

Seeking Jesus
Livin' the Life
John 6:22-29
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We are continuing our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life looking at Jesus and the life he offers. I hope you are seeing Jesus' infinite worth more clearly. For the next couple of weeks, we are looking at Jesus' interaction with the crowd after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. Today we are looking at John 6:22-29, in which Jesus is calling the crowd to follow him on his terms. So, let's look at this passage together.

So far, we have seen that the crowd misunderstands the sign Jesus gave them. The significance of the feeding of the five thousand points is that Jesus is the bread of life and they think he has come to fill their bellies. They did not see the glory of the only Son of God the Father (1:14). And because they are seeking him for the wrong reason, he walks away from them (15). Then we saw the disciples struggling to get across the sea of Galilee in a storm when Jesus comes to them walking on the water to reveal himself as the Great I am. He came to them in their time of need to show them that he is much greater than they imagine and no matter how much trouble they are in nothing can keep him from them. The rest of chapter six is one long dialogue about Jesus as the bread of life.

The crowd is looking for Jesus because he is useful (22-24), he meets their natural wants and desires. When they find Jesus on the other side of the sea of Galilee they ask, Rabbi when did you come here (25)? But Jesus ignores their question. Instead he says truly, truly, which means, listen now, this is important. You are seeking me not because you saw the signs but because you filled your bellies with bread (26). The bread of life, the eternal Son of God, is standing in front of them and they only see a man who can feed them. The one who is infinitely valuable, infinitely worthy, is in front of them and they only see a man who feeds them. They want the bread he offers but not the bread of life. They want what he can produce for them but not him; they want the gift but not the giver. Don't get me wrong, they are thrilled to find Jesus, but only because he feeds them. It is why they are putting so much effort seeking him out. They searched both sides of the sea of Galilee for him. Their needs are real and legitimate but hunger does not mean they see His glory, his infinite worth, see him as precious. They are following Jesus so he can meet their own needs rather than seeing Jesus as the solution to their greatest need, overcoming their sin.

Jesus' response is both patient and gracious. He did not need to explain himself but he does because the Father sent him on a mission to seek and save the lost. And though the crowd is seeking him they are lost. Jesus has given us this same mission, as the Father has sent me, I send you (Jn 20:21). Jesus responds, do not work for the food that perishes (physical bread) but (work) for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal (26-27). I want us to look at those three phrases. First, do not work for the food that perishes; second, but (work) for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you; and third, for on him God the Father has set his seal. So, let's look at the first, do not work for the food that perishes. What does that mean? They have given a lot of time and energy in looking for Jesus to get food that perishes. He is saying, do not pursue me for ordinary human food. If that is all you want, you are missing my message and forfeiting eternal life. Life is so much more than your temporary needs in this life. Does God care about them, yes. Does God provide for those needs, yes. Does God even do it in unusual and miraculous ways, yes. God is generous for many reasons but the ultimate reason is that we see the glory of the giver. If you think Jesus is usefull, all about making your life better then you are missing Jesus.

The next phrase I want to look at is in contrast to this phrase. Listen, Do not work for the food that perishes but (work) for the food that endures to eternal life, life that extends beyond this short and momentary life. Eternal life means that first, you are reconciled to God and know God the Father and Jesus Christ. Second, you experience the very life of God within you. And third, God adds a new chapter to your life, a final chapter that goes beyond this life into eternal joy. But they do not

understand so they ask, what must we do to be doing the works of God (28)? What work must we do? They think they can do something that makes them acceptable to God. Jesus makes short order of that confusion with this statement, this is the work of God, that you believe in him whom the Father has sent. In other words, the only kind of work God accepts, is not human effort but belief. Jesus is saying, you don't do anything but look to me as the bread of life. If you do not see Jesus as the bread of life, no amount of work is going to get you eternal life! You can work yourself to the bone and it will never be enough if you do not see Jesus as the bread of life! This is offensive to moral people. But none of us live up to our own standard of morality.

The third phrase gives us the basis for Jesus saying these things, for on him God the Father has set his seal (27). Only Jesus can offer eternal life because the Father has set his seal on him. At Jesus' baptism God says, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Jesus was with God in the beginning and is God (1:1). Jesus is eternal life so he can give eternal life. He is offering eternal life and they want a meal. They value food over eternal life because they do not see the significance of the miracle. All miracles are temporary, eternal life is permanent and everlasting. This is the point, do you see Jesus as more important than those things we live for everyday – food, work, TV, social media, marriage, children, the weekend, retirement. What are you living for - Jesus or this life? If you are living for this life and think you can follow Jesus then you are misled. Jesus will not be manipulated, he will walk away from you just like he did with the crowd. You cannot follow Jesus on your own terms, you cannot redefine Jesus. You follow Jesus because he is more precious than anything this life because he gives eternal life, enjoying eternity with him. The biggest problem for many of us is that the gifts of God have become idols, they are more precious to us than Jesus. The only way out, the only acceptable way to follow Jesus is to repent of your sin and turn toward him in faith for eternal life. Faith is not a one time decision but the work of God in us so that we treasure him above all things in life. This kind of faith produces a life of following Jesus, fighting to keep him as the greatest treasure in our lives. Otherwise he walks away. He defines the relationship not you or me.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why is the crowd seeking Jesus?
2. Is seeking Jesus for the good life legitimate? Why or why not?
3. In what ways do you work for food that perishes?
4. How can you tell if you are working for food that perishes for the food that endures to eternal life?
5. How is Jesus the bread of life?
6. How is believing not a work of man but a work of God?
7. Why does humanity naturally think they can be good enough, earn salvation?
8. How do you try to define the relationship with Jesus?
9. What things in your life do you have a tendency to treasure above Jesus?
10. How is God saying to you this week from this message? How do you respond?

