps He would then agree. They knew that the Lord Jesus had not sailed with His disciples, who had left on their own. Jesus had constrained them to go to the other side, but He Himself had remained behind. No other ships had arrived, so Jesus must still be somewhere near.

Yet when the next morning they sought for Him, they could find Him nowhere. Where had Jesus gone?

You can answer that question can't you?

Jesus had walked over the waves during that stormy night to His disciples' ship.

The Jews did not, of course, know this and that is why they were very surprised that they could not find the Prophet of Nazareth anywhere. They could not understand it at all.

But look, some more ships are approaching the place where the multitude had been so miraculously fed the evening before. The Jews who still remained step aboard and sail across. Well, of course, that is the best thing to do. Jesus is not there after all. Their plan has failed.

Soon afterwards the ships tie up at Capernaum and, sure enough, they find Him in the synagogue. They go to Him in the utmost amazement and ask curiously: "Rabbi, when comest thou hither?"

Jesus does not tell them that He has walked in such a wonderful way upon the sea. He does not even give them an answer to their question. Oh, the Son of God knows why they seek Him. Their heart is not upright. They are seeking Jesus because of the loaves. But He warns them about those wrong thoughts. Listen to what He says to them.

"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

No, those Jews have no need of a Saviour from their sins. They still have thoughts only of an earthly kingdom. Yes, they would like to have just such a "Bread-king":

"Labour not", says the Lord Jesus, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." It is as though the Lord says: "Ordinary bread is not sufficient. It can only satisfy you for a short while, but then it is consumed and you are hungry again. But heavenly gifts, they remain."

A look of wonderment appears on the faces of the attentive Jews. They do not understand what Jesus means.

"What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" they ask.

Jesus' answer comes at once: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." He means: "You must believe in Me as they long awaited Messiah. You must believe in Me as the Saviour. I am sent by My Father."

Yes, but they are not going to do that. They do not want to do that. Shamelessly they ask: "What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?"

Oh, boys and girls, is it not terrible? They ask for a sign. Has Jesus not wrought enough wonders? The previous evening they had all eaten and been filled from only five loaves and two fishes. Now they rudely ask: "Shew us a sign."

Yes, they try to make the miracle appear less than ~~it~~ it is, for they say to Jesus: "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert."

But why do they say that? What do they mean by that? ...

Listen carefully. It is as though they say: "Yes, it is true that we have all eaten, but Moses did a far greater miracle. Moses gave our forefathers Manna in the wilderness for forty years long, and Thou hast fed us but once. What thou hast done is nothing like so great as what Moses did. He fed our fathers with heavenly bread."

Can you see how unbelieving the Jews are? They do not want to believe in Jesus. What enormous ingratitude. As soon as Jesus points out to them that He has come down from heaven, and that God is His Father, their enmity bursts forth.

The Lord Jesus replies calmly: "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven: but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

I will not repeat everything which the Lord Jesus said to the Jews then, for that is still too difficult for you. I will only say that Jesus went on to speak of another bread which came down from heaven.

Just listen! He says: "I am the bread of life." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life."

When the Jews hear these words, their faces show a mocking expression. They do not understand what Jesus says here. They do not believe it.

"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" they say to each other.

"Jesus answers: "Verily, verily, I say unto you ... my flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

And what happens then? ... Oh, just look, most of the people walk away. They shrug their shoulders and depart. The crowd no longer wants to stay with Him. For a long time they have been following the Lord Jesus. They have accompanied Him to the various towns and cities in Galilee. They have sought Him out whenever He was for a moment alone. They have seen His many miracles and signs. They have heard His preaching. And now? ... They go away! The Jews forsake the Lord Jesus. They are upset by His words. They think that Jesus means it all in an earthly, human sense.

Just as you eat a piece of meat, thus the Jews think, Jesus will give them His flesh to eat. They think that is ridiculous and so they no longer want to follow Jesus.

You can understand quite clearly though that Jesus does not mean it in that way, can you not? No, indeed, He means something else. The Lord Jesus was to die upon the cross. His blood was to fall upon the earth. Why was that to happen? ... Well, He would pay for the sins of His people. He would endure the wrath of God for sin, and thereby God's people shall be saved for ever from that divine wrath. All who truly believe that, shall never be eternally lost, but shall sing to the honour of God in heaven.

The Lord Jesus really means to say: "Oh Jews, My people, only believe that I have come to suffer and to die for sin. I shall offer up My flesh and ~~XX~~ My blood for lost sinners."

But the Jews cast that solemn call to the winds. They are offended at it, and they go away. They forsake Him.

Look, the Lord Jesus is standing there alone. Alone? ... No, twelve men have remained with Him. They are His disciples. They have not forsaken Him.

All at once the Lord Jesus says to them: "Will ye also go away?"

But immediately Peter answers: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

At this question from ~~XXX~~ his Master Peter feels that he cannot live without Jesus. He loves his Master with his whole heart. He cannot forsake his Master, for then he would have nothing else in the world. That is why he answered thus.

Peter thinks that the other disciples have exactly the same thoughts as himself. He thinks that the other disciples also believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But he is mistaken.

One of them stands there in silence. In the eyes of that one there is no love, in the heart of that one there is no faith. That one has also been offended by the words of the Lord Jesus. And yet that one did not depart. Why not? ...

Oh, that one disciples still hopes that things will change. But his heart is full of anger and revenge. Peter does not know that, but the Lord Jesus does. He sees into the depths of each of their hearts.

He says quietly to His disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ you is a devil?"

Oh, the other disciples do not yet understand that, but later on they will indeed understand, for one of Jesus' disciples will betray Him.

But we will tell you about that later.

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This has been a difficult chapter, boys and girls. Perhaps you have not been able to understand all of it. But you can surely understand from it that the Jews have forsaken Jesus.

The Pharisees hate Him and try to kill Him. Now the ordinary people also forsake Him. The Pharisees laughed. They thought that was fine. Yes, yes, that was just what they wanted, that was just right for them. The people

must not listen to Jesus any more. The people must not believe in Him. They must all reject Him.

Was the preaching of Jesus all in vain then? ... Will all the people go away? ... No, that is impossible. Certainly most of them leave, but not all.

And so it is still. In our country there are millions of people, but most of them do not want to know about God and His service. They laugh and ridicule it.

And what do you do? ... How many boys and girls also forsake the Lord Jesus. They know about it very well, but they become indifferent and no longer listen to the earnest warnings of their parents or of the minister. Will it be thus with you? ... May the Lord keep you from it, for remember ... "God is not mocked!"