

“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN”

#10: “Jesus Feeds 5,000 and Walks on Water”

SCRIPTURE: John 6:1-21

INTRO:

“After this...” What is the **“this”**? **“This”** is the conversation Jesus had with the Jews who confronted Him for healing the man at the pool and for calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

However, **“after this...”** is not immediately **after this...”** Actually, there’s a whole year’s ministry between John 5 and 6. During that time there were controversies about the Sabbath, the Sermon on the Mount, the raising of the widow’s son in Nain, the healing of the demoniac at Gergesa, a second visit to Nazareth, the twelve sent out in pairs, and Herod’s desire that Jesus visit him. These things were included in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not in John’s gospel.

He and His disciples walked to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. On that side, it’s called the Sea of Tiberias, after the city of Tiberias, which is on the shore.

This reminds me that the Rio Grande, which forms the southern border of Texas. On the Mexican side it’s called the Rio Bravo.

A large crowd was following because of the healing of the sick He was doing. Have you ever noticed how excited people get over healing? They get more excited over healing than over how to earn a million dollars! They get more excited over healing than over how to go to heaven! Why?

The people of Jesus’ day got excited about it because they’d never seen anything like it. The people of today get excited about it because it’s something their doctors can’t do.

But should we get excited about healing? Yes and no. Yes, for the reason I’ve already stated. No, since it’s not God’s priority. Healing doesn’t come to all who ask; it’s not a regular miraculous thing.

Our infirmities are due to thousands of years of sinful living, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing through the lives of our forefathers. The perfect genes that God created have been mutated time and time again, making most of us susceptible to all kinds of diseases and maladies. God has made provision for new bodies that are perfect once again.

The big event we’re looking at today is...

...THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000.

Besides the miracle of the resurrection, the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle that is related in all four of the gospel accounts, which gives it a high degree of importance.

This huge crowd that followed Jesus up on the mountain numbered well beyond 5,000. Look at verse 10: ***“...the men sat down, about five thousand in number.”*** This is just the men. How many of them, do you suppose, had their wives and children with them? Probably not all of them; just some of them. So, it's safe to say that there were at least six to eight thousand total.

How much food would be required to feed such a crowd? Can't you just imagine what Philip might have thought when Jesus asked him, ***“Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”*** Philip had to have been thinking: “You're going to try to feed this crowd?” He says, ***“Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.”*** Now, how much would that be? A denarius was a common day's wage for a laborer in that day, so we're talking two hundred days' wages. This would be equivalent to several thousand dollars in today's world. Philip knew that even this much wouldn't buy a bite for each person. So, he was, in essence, saying, “There's no way we can feed this crowd!”

Why do you think Jesus felt that He should feed these people? While feeding guests may have been the proper thing to do, even in that day, as well as in our day, providing food for 6,000 to 8,000 people is a whole 'nother ball game! What was Jesus thinking? The miraculous was no problem for Jesus, so whether there were six to eight people to feed or six to eight thousand made no difference. But I wonder why He felt they must be fed. One author, Peter Krol, suggests that each of the four gospel writers gives a distinct different reason for Jesus feeding the 5,000:

1. John wants you to know Jesus so you can have eternal life.
2. Matthew wants to equip you to preach the gospel boldly.
3. Luke wants to equip you to practice the gospel daily.
4. Mark wants you to know that Jesus will complete his work in you, despite your sin and failure.

Apparently, Andrew spotted a boy with five barley loaves and two fish that he was willing to give to Jesus. So, Jesus gave thanks and started distributing the bread and fish, and lo and behold, every person was able to take as much as he wanted. Jesus then told his disciples, ***“Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost.”*** So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When people saw the sign he had done, they said, ***“This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”***

There was a problem, however. Excitement over what Jesus had done was giving them the idea that they ought to make him their king. John wrote: ***“Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.”*** It wasn’t time for him to be king, and what’s more, he didn’t come to be the type of king they were thinking of.

Next,

JESUS WALKS ON WATER.

The disciples decided to go to Capernaum, so they got into a boat to row across the Sea of Galilee. They no sooner set out when the wind began to blow, causing the sea to rise in high waves. They had rowed for only three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the sea toward them.

Even the disciples, who had already seen Jesus do a number of miracles, became fearful when they saw Him. ***but he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”*** So, they took Him into their boat. And notice what John says next: ***...and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*** Now, how far had they rowed when Jesus came to them, walking on the water? Three or four miles, even though they’d been rowing about nine hours. How far was it to Capernaum from where they started? It was all the way across the Sea of Galilee. How many miles was it across the Sea? It was about six miles. So, they made it three more miles without rowing!

Matthew’s account of this in chapter 10 includes something that John doesn’t: Peter’s attempt to walk to Jesus on the water. When Jesus said to the disciples, ***“It is I. Do not be afraid.”*** Peter said, ***“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”*** He said, ***“Come.”*** So, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ***But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”*** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ***“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”***

Now, why would John leave this part out? Furthermore, why would Mark and Luke also omit the part about Peter walking on water? Did they have a bone to pick with Peter? Did they have something against him? Did they think he had too much ink already? That he was too prominent?

Your guess is as good as mine.

IN CLOSING...

While the disciples had intended to go to Capernaum, they wound up at the plain of Gennesaret, having been blown off course by the storm. Of course, Jesus was aboard the last half of the trip, so their landing at Gennesaret must

have been the Lord's will. Mark says: *When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, the villagers, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well* (Mark 6:53-56).

Just as it is today, physical healing was valued in Jesus' day more highly than spiritual healing. Our focus is on physical healing. Just consider the prayer requests that we see. How often do you see a prayer request for a spiritual need? For salvation? We don't like to make those public, do we?