

## The Search!

### John 6:22-27

Online Sermon:

[http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

## Not all Searching for Jesus is Holy

The Bible states we are to “seek the Lord while He may be found” for when we “come near to Him, He will come near to us” (Isaiah 55:6; James 4:8). He who has placed eternity in



our hearts so that we might thirst for the living God has sealed His own with His Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) so that there is no where we can go where He is not (Psalms 139). Augustine is right when he said, “Thou has formed us for

Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in three.”<sup>1</sup> Since there is no one righteous (Romans 3:10-18) and all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) is it possible to “reach hither thy finger and put it into the

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 463.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Seeking for Jesus.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 16 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1870), 476.

prints of the nails, touch the hem of His garment,<sup>2</sup> and be led by the still waters (Psalms 23) so that in His presence forgiveness and the renewing of one’s mind might be obtained (Romans 12:1-2)? I do not doubt that when we had our first love passionately within seeking God was easy for, He already found us,<sup>3</sup> but for most Christians we must admit that walking and talking with God like Adam and Eve did in the Garden is far from continuous and only rare! Though we watch and pray (Matthew 26:41), meditate on His holy word (Psalms 1:2), seek to obey His every command (1 John 5:3), feed the poor (Matthew 25:31-40), and love our enemies (Matthew 5:44), why is it that He who is indivisibly present everywhere seems to be so evasive? When prayers and groans from His own who are thirsty for living waters and mere crumbs from the Master’s table go unanswered what does one do?

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*In today’s sermon we are going to find out that not all seeking of the Lord is holy! Those who focus on what they can receive from the Lord’s hand instead of surrendering the life they cannot keep to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) will not find the Treasure of their hearts (Matthew 13:44-46) but only utter despair and hopelessness!*<sup>4</sup>

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Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (to please Him), for they will be filled (Matthew 5:6).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 463.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Seeking for Jesus.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 16 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1870), 476-477.

<sup>5</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 468.

## Feeding of the 5000 (6:1-15)

Before we can understand the right way to seek God as given in Matthew 6:22-27 we need to know the miracle that this passage refers to.<sup>6</sup> Because they “saw the signs Jesus had performed by healing the sick” a great crowd followed Jesus to a mountainous region on the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 6:1-2). “When Jesus looked up and saw them coming toward Him, He said to Philip, **where shall we buy bread for**



**these people to eat** (6:5)? Jesus asked this question to test Philip who promptly answered, “it would take more than a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite” (6:7)! Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother spoke up and

said, “here is a boy with five small barely loaves and two small fish” but how far will they go to feed so many (6:9)? And yet despite there being about 5,000 men, plus women and children, Jesus commanded the disciples to “**have the people sit down,**” gave thanks for the food (6:10) and distributed the small barely loaves and two small fish to those seated and they ate as much as they wanted (6:10-11). It is likely the boy in this story could never have imagined serving Christ so profoundly with such a small sacrifice! Jesus then commanded the disciples to “gather the pieces that are left over, let nothing be wasted” and twelve baskets of left-over food were gathered (6:12-13). When the “people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, surely

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<sup>6</sup> Chris Benfield, “[Seeking to Be Fed \(John 6:22–29\)](#),” in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 479.

this is a Prophet who has come into the world” (6:14). Jesus then withdrew to the mountain by Himself for He knew they wanted to make Him their king by force if necessary (6:15)! It is important to note that there is no mention of faith in Jesus as their Good Shepherd and Messiah in this story but merely of a crowd who having already seen Christ heal the sick and having fed their bellies was to be sought after as a great provider.

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*Being part of the agricultural era when the most one could hope for was to avoid starvation, the crowd most likely dreamed of how much material possessions they could have with Jesus as their king to provide them with unlimited, free food!*

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## The Search (6:22-24)

Later that evening the “disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum” (6:16) leaving Jesus behind.<sup>7</sup> When they are about three miles out in the lake a strong wind began to blow and the waters grew rough (6:18) and in seeing Jesus walking on the water and hearing His words “it is I, don’t be afraid” they invited Him into the boat and immediately the “boat reached the shore where they were heading” (6:20). The next day the crowd searched for Jesus to make Him their king but could not find Him.<sup>8</sup> Realizing there was but one boat, of which the disciples

<sup>7</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 315.

had used the night before, they were “perplexed as to what happened to Jesus.”<sup>9</sup> While they were confident that Jesus would not be separated from His disciples for very long<sup>10</sup> they thought maybe He “walked around the northern shore of the lake during the night”<sup>11</sup> and was now present with them at Capernaum. Once boats from Tiberias landed on the shore near



the place of the feeding of the 5,000 they got into the boats and went on a search for their want to be king (6:23-24).

Since Capernaum was a small town,<sup>12</sup> they easily found Christ teaching in the synagogue (6:59).<sup>13</sup> And while their motives would soon come into question one can't help but admire

their passion to seek and find the Lord. While we say that Christ is our portion (Psalms 16:5-11), and we want to serve in His kingdom with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength (Matthew 22:37) how can this be when so few of us take any time to be holy (1 Peter 1:16)? And while we don't need a boat to meet Jesus, whom of us practice the spiritual disciplines of solitude, prayer, and fasting that is often necessary to hear and be transformed by His mercy and grace?

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*Truthfully, we don't take time to be with Christ due to our busy schedules, or not wanting to obey what He might tell us to do, or more likely because we value other activities, relationships, and the accumulation of material possessions far more than having a close, personal relationship with our Lord, Savior, and King!*

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Whatever our reasons the results are the same, God's own are starving at the communion table<sup>14</sup> in our churches because they refuse to seek and accept the living waters and bread of life being offered!

## The Signs were Given (6:26a)

When they found Jesus on the other side of the lake at Capernaum, they entered the synagogue and asked Him, “Rabbi, when did you get here” (6:25)? Jesus told them, “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” (6:26). The healing of the sick and the feeding of the 5,000 were miracles that impressed the crowd but like the Pharisees they failed to look upon the One performing them and realize His identity! They did not see the miracles as “tokens of His divine power and mission”<sup>15</sup> or as proof that One greater than their

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<sup>9</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1999), 90.

<sup>10</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 166.

<sup>11</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 166.

<sup>12</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 316.

<sup>13</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Quote taken from A.W. Tozer

<sup>15</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 148.

“first redeemer, Moses”<sup>16</sup> had arrived who was Himself the manna from heaven (6:32-33)! 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” (6:35). While they sought to have their stomachs full, Christ offered them so much more, “living waters and bread to satisfy their very souls.”<sup>17</sup> While “faith in miracles was better than no faith at all,”<sup>18</sup> eternity



was placed within their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11) by their Creator not so that they might have their “hands out,” rubbing Him as a genie in the bottle, but so that they might treat Him as “God’s miraculous sign”<sup>19</sup> of His compassion that

none be lost (2 Peter 3:9). Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of His Son they would not only receive eternal life but also be raised up at the last day (6:40). If we want to get closer and follow in Jesus’ footsteps, then should not our prayers and our daily activities be focused on seeking first the kingdom of God and in faith trusting that our own desires will also be met? While the Scripture teaches that with prayer and petition, with thanksgiving we are to present our requests to God (Philippians 4:6-7) and ask for our “daily bread” (Matthew 6:11), such requests become sinful when we come to covet the things of this

<sup>16</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1999), 91.

<sup>17</sup> D. A. Carson, “The Gospels and Acts,” in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 1905.

<sup>18</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 317.

<sup>19</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 110.

world far more than the spiritual blessings we have in our Lord (Ephesians 1:3).

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*With God as our portion our prayers ought to be to have Him show, teach, and lead us by the still waters of His grace and mercy so that in some limited, albeit glorious way we might touch the untouchable!*

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## Seeking God not Self (6:26b)

Not only had they missed the signs, but Jesus also told them, “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” (6:26b). Even though the crowd spend significant energy tracking down Jesus and heard Him teach in the Synagogue does not mean they found Him!<sup>20</sup> They wanted to make Jesus their physical king but not the Lord of their lives! Their minds were on themselves,<sup>21</sup> specifically how they could be freed up from working so that they could buy the desires of their hearts, material possessions. By seeking the “product of the miracle instead of the person of the miracle,”<sup>22</sup> they proved that their search must continue<sup>23</sup> for without faith in and love for their Creator above all other things

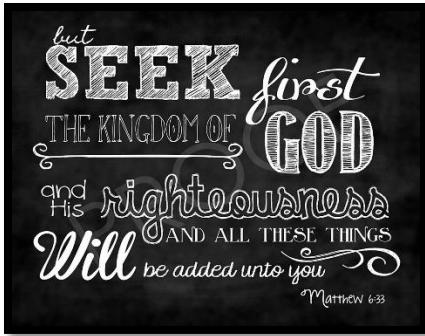
<sup>20</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 464–465.

<sup>22</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (2000–2014)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 109.

they remained on the broad path (Matthew 7:13) for the Lord is only near to all who call upon His name (Psalms 145:18) as the way, truth, and life (John 14:6)! Are we like the crowd when we seek Jesus? “Do we come with our minds filled, not so much



with Jesus and His all-surpassing worth, but with our needs or with what you imagine them to be?”<sup>24</sup>

Do we pray, read the Bible, feed the widows and the poor merely in hopes of purchasing favour from our Lord so that we might receive by His hand an easy and

prosperous life or do we follow these commands out of love and a desire to please Him so that we might get a glimpse of His glory?

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*“One of the major steps to achieving good spiritual health is getting our minds off ourselves and unto the Lord.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus is not saying that it is a sin to ask for our daily bread but merely that we ought to have faith that He will provide for our basic needs while we are faithfully seeking to serve Him in His kingdom.*

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When you come before His throne of grace are you merely asking for good health, wealth, a happy family, and a great retirement package that are all here today and gone Tomorrow,

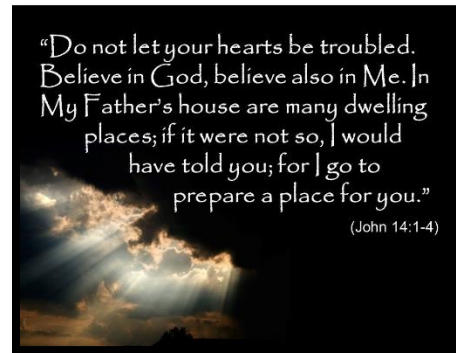
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<sup>24</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 465.

or are you on your hands and knees passionately asking to have a vibrant, healthy relationship with He who knit you in your mothers’ womb (Psalms 139)? To put aside our goals and dreams and seek first the kingdom of God is the key to attaining the full measure of Christ in your life!

## Seeking Food that Never Spoils (6:27)

Even with the curse of God ringing in our ears one can joyfully stand upon the promise that while the dust will return to hence it came our spirit will return to God who breathed life into us (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Genesis 2:7). One of the reasons that God



has placed eternity in our hearts is to remind us that the world is not our home and one day Christ will finish preparing a place for us with the Father, return and take us to be with Him in heaven forever (John 14:1-4)! Joyfully, we will not

only live beyond the grave but while on this earth we can let our light shine before others so that our faithful living might point to the Father (Matthew 5:16) and in doing so receive many crowns of righteousness that will not fade or spoil. Is not one day in His courts (Psalms 84:10) more precious than any amount of money, fame, or power that this world has to offer? Since “where our

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<sup>25</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 465.

treasure is, there our hearts will be also” (Matthew 6:21),<sup>26</sup> should not our heart’s desire be to use the spiritual gifts God has given us to perform whatever, divine tasks He has assigned us? We have spent enough time living as the pagans (1 Peter 4:3), chasing after trinkets and toys that merely promise happiness but only provide a prison of coveting. What would our lives look like if the gifts we asked from God were focused not on self but on attaining the full measure of Christ and seeking first His kingdom?<sup>27</sup> What if we could take in the stranger, feed the hungry or cloth the needy of this world as though we are doing it unto Christ (Matthew 25:31-46), would not helping even one of them be worth more than all the riches of this world? We all have but one life to live and the way we chose to run the race will affect us for an eternity.

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*Augustine was right, the soul remains  
wrestles until it finds its solace in the One  
who gave us life. So, let us seek Him with  
passion not to receive from His hand but to  
serve Him in any manner He asks and upon  
the day we meet Him at our prepared home  
with the Father we will hear the words, good  
and faithful servant!*

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<sup>26</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(2000–2014\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Chris Benfield, [“Seeking to Be Fed \(John 6:22–29\).”](#) in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 481.