

No Worries – John 6:1-21

Know Jesus, Know Christmas. Because Christmas is all *about* Jesus. All about the nearness of *God* in Christ. Immanuel. God with us, to save and redeem us. God with us, to give us life. That’s Christmas. And if you know Jesus, you have it. You have life. The greatest gift in the world.

But if you don’t, if you don’t know Jesus, Christmas is just a holiday. A break from work that won’t last any more than the gifts you receive. Know Jesus, Know Christmas; *No* Jesus, N-O, *no* Christmas. *No* life. Or any of the blessings that come with it.

Some of which are found right here in John 6. We don’t normally associate it with Christmas, but the gifts we find are every bit a part of it. So if you haven’t already, turn with me to John 6:1-21.

Intro

This is one of the more well-known events in the life of Christ, and the only miracle mentioned in all four Gospels. Which not only gives us a bunch of *detail* to draw on, but emphasizes its importance.

[1] *After this* [after Jesus’ time in Jerusalem; probably about 6 months after] *Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee*. The *other side* (**Map, ESV Study Bible, 1826**) would be somewhere around Bethsaida; on the northeast side. Because that’s where *Luke* says they went (Lk 9:10b); in his account. Implying that Jesus’ starting point was on the west side. Probably around Gennesaret or Capernaum; his home base.

And Mark tells us that the reason he left was to get away with his disciples to a quiet place for rest. So many people were *coming* to them, they were exhausted and overwhelmed.

So they *went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee* [John says], *which is the Sea of Tiberias*. The *Roman* name of the lake. After the *city* of Tiberias on the southwest side. Tiberias being the Roman emperor when it was named in AD26.

And John uses the Roman name, I think, because his immediate audience probably wouldn’t have known it by its Jewish name. Remember, he was writing five to six decades later from the Roman city of Ephesus, 600 miles away across the *Mediterranean* Sea.

In any case, Jesus went to the other side – *And a large crowd was following him* [v2], *because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick*. *Signs*, as in miracles with a purpose. To authenticate his identity, support his claims, and encourage our belief.

V3 – *Jesus went up on the mountain* [probably the famous Golan Heights in our day; rising quickly from the eastern shore], *and there he sat down with his disciples*. Rested.

Then John says this in v4 – *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand*. Which seems entirely out of place. Until you realize that he’s cluing us in to what’s to come. That just like the Passover was a commemoration of God’s mercy, and provision, and deliverance in days of old; this would be a situation of mercy, and provision, and deliverance in Christ. He was foreshadowing the parallel. Intending to create some anticipation as we read. Set up some ah-ha moments.

[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*. He tested Philip’s trust. His confidence. His perspective.

Was Philip thinking the way Jesus was, relying on the *Father* to provide? Or was he thinking he’d have to take care of it himself? Did he trust *Jesus* to supply their need, or only what he and the disciples could do? Was he *confident* in the presence of the Lord, or worried? Given his reply, I think it was worry.

[7] *Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread* [200 days wages; 2/3 of an annual salary] *would not be enough for each of them to get a little*.” As if to say, “who cares about the *where*, *where* we could buy bread; we don’t have the money. We don’t have the means.” He forgot all about Jesus. All about his previous miracles. Test failed.

But he wasn’t the only one. [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?”* More worry. More failure.

[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*.

It was a miracle of miracles. Not only meant to authenticate his divinity, but teach us that.. **We need not worry (v1-6)**

That’s the first takeaway. The *first* gift that comes with knowing Jesus. Know Jesus, K-N-O, no worries. N-O. How applicable is that? When things get hectic or overwhelming in the course of life, we need not worry. When things are out of control and beyond our ability, we need not fret.

Why? Because . . .

• Jesus knows

He knows our plight. He knows our situation. V5 says that he lifted up his eyes and saw *that a large crowd was coming toward him*. He knew. Not that he had to look. He knew every single person *in* the crowd. From the number of their days to the hunger of their stomach. He knew how tired they were, how weak, how desperate, you name it.

And he knows you too. He knows *this* crowd. He knows what you’re facing, he knows your struggles, he knows your situation, he knows your needs, he knows your desires, he knows it all. He knows every hair on your head and every thought within it.

And best of all, he knows what to do. And what he *will* do. Like John says in v6b – *he himself knew what he would do*. He knew the end from the beginning. And knows now. What’s to worry?

Plus . . .

• Jesus cares

We need not worry because Jesus knows and Jesus cares. Like he cared about their hunger, and met it. Cared about their plight, and relieved it.

We don't follow someone who's aware but unconcerned. We follow Jesus. The one with such tenderness and power, he heals the broken-hearted, sets the captives free, makes the lame to walk again, and causes the blind to see. Not to mention feeds 5000 with a lunch. We need not worry. Ever. Jesus knows and Jesus cares.

And if you're thinking, "Well, he might know and care for you, but he's not doing anything for me. He's not doing anything about my situation." If that's you, perhaps you're missing it. Perhaps he *is* doing something and you just don't know. Or don't see. Or perhaps your struggle is exactly what you *need* right now. To test *your* faith like he did Philip's.

Whatever the case, we need not worry. Jesus knows and Jesus cares.

Second . . .

We need not doubt (v7-15)

That's the second gift of knowing Jesus. Doubt need not plague our soul and overwhelm our thinking. Wondering if Jesus really *is* able. Really *can* handle our situation. Really *is* powerful. We need not doubt.

Because he makes it clear in this miracle, this sign, that . . .

- **No problem is too big**

None. Not yours, not mine, not ours, not anyone's. There's no situation, no circumstance, no state of affairs, that's beyond the reach of Jesus. Beyond his control. Beyond his ability to change it. He fed 5000 people with a *lunch* for crying out loud! Not to mention paid the price for the sin of the world, overcame the penalty, and rose again. You have a problem bigger than that? We need not doubt. No problem is too big.

And yet we do, don't we? We forget who we're with, we forget his power, we forget his love, we forget what he's done, and we wonder. We question. "Is it really true? Can he really save? Can he really heal? Can he really change things?"

Yes! Yes, yes, and yes. He can. Because no problem is too big.

What's more . . .

- **No amount is too small**

We need not doubt because no problem is too big, and no amount is too small. After Philip's doubt, came Andrew's. V9 – "*There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?*" In other words, it's too small. It won't even make a dent in the problem. Like a drop of rain in the middle of a drought.

And if we're honest, we think like that all the time. "My gift won't help. It's a pittance compared to the need. My service isn't important; I'm one of hundreds. My tithe doesn't matter; look at our budget." We think like that sometimes, don't we? And apart from Jesus, we're right.

But *with* him, in the hands of our Redeemer, God in the flesh, *no* gift is too small. No amount is too little. Time, talent, treasure; bread, fish, anything. He uses it all. Adding your drop, to your drop, and your drop, to create of *ocean* of supply. We need not doubt.

- **Jesus provides**

That's the bottom line. V10 – *Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place.* [Another indicator that nothing's too small or insignificant.] *So the men sat down, about five thousand in number* [plus another 10-15k women and children; they were present too according to Matthew (Mt 14 :21)]. *[11] Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks* [thanks for God's provision and power], *he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.*

No problem is too big and no amount too small, because little is much when God is in it. Jesus provides. He may not do it miraculously; he may not supply right away; he may not give what you want; but he'll provide. He'll provide what you need. What *we* need.

And sometimes he'll go above and beyond. Providing *more* than enough. V12 – *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.* Bread and fish according to Mark's gospel.

Sometimes Jesus provides *more* than enough. And when he does, he expects us to steward it. To gather it and preserve it for something else. Some *other* need. Some other situation. Another work of ministry.

No problem is too big, no amount is too small, and Jesus provides. We need not doubt.

Third . . .

We need not take matters into our own hands (v14-15)

V14 – *When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"* The prophet like Moses, promised all the way back in Deuteronomy (18:15-18). We looked at it last week. The one who would do signs like Moses did. So when Jesus fed the masses with bread and fish, like Moses fed the Israelites with manna and quail, they were like, "He's the one! He's the Prophet!" And they weren't wrong. Except for their desire.

V15 – *Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king* [take matters into their own hands], *Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.* And Matthew tells us he urged the disciples to leave as well. To get into a boat and go back. Because though the crowd came to the right conclusion, that he was the Prophet, they came to the wrong desire. Wanting to take matters into their own hands.

Except Jesus had a plan, and it wasn't time. Nor was he about an *earthly* kingdom at that point, but a spiritual one. And the same is true now.

Jesus *had* a plan, and . . .

- **Jesus has a plan**

A plan for your life, a plan for our church, and a plan for the world. A plan to save your soul and make you whole. A plan to build our church and establish his kingdom. A plan to come again and make all things new. He's got the whole world in his hands, and he has a plan.

And the worst thing *you* can do is take matters into your *own* hands. *Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him.* (Ps 37:7). Get on his plan, and let go of yours.

Last . . .

We need not fear (v16-21)

[16] When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, [17] got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. Maybe indicating that he *said* he would. Probably thinking he would come in another boat.

[18] The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. [19] When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened [fearful]. [20] But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Don’t fear.

At which point Matthew (**Mt 14:28–33**) includes Peter as saying – *[28] “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” [Same episode.] [29] He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. [30] But when he saw the wind, he was afraid [more fear], and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” [31] Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt [like Philip and Andrew had]?” [32] And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. [33] And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Or as John says it in v21 – *Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.* Another miracle. To emphasize the fact that we need not fear.

It is I [he said in v20]; *do not be afraid*. And while the reasons for that are many, three of them are right here.

First . . .

• Jesus will come

We need not fear because Jesus *will* come. They may not have expected the *way* he came, but he came. And we can expect the same. Not only at the *end* of this age, but in the midst of it. Where two or three are gathered, he will come. Where his work is being done, he will come. Where he’s welcomed and wanted, he will come. Where he’s sought after and yearned for, he will come. Fear not.

Second, we need not fear because . . .

• Jesus is near

Like it says in v19 – *they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat*. But it’s not as though Jesus is distant from us and only comes near at *times*, he’s near *all* the time. “*I will never leave you nor forsake you,*” implies he’s *always* close (Heb 13:5b). He’s here and he’s near. No fear.

And third . . .

• Jesus saves

Just like he saved Peter, and the 12, and the crowd, and us. Saving us from our sin, saving us from Satan, saving us from hell, and saving us for good. What’s to fear? We need not. Nor worry, or doubt, or take matters into our own hands. Jesus knows, Jesus cares, and Jesus provides.

Prayer – Father, “what heights of love, what depths of peace; when fears are stilled, when strivings cease.” Oh Lord, may that be true of us. Forgive us of worrying. Doubting. Taking matters into our own hands. And fear. How thankful we are for Jesus; at Christmas and always. Increase our faith. Increase our trust. And fill us with peace.

You Are Loved