

Jesus and his disciples were coming out of an intense ministry season and needed a little time of rest and regrouping. The disciples, just returning from being sent out by Jesus in teams of two, were super excited to share their experiences and the miracles they had seen. It was also time to prepare for Passover and Herod, fearful of an uprising, had John the Baptist beheaded and is now looking for Jesus. Jesus wanted to share in the joy of his disciples, but was also grieving for John. On top of all that, the crowds kept pressing in, so Jesus proposed a getaway. What begins as a retreat turns into Sign Four of the Seven Signs that proved Jesus as the Messiah. The retreat resulted in Jesus feeding five thousand.

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

Apart from the Resurrection, this is the only miracle that is recorded in all four Gospels.

John 6:1-13

1 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),

2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick.

So much for the retreat. The people found him and he had compassion for them. They came because they saw the signs.

Sign One- Water to Wine, not everyone saw. Only the servants and disciples.

In **Sign Two- The Healing of the Official's Son** word probably spread some about the healing.

Sign Three- The Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda probably got the most public attention of the three. Plus, there were other miracles with Jesus and the disciples that weren't even recorded.

3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.

4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

Probably a year after the Passover Feast mentioned in John 2:13 when Jesus cleansed the temple.

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Mark 6:37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,

9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).

JESUS' PLAN TO FEED MANY PEOPLE

Mark 6:39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.

- Divide them into groups.
- In a comfortable setting.

Mark 6:40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.

11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

12 When they had all had enough to eat, (Mark tells us, "They ate until they were satisfied!") he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

The Result of the Fourth Sign

John 6:14 After **the people saw the sign** Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” A very public sign!

You’ve Got the Wrong Idea

The people’s response of “Surely this is the Prophet” reflects the popular belief that a prophet like Moses, who fed the Israelites with manna, would come into the world to establish an earthly paradise. This sparked their messianic fervor, and they wanted to install Jesus as their political “bread Messiah,” making Him king by force. Jesus would have none of it (see Matt. 4:1-4).¹

Remember this was one of the “establish your Kingdom my way” temptations that the devil threw at Jesus.

Matthew 4:1-4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” The Bread Messiah 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

John 6:15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (Remember it’s about the Father’s timing! Jesus said in **John 5:30** *By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.*

John 6:16-23 Sign Five - Jesus walks on the water. – Next Sunday.

Looking for Another Hebrew Happy Meal

John 6:24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

At this point, Jesus was on a roll. He’d just performed the Fourth Sign, feeding the 5,000. But in the “Messiah frenzy” the crowd wanted to make Jesus their King, even if meant doing it by force. Jesus escaped from the crowd, but they find him again.

The Worst Sermon Introduction Ever Given!

John 6:26 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

- The crowd who’d eaten their fill the night before got up in the morning and they searched for Jesus because they wanted another happy meal miracle.

The Midrash, Moses, and Jesus.

These people knew the Midrash, a Jewish commentary.

- The Midrash said that Moses performed a miracle back when the children of Israel were free from Egyptian bondage. It said Moses was the one that caused manna to drop from the heavens. And it also said that the Messiah would duplicate the miracles that Moses had done in his life. (Now the Bible doesn’t say that, but the Midrash did.)

¹ Jack W. Hayford, Litt.D., Spirit Filled Life Bible NKJ (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), p. 1584

- So, these Jews are thinking, “Okay, you fed me one time, Jesus, and I’m ready for you to do it again!” “I’m just waiting for manna! Jesus, show me some manna. Show me some signs.”

Desire the Right Kind of Bread

John 6:27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

- They weren’t thinking about spiritual food here. They were thinking about their wants, their desires. They were saying, “Jesus, feed me, feed me, feed me.” **They were diet-driven people.**
- Jesus is saying, “You need to be working... but work for the right thing.”

BOLD NEXT STEP: This week I will consider: On a scale of 1-10, how much of a diet driven Christ follower am I? Am I in it for the blessings only? For what Jesus can do for me?

John 6:28-29

28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

John 6:30 So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? They just saw Jesus feeding some 15,000 people, was that not a sign enough?

John 6:31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” The crowd knew about the manna that God supplied their forefathers in Israel. They also knew the Midrash, a Jewish commentary (not the bible), said that the Messiah would duplicate the miracles that Moses had done in his life.

So, these Jews we probably thinking, “I’m waiting for manna to fall from the sky!”

I Am the Bread of Life

Well, Jesus continues to explain what kind of Bread He was talking about...

John 6:32 Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

- Moses was everything to the Jewish people and Jesus was saying “It’s not Moses.”
- “It is my Father”—“Who gives you the true bread (hint, hint) from heaven.”

John 6:33-34

33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

34 “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

<i>Manna</i>	<i>The Bread of Life</i>
<i>Manna came down from heaven in darkness.</i>	<i>Jesus entered this world that was darkened by sin.</i>
<i>Manna saved people from a physical death.</i>	<i>Jesus saves people from spiritual death.</i>
<i>Manna only temporarily satisfied. (24 hours)</i>	<i>Jesus satisfies forever!</i>

BOLD NEXT STEP: The people were blinded by their preconceived ideas of what Jesus should be and what Jesus should do for them. They almost missed The True Bread of Life. This week, I will examine my own preconceived ideas of Jesus and what he will do for me and make sure that I’m not missing something far better that he is trying to give me.

The Work of God is to Believe in the One God Sent... Christ Jesus.

**John 6:28-29 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”
29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

The people must have thought...*“Believe in the one God sent? That’s it?
There’s nothing else I can do? You mean, I can’t work my way in”?*

The same is true for us...

*“I can’t get baptized enough or I can’t give enough money, or I can’t do enough good works?
You mean it’s not something I do? It’s not something I work for?”*

The Bible says we’re not saved by works. What would life be like if you were saved by works?
We’d go around boasting about our good works all the time. But it’s just not that way. It’s about grace.
To Believe?

You might be saying, “Well, you know, I believe in the bread. Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life.’
I believe in the bread.”

ILL: Yes, you intellectually agree. “Hey, here is bread.” You might smell the bread. Feels like bread.
You might kind of taste it. Is that enough?

Jesus said, “You Must Believe.” *Is that what the word “believe” means? I believe this is bread. Nope.*

- Belief in this context meant **total assimilation.**
- It means to do with Jesus what we do with bread.
- What do we do with bread? Is bread any good if we say, “Oh, I believe its bread. Smells like bread. Kind of looks like bread.” This bread doesn’t do us any good unless we do what?
Unless I eat the bread!

So maybe Christ is saying that, like bread and like digestion, we take it, and it **becomes a part of us.**

We must do that with him, the bread of life.

Ingest Jesus, the bread of life! Take Him in and allow to Him to bring us life and make us strong!