



The Breadmaker That Would Be King

March 10, 2013

John 6:1-15

Clint Pressley

6 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

¹⁵ 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.

(Pastor Prays)

At the May 2009 Pew forum on religion and public life, top political scientist Robert Putnam and David Campbell released their grim findings. They reported that young Americans are dropping out of church in an alarming number of five to six times the historical rate. A generation ago, 5

to 10% of young people had no religion. Today, 30 to 40% of young adults claim to have no specific religion. Sociologists are seeing a major shift taking place, away from Christianity. The percentage of Americans not affiliated with the church, while disappointing, is not shocking. Look around you. What's alarming is that 73% of those that claim to have no affiliation or faith came from devout church going homes. They have been labeled diconverts. In my opinion it's because they believed in a defective Jesus. Or maybe better said, they had a defective view of Jesus. It's not uncommon. It's happened here. A person follows for a while, is enthusiastic, even excited, but after a while the novelty of following wears off and they're going off to the next exciting thing. In the text, the people were following because of the signs. And although they seemed really excited about Jesus, they were missing the point on who he is and what he came to do. In verse 35 of this chapter, he will say, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." This seemed to be the point of this miracle, but the people didn't give it, wouldn't get it. They had a defective view of Christ. Even the disciples' view was defective. By this point in their journey, they had seen Jesus turn water into wine. In chapter 4, they witnessed Jesus do a long-distance healing on a nobleman's son. He just spoke and the boy was healed from miles away. In chapter 5, at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus healed a man that had been paralyzed for 38 years. In this story, by the way the only miracle recorded by all four gospel witnesses, Jesus starts the story with a large crowd of bandwagoners. They are there for the show. He will end the chapter in verse 66, losing a whole host of people. But the ones that had a right view of Jesus, the ones that stayed, would experience life.

A Right View of Jesus Equals A Right View on Life

Jesus doesn't confuse excitement with commitment

In verse 2, we are told about a large crowd following Jesus. They know he's a miracle worker, and they were excited about the signs. They really didn't know who he was and what he would demand. They were thrill seekers, and they were following him everywhere. It was almost

cultish. They weren't worshipping Jesus because they were transformed, they were there because it was honestly thrilling to watch. The crowd was not motivated by faith or repentance or genuine love for Jesus, but man, were they excited. I think this sort of thing happens a lot today, people get excited about Jesus, but it's the wrong Jesus they're excited about. You want the moral Jesus or the tolerant Jesus or the racist Jesus or the weepy Jesus, or the non-judgmental, ask no questions Jesus. Our day wants the cool Jesus with plenty of product in his hair and some well-placed body art. And when you get to the end of this story, the people try to make him king.

And then in verse 15, he just leaves them, he just leaves. If your enthusiasm for Jesus is for a Jesus that doesn't exist, Jesus will leave you. The people were thrill seekers, and they didn't grasp who he really was. They flocked to see his works, but in verse 66, they refused to receive his words. They wanted the benefits without the brokenness. And Jesus wouldn't have it, and still won't. In our entertainment-driven world, there is tremendous pressure to present Jesus in an exciting light that's winsome and warm and not threatening. But I agree with Dietrich Bonhoeffer when he said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die." The way of Jesus is the way of the cross and today he calls for your all. He calls for your past and your addictions and your dreams. He wants you to come lay them down, take up the cross and follow him. Jesus doesn't confuse excitement with commitment.

I'm thankful for this next one. Here's the second point, number two.

Jesus views sinners with compassion

Let's start back at verse 3 and read to verse 5 to get the context. ³ *Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.* ⁴ *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.* ⁵ *Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"* Notice verse 5 says, lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him. At this point, Mark fills out the picture a little more. Mark says in Mark 6:34, ³⁴ *When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.* He looked at them and saw their lostness. They were scattered and directionless, and hopeless, and he had compassion. He felt it in his gut when he looked at them. He did not

look with hatred or judgment, not even sappy sentimentalism. He really felt for them, hurt for them. When we pray in our struggles, one of the reasons I think we can have peace that surpasses understanding is that we have a savior that feels what we feel. In your brokenheartedness, know that Jesus views sinners with compassion. Remember, these people are going to leave him. And he knows they're going to leave him. Yet he still has compassion on them. Paul says it like this in Romans 5:8. *⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

In the text, and especially the way Mark tells it, Jesus felt the needs of every person in that crowd. It's just like he feels every need of every person here. Jesus doesn't confuse excitement with contentment. Jesus views sinners with compassion. Let me give you a third oint, number three.

Jesus tests his people

You might say, what? He test? Where did you see that? Let's read verses 5 through 6. *⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.* This is a test here, Philip is being tested. Andrew will get in on a little bit of it here in a minute. In verse 6, he said this to test Phillip, for he himself knew what he would do. In other words, Jesus has a plan in place but he's going to take Philip through this panicked process to test him. And the test for Phillip is, "Phillip, do you even know who I am?" It's the same test you will have or maybe you are having. It's what God does with his people, he tests them. When God chose Abraham to be the father of his people, Genesis 22 says he tested him. When God saw his faithful servant Job, to draw him closer, he tested him.

Listen to what Jesus said about testing in James 1:2-4. *² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* Our problem is that we don't like the testing. Yeah it's unpleasant. We like to be comfortable. The question with that is, if you live a life being untested, when difficulty does come, it's a shock to your system, and you end up making bad decisions or maybe something worse. In verse 6, Jesus asked Philip, where are we going to get bread? And in verse 7, look at

Philip's answer.⁷ *Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."* 200 denarii would equal about 8 months of wages. They couldn't buy bread even if they had the money, where are we gonna buy it? There's no Costco out here.

You have two people responding to Jesus' test. Phillip, who is an absolute pessimist. He is an expert on letting you know just how impossible your idea is. He's the guy with the calculator telling you it's too much money, it can't be done, in fact, you were dumb for bringing it up. This guy could make Snow White cry. Then there is Andrew. He's not a pessimist, he's an optimist. In verses 8 through 9, he finds a boy and his lunch that has two fish and five loaves. But by the end of his little speech, his optimism runs out. *But what are they for so many?* His optimism is unfocused and that is just as dangerous as pessimism. They both had one problem, they were looking at their own ability, one positive and one negative, instead of looking to Jesus. That's what the test is about: getting them to look at Jesus, relying on Jesus, and trusting in Jesus. That's what your test is about. It's not to see if you can maintain a good attitude or are tough enough to get through the struggle. The test, the cancer, a problem child, the loss of a job, midlife change, infertility, it's a test to show you your bankruptcy of strength and your need for Jesus. When you look at Philip and Andrew, all you see is the problem, and all you have is hopelessness. Look at Jesus. When you see a right view of Jesus, it gives you a right view of life. Jesus doesn't confuse excitement with commitment. Jesus views sinners with compassion. Jesus tested his people. Less finished with two last points.

Jesus provides more

Jesus had all the people sit down in the grass, 5000 men, 10,000 to 15,000 people altogether. In the other gospels, Jesus has them sit in groups of 50 or 100. Now read the miracle from verses 11 through 13. Do you see the lavish supply? ¹¹ *Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.* ¹² *And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost."* ¹³ *So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.* Five loaves, two fish, and 15,000 people ate till they couldn't eat anymore, and then they picked up 12 basket fulls. That's an important number. All four gospels mentioned it. There was more, he provided more

than they needed. Now look, he's going to use this later in the chapter to say, I am the bread of life. What's the point? Jesus is the bread of life. And for your life, he has an abundant supply of grace, peace, forgiveness, restoration, boldness, and strength to get you through. You must come to him and eat. He will satisfy your souls hunger and still have grace in reserve. Jesus provides more.

Jesus expects more

Watch what happens in verse 14 and 15. ¹⁴ *When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"* ¹⁵ *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.* After they saw what he could do for people, their stomachs were full, and then they wanted him to be king. We want what they wanted, somebody that's going to provide for us and will require nothing from us. He won't be king on those terms. That's the fundamental mistake of the prosperity gospel. They want to use Jesus's power to get what they've always wanted. Jesus doesn't come on those terms. That's not the gospel, and he walks away from that. He will not be made king by unselfish and unrepentant hearts. You can't manipulate Jesus to be king on your terms; he's King on his terms. His terms are that you turn away from your sin, that's repentance, and by faith, receive the free gift of forgiveness at the cross and begin to live the life of following Jesus. Jesus provides more and he expects more. Come, see him as King and give him your life. He stands ready to love, receive, forgive, heal, sustain, and provide hope. The right view of Jesus leads to a right view of life.

(Pastor prays)