

John 6:1-35 The Glory of the Son as Provider and Protector of His People

In John cp. 6 we find two more signs; two miraculous events. Jesus provides food for five thousand men, along with their wives and children. Also, Jesus walks on water during a storm and delivers the disciples and their boat safely to the other side of the sea. And as John does, he uses these signs to allow Jesus himself to teach us their true meaning. Do you remember Jesus' first sign in John's gospel? During the wedding at Cana Jesus turned water into wine. Why? Look back at 2:11. John says, **"This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him."** John uses these signs to show . . . to display the glory of Jesus. Why? That those who see them (and read about them today) may believe in him. With this in mind, as we take the Lord's Supper today, I want to highlight one truth from each story that will help us see the glory of the Son . . . as those who believe in him. Here they are: 1) In the feeding of the five thousand we see the glory of the Son as the One who provides for his people, and 2) As Jesus walks on water and safely delivers his disciples to the other side of the sea, we see the glory of the Son as the One who protects his people. (We will get more specifics from these stories over the next two weeks.)

1. The glory of the Son as the One who provides for his people. Let me read vv. 1-15. Now, to vv. 22-29. In v. 30, the people are now pretty sure that Jesus is a very special prophet, even the One Moses spoke of (see v. 14 with Deut. 18:15-19), the prophet who will lead God's people into a new exodus (like Moses). And, we know Jesus IS this prophet. But, John's purpose is to show that HE is much MORE than a prophet. He is the VERY GLORY of God. Look back to 1:14 says, **"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."** And this is EXACTLY what Jesus will teach them. Look now at vv. 30-35: **"So they said to him, 'Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.''" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always. Jesus said to them," "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."** In these words, Jesus is teaching them (and us) that HE HIMSELF is the provision of the Father. In other words, the Father Gives the Son that we may have life.

Think about the story of Moses in the desert. In Exod. 16 we find the Israelites only two months out from their deliverance from Egypt. They find themselves with very little to eat, surely not enough to sustain them much longer. And they complain to Moses, saying, ***"Oh, that we would have died in Egypt where we had plenty of meat and bread"*** (v. 3). So, in his great mercy and grace, what does God do? In the greatest miracle of provision, He makes the sky rain down bread (heavenly bread called manna). And Moses tells us in v. 7 that when they see the manna, they see the "glory" of God (v. 7). Let me ask, "What did God do?" He provided bread for them that they

might live. And in doing this, they see the glory of God who provides food for them that they might live.

This is John's purpose as he recalls this story. In the same way, Jesus IS God's TRUE provision for his people. Moses' sign was given with the purpose of the eventual coming of Jesus (as are all the types and shadows in the OT). Look at vv. 32-35 again, **"Jesus said to them, Truly, truly I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."** And then in v. 35: **"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."** Look over at v. 51. Jesus says, **"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."** And then in v. 53: **"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life . . ."**

The most obvious truth for us today as we take the Lord's Supper is found in Jesus' words, **"This is my body broken for you."** In the Son of God we do not find the physical bread that will keep us alive in a desert, we have TRUE bread from heaven. And those who **"eat his flesh"** and **"drink his blood"** have eternal life. This is a picture of FAITH, BELIEF in the Son of God as the ONE who came to provide our deepest and most essential need! What is this? LIFE. ETERNAL LIFE. The world only sees that which is physical, the things of this world that "may" or "may not" take them to God (Religious leaders in John 6). The world "eats" and "drinks" all kinds of things. In 1 John 2:15-17 John tells us about the things the world loves. He says: **"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."**

But, as Christians, WE "eat" and "drink" of the TRUE bread from heaven. We believe in the Son: WHO He is and WHAT He came to do. We remember his body . . . a body that was . . . broken. This is the CROSS. This is the sacrifice of the Son of God. This is why he came. This is why God sent the Son . . . This is why John writes these words . . . That we may have life . . . that we may have peace with God . . . that we may have our sins forgiven . . . that we may have the wrath of God for our sins taken away. Brothers and sisters, our sins have been laid on the Son. The wrath of God has been poured out in its fullness upon the Son. Why? That those who believe may have life. As God gave manna in the desert, So now He gives the Son to the world. And this is the purpose of this first sign (very simple). In Jesus, God provides for his people!

Three applications: 1) ONLY the provision of the Son is sufficient. All forms of self-righteousness, going to church, waling an aisle, giving to the poor, saying the "right" things about the Bible for many who profess Christ. And, all the other religions and their works; they cannot provide for our greatest need, to have peace with God. 2) There is a difference between

seeking good things that come “from” Jesus and seeking Jesus himself. Another way to put this is to ask yourself, “*Do you seek the gifts, the good things that come down to you through the Church and its people? Do you enjoy some of the cultural benefits of being “called” a Christian?*” Yet, underneath you really love the world. You look pretty good outside, but not on the inside. Paul sums up this application in 2 Tim. 3:1-5: “**But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.**”

3) As the ONE who provides, God will supply all your needs in Christ Jesus. In Jesus you have EVERYTHING you need for life and godliness? (What about physical needs?)

2. The glory of the Son as the One who protects his people. This is an obvious truth; for protection follows provision. I get this from our second sign in vv. 16-21. In this story (as Jeremiah faithfully preached to us a few weeks back) we get the second part of the day and the following night after leaving the crowds with their bellies full. Some of the disciples (without Jesus who heads up a mountain to pray) get into their boat and head for the other side of the sea. And suddenly there was a storm with big waves and wind, etc. They are very much . . . afraid (See Matt. & Luke.) In their terrified state they attempt to get to safety, rowing with all their might, to land their feet on dry ground in the midst of this storm.

And then what happens? They see Jesus walking toward them on the water. At first they think he is some kind of ghost (Matt. & Luke), which only added to their fear. And as their fear escalates, they realize it is Jesus. And what does Jesus say to them? V. 20, “**It is I; do not be afraid.**” And then in v. 21 John recalls: “**Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.**” John leaves out many of the details from Matthew and Luke. But, I believe he does this because he wants his readers (and us) to know that Jesus is not only the ONE who provides for his people; He is also the ONE who protects his people . . . as “IMMEDIATELY” the disciples are safe on the other side of the sea. Jesus appears . . . They are safe! He delivers them to their destination! Jesus says to them and us: “**It is I, do not be afraid.**”

I believe John’s picture from the OT is the crossing of the Red Sea for the Israelites. In a powerful, miraculous way, God delivers his people from slavery and bondage in Egypt. But, as they are leaving, they come to the Red Sea where they find a furious Pharaoh and his armies ready and arming themselves to destroy them as they are trapped, hemmed in by the sea, with no where to go, no chariots, no real weapons, no trained soldiers, only FEAR of SURE destruction! (same as the disciples) But then . . . God shows up! He divides the waters, they walk through safely. And, Pharaoh’s armies are destroyed in the midst of the sea!

In our story Jesus says, ***“It is I . . . and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.”*** In these words, ***“It is I,”*** as we’ve seen above in Jesus words, ***“I Am . . . the bread of life,”*** we find the GLORY of the Son who does the VERY SAME as God does! With the picture of the manna Jesus is the ONE who provides. With the walking on the water during the storm and their delivery to safety, we see Jesus is the ONE who protects. In these words Jesus isn’t merely a man walking on water. He is the creator of ALL waters. And, it is as EASY for him to walk on water as it is to walk through fire. He is Lord over his creation. With the woman at the well in John 4 Jesus is the “living” water of the well that flows from side of God himself. He is LIFE! He is LIGHT. But in John 6, the “waters” are a picture of danger, chaos, and destruction. And where do we find Jesus?

Listen to these words in Isaiah. ***“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?”*** (40:12).

I think of God’s words in Is. 63:11-12 as I consider my own sinfulness and the mercy of God to protect me. ***“Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name . . .”*** Where is He? In John 6 He is the ONE who walks on water. He is also the manna from heaven. In John 5 He is the great healer and the Lord of the Sabbath and the Lord of all judgment. In John 4 he is the living water. In John 3 He is the source of regeneration and the savior of the world. In John 2 He is the savior and hero at the great wedding feast of God . . . As He is also the Lord over his temple. And then back in John 1:14, He is the ***“Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”***

Should we then ask, ***“Can He . . . protect us”*** and bring us safely to our destination? I love Trevor, my grandson. I love his sincerity. I love his many words and phrases. I love when puts on his Knight vest and grabs his sword, saying to Nora and Annie, ***“I can protect you.”*** I love his heart! And from a human standpoint, he is just learning to be a man. But, to think that ANYONE or ANYTHING could bring me or you to safety apart from the LORD JESUS Christ, to think that your self-righteousness, or what you can accumulate in this life, or . . . even your favorable circumstances . . . is to believe a three-year-old child could protect you from Pharoah’s armies or the judgment of hell. Listen again brothers and sisters to the words of Isaiah: ***“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you”*** (Is. 43:2). Today when we take the Lord’s supper and recall the words, ***“This is my body broken for you”*** we know that through his death and subsequent resurrection HE is our provision. HE is our protector.

And though He does provide for us the food we eat and often protect us from physical danger, He ultimately protects us from the wrath of God to come that will come to this earth on the GREAT DAY of judgment. How can this be? “This is my body broken for you!” Jesus PROVIDES and PROTECTS because the WORD became flesh and dwelt among us. And this WORD I preach tells us about his glory!

Brothers and sisters, Do not Fear! Do not let the circumstances of life be your protector! Though he may not carry your body through earthquakes or Tsunamis or tidal waves or car accidents or cancer, He will carry your soul to safety (See Heb. 11). God will provide all your needs according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).