

John 6:1-15

Jesus is More Than Enough

Introduction

Those of you who have spent any time looking at John's Gospel...will know just how **infinitely simple** yet **deeply profound** this Gospel can get!

And so very often **it seems** that the author delights in using everyday, **basic and simple pictures** – to depict deeper, richer, more theologically dense realities!

Now the problem with this is that **on one level**:

There are men and women who seem to be picking up what Jesus is laying down: food, & water, & clothing, & drink – but **on another level** (the deeply spiritual level) they completely **miss the point!**

And so as a result – there are men and women **in the bible** who are constantly **coming to Jesus**:

- To **hear** but not actually **hear!**
- **See** but not actually **see!**
- **Follow** but not actually **follow!**
- **Believe** but not actually **believe!**

In other words, John is **constantly reminding us** of this one fact:

There is more to the story than what's actually going on...

John 6

And here in John 6 this principle (of seeing but not seeing – believing but not believing) is really **no exception!**

Here we have a **deeply profound** yet **historically easy** lesson that Jesus is trying to teach – and yet so many of His disciples, so many of His listeners, His followers and fans **are completely missing the point!**

Historical Setting

And so there are really **2 levels** to the story here in John 6 – one is the **redemptive historical level** – and **the other** is the **deeply spiritual** level – and so on the historical side of things the narrative is **really quite simple** – have a look at verse 1:

After this, Jesus crossed over the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias), and a large crowd seemed to be following...

So there's **nothing really confusing** about this!

An unidentified amount time has elapsed since John chapter 5 – and now Jesus is **back up in the Galilean region** where He is trying to teach disciples!

Verse 2:

Now a huge crowd was following Him because they saw the signs that He was performing...

Now we know from the other Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) that Jesus was **trying to get away from the crowds** – but apparently these men were **very persistent** – and this crowd you'll notice has **great overtones** to the people we saw back in chapter 4 – when (if you remember) Jesus was welcomed in because of **the signs** He had performed...

So these people are **NOT** off to a good start in the mind of John – or in the mind of John's readers!

Jewish Passover

But John also tells us **the other reason** there was a large crowd following Him – verse 4:

Now the Passover, a Jewish festival, was near...

So there are 3 Passover meals that are mentioned in John's Gospel – we already saw one of them back in chapter 2, we'll see one when we get to the end of chapter 11, and now here in John chapter 6!

And remember this was the time of the year when Jews **from all over the Roman Empire** would come to celebrate one of the **3 main Jewish festivals** that were given **throughout the year...**

And **on this day** they celebrated **that holy event**, of when the angel of death had struck down **every first-born male** living in Egypt – and Moses the **great prophet** of the Jews had led them out of captivity!

And so here **at this time in the region** there would have been Jews streaming all the way down from the cities in the North – and Jews streaming all the way up from the cities in the South – **in order to get to Jerusalem** which was **the main city** in the middle!

And so the crowds are far from home...many of them are hungry – many of them are tired – **and they needed to find some food!**

Now John doesn't tell us what moved Jesus to feed these men – but Mark makes it clear:

When He had seen the crowds coming toward Him He had looked on them with compassion – for they were like sheep without a shepherd!

Jesus had compassion on these men...

And so Jesus (in verse 5) turns to His disciples – and He begins to talk to Phillip:

He asked Philip, where will we buy bread so that these people can eat?"⁶ Now He asked this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do...

Now just stop to appreciate the power of Jesus in a situation where we would simply crumble!

Jesus is **never once wondering to Himself** what He's going to do here!

He's never worried – He's never scared – He's never wondering what to do!

Because our God is in the heavens and He does all that He pleases!

And so Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread (that’s 8 months wages) wouldn’t be enough for each of them to have a little...But one of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ⁹ “There’s 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 we know from the **other gospel accounts** that Jesus had them sit by fifties – and tens – and small groups and families:

Because Jesus was a Baptist!

He loved families – and structure – and church polity!

Fish-cake Sandwiches

Now the other thing to note is that these fish were **not like our regular sized fish** – it’s not the normal word for fish but it’s actually a word referring to **smaller fish** almost like a pickled fish (so think of a sardine sized pickled fish relish)...

And likewise when you think of the bread don’t think of a **large sized bread loaf** – think of a hot-cross bun **sized English muffin!**

Alright so we got a couple of **English muffins sized** fish burgers –big enough to feed a young boy!

And there’s about **20,000 people** coming to Jesus...

Now 20,000 because **when you consider** the fact the this was around the time of Spring during the Passover festival – there would have been **3 times the amount of 5,000** when you include the women, the children, and the elderly!

So 20,000 people comin to Jesus... and they got a couple of fish relish burgers... things aren’t looking good at this point!

And so Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were full, He told His

disciples, “Collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted.”¹³ So they collected them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten...

So it’s a very easy narrative for us to follow:

1. People are hungry!
2. Jesus is God!
3. Jesus multiplies the food!
4. The people are full!
5. Jesus is amazing!

You have not read the story

I mean we get the narrative of the story – but **do we actually** get the narrative of the story...

If all you get from this story is that **Jesus was an amazing human – Jesus was a wonderful guy** –
And He looked upon the crowd with love and compassion:

Then you have not read the story!

If all you get from reading this story is that the people learned **a valuable lesson about sharing**:

Then you have not read the story!

If all you get is that God will provide **every single one** of your physical needs in Christ...

Then you have not read the story!

Especially **in light of the fact** that we have **just come out of a section** in – where Jesus specifically rebukes these men, for reading their bibles, and **completely** missing the point...

And so I said it before – and I’ll say it again:

There is more to the story than what’s actually going on...

Main Point

3 things I want you to notice about John 6 that John **under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit** is trying to communicate about Jesus Christ – 3 things that John wants us to see here in John 6:

1. Jesus is more than a Prophet!
2. Jesus is more than a King!
3. And Jesus is more than enough!

Now just to be clear **I did not come up** with those 3 points myself – I took them from Kevin DeYoung’s sermon – but I liked them so much that we’re going to use them as our 3 points – because **I really do think** that these 3 points are what John solidifies about this sign in John 6!

A Better Prophet

So, let’s begin at point 1:

Jesus is more than a Prophet:

Have a look with me at verse 12:

*When they (the crowds that had eaten) were full, He told His disciples, to collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted. ¹³ So they collected them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten. And when the people saw the sign He had done, they said, **This truly is the Prophet** who is to come into the world...*

Opening Gambit

Now let me tell you something amazing about the **first century people** that Jesus was trying to teach...

Long before the marvellous invention of the internet – and long before they invented high-definition T.V – long before the time of Netflix and Disney – and skateboard and bicycles:

People told stories...

That's what they would do for fun!

They would memorize stories – and they would **illustrate** these stories – and they would **pass on these stories** – to their children and their **children's children!**

And they wouldn't just tell **any kind of story** (Goldilocks and the 3 bears) – but they would tell **biblical stories...**

Stories of Moses – stories of Elijah – stories of Abraham & Isaac, Jacob & Jacob, & Joseph!

Stories to do with the of God Israel – and the redemption He brought from the land of Egypt:

So that these stories could be preserved – & loved – & adored – and remembered for generation to come!

And so these people would have been **much more aware** of the biblical connections being made between the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophesized Messiah!

A Prophet like Moses

Now I say that because here in John 6 – John is making the connection between Jesus Christ and the Old Testament Prophet:

Moses!

And they actually got **some sort of a connection** to Moses from what Jesus did – this truly is the Prophet who is to come into the world [Deut 18].

So let me just give a few connections these people would have seen to help draw the point:

In verse 10 – we have Jesus **leading a multitude of people** into a desolate place in order to sit down and eat the manner that has come from God!

Moses **led the people** out of Egypt **in order to eat** the manner from God!

Now John's Gospel doesn't say *desolate place* but in Mark's Gospel it's clear that Jesus was in:

A desolate place...

In fact verse 1 is clear that Jesus has *crossed over* to the other side of the sea – that is **the East side** – the desolate side; the side with no population...

In other words:

This could be perceived as Jesus going into the wilderness...

So that's the first connection John draws!

Signs

Second – the crowd is following Jesus **because of the signs** that He was doing while working in Jerusalem – and **like Moses (in the book of Exodus)** the people of Israel follow Moses out **into the wilderness** because of the signs they saw him doing in Egypt!

Mountain

Third – Jesus and His disciples went up on a mountain – Moses (after leading the people of God) goes up onto a mountain!

Lots of things happen in the bible because of mountains...and remember Jesus goes up onto the mountain (in Matthew 5) **to deliver** God's law!

Moses goes up **to receive** God's law!

Passover

Fourth – these events are taking place during the Passover festival in Jerusalem – and remember Moses leads his people out of the land of Egypt the night of **the very first** Passover Meal!

Walking on Water

Six – Moses and the people cross the Red Sea in a miraculous event of God parting the waters – and next week we’re going to see Jesus walking on the water as if it were dry ground **in order to cross the sea!**

Bread From heaven

And of course, there’s even the connection to Moses in the middle of John 6 with the bread of life **coming down from heaven** – just as Moses **called down bread from heaven in the wilderness!**

So, there’s **all these allusions** – all these parallels – to Jesus being a better Prophet **than Moses ever was!**

So that’s the **first allusion** to Jesus as a Prophet!

Jesus is the better Moses!

Elisha

Second – **not only** is Jesus a better prophet than Moses but:

Jesus is a better provider than Elisha **X2**

So please turn in your bibles to 2nd Kings chapter 4 – 2nd Kings 4 (that’s on page **321** in the black pew bibles)...

In 2nd Kings 4 we see a similar story to the feeding of the multitude here in the ministry of **Elisha the Prophet!**

2nd Kings 4 beginning at verse 42 it says this:

Now a man from [Bail-sha-lish-a] came to the man of God [that’s Elisha] with his sack full of twenty loaves of barley bread from the first bread of the harvest. Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.”⁴³ But Elisha’s attendant asked, “What? Am I to set this before a hundred

*men?” “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said, “for this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat, **and they will have some left over.**”⁴⁴ So he set it before them, and as the LORD had promised, they ate and had some left over...*

Now one pastor has illustrated this story as:

Barley – Boy – Baskets! X2

We see the allusion to Barley here in 2nd Kings – just as we do in the Gospel of John!

Barley was the choice of bread among the poor in Jesus’ day – If you didn’t have **the best wheat** you would settle for barley!

- And so just as Jesus fed the people by a miraculous sign from God...
- Elisha fed the people by a miraculous sign from God...
- Jesus meets a boy with barley loaves of bread!
- Elisha meets a young man with barley loaves of bread – same word for boy here in John is used of man in 2nd Kings!
- The disciples collect the baskets with plenty more leftover!
- And Elisha collects the baskets with plenty more leftover!

Now **it doesn’t actually say baskets** in 2nd Kings 4 – but you get the point!!!

In very single instance when it comes to Jesus Christ John is telling us:

Jesus is better in **Every. Single. Way!**

Jesus exemplifies the office of a Prophet **a thousand times greater** than the rest!

He is the better Moses!
 He is the better Elisha!
 And He is the better bread!

He is what the Old Testament stories had been pointing them toward!

But as we have learned far too many times in John's Gospel:

They still miss the point!

Because **they still did NOT perceive** the True nature of what this sign pointed toward!

More than a King

It pointed toward the fact that Jesus was a better prophet – but they wanted to use that to make Him **an earthly King!**

But friends Jesus is **NOT just** a better prophet but as we will **now see**:

Jesus is a better King X2

In fact Jesus is more than a King!

So again, let's read verse 14 to get the context:

*When the people saw the sign He had done [the multiplying of the bread and the fish], they said, "This truly is the Prophet [of Deuteronomy 18] who is to come into the world. Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take Him by **force to make Him king**, He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself...*

Political Pride

Now there's an **important element here** that John mentions as to why these men **tried to take Him by force** and make Him king!

John has **intentionally mentioned** that this was around the time of the Jewish Passover X2

And so **NOT only** was this a time for the Jews to come together to celebrate the liberation of their people – but this was a time in Israel's history for **Political & National Patriotism!!!**

This was like **the Fourth of July in America** – or like the Spanish Pamplona of the Bulls – this was the chasing of the cheese down the hill in England!

They were militant nationalist about this!

The excitement of these Jews would have been **absolutely tangible!!!**

And so at this time of the year **their senses** would have been heightened!!!

More than a King

They wanted a political ruler – and a political King to come and to liberate the people of God from the Roman Empire – and they see Jesus doing this sign and think to themselves:

We've found our King!!!

Just as Moses (who was also a political ruler and Prophet) was **able to liberate** the people of God!

And so apparently back in Jesus' day this notion of *the Prophet who is to come* **had been amalgamated** with the office of the Old Testament King!

And these people were trying to make Jesus fill both of these roles as the Geo-political Messiah of the Jews!

And yet Jesus is clear in **so many portions** of the Gospel that:

My kingdom is not of this world!

It's **NOT going to come** through some earthly, political, national, militant reign of an earthly Messiah – but through the consistent and faithful proclamation and announcement of the gospel!!!

It's going to come through the power of the gospel going out into all men's hearts and **through that message** bringing about a change in the culture!

So the way that the kingdom comes – the way the kingdom is established is **NOT through** the political power and force of the state!

But through the godly sacrificial love of the gospel!

The gospel that **goes forth into the world** and changes the hearts and minds of rebellious sinners by faith!

And so it is through the power of the Spirit – through the proclamation of the Gospel that:

Christ's Kingdom is established!

That's the first thing we see here!

A Secure King

Second – not only do we see this crowd wanting to make Jesus a political militant Ruler & King – but Jesus **would not allow Himself to become** this sort of a Military & Political Ruler & King!

So intimate – so secure – so protected was Jesus *in His heavenly Father's will* that He **would NOT allow Himself** to succumb to the pressure and burden of 20,000 men and women taking Him by force!

He would NOT allow the kingdom of men **to usurp** the kingdom of His heavenly Father!

See Jesus knows that if He would have become King **in the sense** that **they wanted Him to become** King – then He would have to stoop down to a human level **less helpful** than what **He had wanted** to do for them!

He was gonna have to **down-grade His glory** in order to accomplish their desires!

And friends lets just be clear that Jesus will **never diminish His glory** for something so futile as man's human desires!

And I think that's **just such** a wonderful reality and picture of our Lord because it means that we can always trust that He will do for us **what He knows is right** – **NOT what we think is right for Him to do!**

God **will NOT allow** any earthly power to succumb, to pass, or to overthrow the Kingdom of His beloved Son!

In fact, you may remember that **even when it came to** Satan tempting Jesus with the power and authority **that he had at that time** – that Jesus **would NOT yield** to the Devil's temptation in the wilderness!

The Redemption We Need

And so the point is this – that:

As the better Adam – the better Moses – as the better Elisha – and the better King:

Jesus is a trustworthy Saviour who will **always seek first** the Kingdom of God and His heavenly Father!

He will always put first His Father's will above His own!

And in so doing He will **purchase for us** the redemption in Christ **that He knows we need** – not the redemption that **we think** we need!

His will, **will always trump** our selfish desires!

Jesus is more than Enough

Third – NOT only is Jesus more than a prophet – not only Jesus more than a King – but John goes on to demonstrate that:

Jesus is more than enough! X2

Look back again with me at verse 10:

*So Jesus said, “Have the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place; so they sat down. The men numbered about five thousand. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, **as much as they wanted.** ¹² **And when they were full,** He told His disciples to collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted. So they collected them and **filled twelve baskets** with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten...*

More Leftover

So clearly here the miracle is **NOT** that they had found a boy who had **enough courage** to trust Jesus to share his 5 loaves and 2 fish with the people...

That’s **NOT** the miracle that John wants us to see!

The miracle is **NOT** that we tend to look at what we lack – but Jesus looks at what we do have – and therefore we just need enough faith for Jesus to act in love!

That’s **NOT** the miracle that John wants us to see!

No the miracle here is that **even after** they had **eaten their fill** – after they were satisfied to the brim:

They still had leftovers!!!

That they still had an abundance of food left over!

That’s the miracle that John wants us to see!

That’s the sign that He’s pointing us toward!

That in Jesus Christ you will have **all that you could want, need, and imagine – plus more!!!**

Because this is a divine invitation into the fullness of Eternal Life!

And because Jesus is the better prophet – because He is the better King – and because He is the bread of life – then you **had better believe** that He will always be enough for you – no matter what life throws at you!

Whether you become redundant in your job and you no longer have an income to feed your family;
Jesus is enough!

Whether your spouse decides to call a quits after 20 years of faithful covenant marriage; **Jesus is enough!**

Whether your body becomes riddled with cancerous cells – or a tumor forms in your spouses body;
Jesus is enough!

So that you can say with the Psalmist (in Psalm 73):

*Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is **nothing** on earth that I desire besides you.
 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God **is** the strength of my heart and my portion **forever**...*

Ezekiel 34

And so let me finish here today by pointing you toward **one final picture** that John is wanting to paint about Jesus in this passage...

Now this is a picture will be more **fully fleshed out** in the later chapters of John's Gospel when we get to chapters 9, 10, & 11 – but for now John is drawing the Old Testament picture of Jesus as the better Shepherd of Ezekiel 34 X2

And we know this **partly because in verse 10** John reminds us of this:

*Jesus said to His disciples have the people **sit down**...And when they sat down there was **plenty of grass** in that place...*

Now why is that significant...?

Because in Ezekiel 34 when God is rebuking the leaders of Israel for being **very bad shepherds** and hoarding the food for themselves!!!

They were not feeding God's people – and they were not providing for God's people!

And so when God finally speaks to the nation of Israel – this is what He says to them in verse 11:

*For this is what the Lord God says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. ¹² As a shepherd looks for His sheep on the day He is among His scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. **And I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land.** ¹⁴ I will tend them in **good pasture**, and their grazing place will be on **Israel's lofty mountains**. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will tend my flock **and let them lie down**. This is the declaration of the LORD God...*

John 6

Now we know that in Mark's Gospel – Mark speaks of this scene specifically in John 6 and do you remember what Mark says about Jesus when he saw the crowds coming toward Him that day?!?!?

It says that:

*He looked upon the crowds **like a sheep without a shepherd!***

And so we read all of that and **we come back** to John chapter 6 and what do we see Jesus do:

Have the people sit down in the green pastures on the mountains of Israel...

And so it's almost like John **under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit** is speaking to his readers here in John 6 and he's saying to us – that because Jesus is enough:

God is now finally going to take care of His people! X2

As the better Adam – as the better Moses – as the better Elisha – and as the bread from heaven:

He will finally take care of His covenant people by giving to them what is **more than enough!**

An abundance of joy and life overflowing through the **Person and Work** of Jesus Christ!

Conclusion

Friends I pray that you would really believe that!

that you would **not just know this** with your **heads** but you would actually believe this with your **hearts!**

That no matter what God brings in 2022 – no matter what happens to your job, to your marriage, your finance, your home, your kids, and your security that you would learn look into the most darkened, hopeless, broken situations– and say with John:

Jesus is enough!

As Calvin the great Reformed theologian would say at this point:

*This is the trail of true faith, when God commands men to walk, as it were, in darkness. And for this very purpose let us learn not to be wise in ourselves, but amidst great confusion still to **hope in God** who never disappoints His own people...*

God will never disappoint those who wait upon Him!

Let's pray.

John 6:1-15

Discussion Questions

[Read John 6:1-15].

Main Point: *Jesus is more than enough.*

Q1. What could be some ways people misinterpret this sign? – How do we make sure that we interpret the sign correctly?

Q2. This is the only miracle, other than the resurrection, that is recorded in all four Gospels [See **Matt 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15**]. – Why do you think this is? – Is there any significant difference between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the way that John records the event?

Q3. What are some narrational details that connect Jesus to Moses? (List all the clues). – What are some ways that John connects Jesus to Elisha? [See **2nd Kings 4:42-44**] – What is John trying to communicate through these connections?

Q5. [Read Ezekiel 34:1-15]. What are some ways John connects Ezekiel 34 to John chapter 6?

Q5. [Read verses 11-13]. Why is it important for John to say that there were leftovers? – What does this tell us about the nature of John's Gospel and being in a right relationship with Jesus?

Q6. [Read verses 14-15]. Why do these people try to make Jesus King? – What kind of a King were they looking for? – Why does Jesus refuse to be that kind of King? – What does this tell us about the nature of the Kingdom that Christ puts forth?

Q7. How does this passage help you to suffer well for Jesus? – How does this passage give hope to others who are suffering?

Q8. How would you explain this passage to a non-Christian?