

John 6:1-21

by Damian Kyle

The sermon highlights the importance of faith in God's Word and trusting in His provision, rather than relying on human resources and analysis.

Duration: 36:24

Scripture: John 6:2-69

Topics: "John"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of fully committing oneself to God's calling. He uses the story of Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee to illustrate how God will go to great lengths to accomplish His purposes. The pastor encourages those who may be facing difficult circumstances and feeling hopeless to find hope in this passage. He also highlights the tendency to underestimate our own resources when God calls us to do something beyond our abilities, but reminds listeners that God can multiply what we have and use it for His glory.

Transcript

Some echoes in this room and some sound things for a couple of weeks and maybe a little longer, so we're doing the best we can with it and let's try not to have it be a distraction to you as we're working hard for that to be just right. John's Gospel, Chapter 6. And after these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Sea of Galilee is, as you might, you know, acknowledge from the name of the Sea of Galilee.

It is in the Galilean region of Israel, the northern region of Israel, also known as the Sea of Tiberias, because the major city that sits on the Sea of Galilee is the City of Tiberias. And in this beginning of Chapter 6, the Lord kind of lays the context for a miracle number four that Jesus does of eight miracles in the Gospel, according to John, that are there by the Holy Spirit in order that any person might come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah by virtue of these miracles. And so it was this location and a great multitude, verse 2, followed him because they saw his signs which he performed on those who were diseased.

Now, verse 2 is a very important verse. You have a group of people that before the chapter is over, Jesus is going to rebuke with maybe maybe the strongest rebuke toward those who claim to be his disciples in the entirety of the Gospels. And they're going to come to him continually asking him to do miracles of their choosing as an evidence that he is the Messiah and worthy of trusting in and believing in for salvation.

But here John wants us to know even before there is the miracle of the five loaves and the two fishes, the feeding of the five thousand, even before that, that crowd is following Jesus because of the multitude of miracles that they've seen him doing. Now miracles, and John seems to bring this up continually through his Gospel, is never the highest. Miracles are never the greatest basis for our faith as we're going to see further developed in this chapter.

The greatest basis for our faith is to trust in the Word of God because that doesn't change. To base my faith upon Jesus Christ on the basis of whether he does some miracle of my choosing, we're all for miracles that God chooses to do, but that I'm going to believe in him or trust in him on any given day or on any given week based upon whether he does what it is that I want him to do on that week, that is no foundation for faith. There will be no Christian life of any strength or stability that will come out of that.

And so there are a group of people that have seen these signs, and Jesus went up on the mountain and there he sat with his disciples. Now there is this great multitude, and it is a great multitude that's following him. We're going to see in a moment of 5,000 men, not counting women and children.

And we know from the other Gospels that Jesus takes his disciples up on the mountains there around the Sea of Galilee, and the Sea of Galilee is ringed by mountains, not mountains of, you know, rocky mountain caliber. We'd call them more, you know, some high hills. But the whole area is ringed by these mountains.

And Jesus is, as we know from the other Gospels, taking the disciples aside to find some time to get alone with them, to give them a break from the ministry that they've been performing and to further minister to them. And so they go up in this mountain area in order to be with the disciples. He sits with them.

And then in verse 4, we're told, now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Now verse 4 is critical to the chapter. I've told you all of the things that are critical.

You're going to have to trust me that they're critical. Because by the time we get to the end of this chapter, whether tonight or next week, Jesus is going to be talking to them about eating his flesh and drinking his blood and these kinds of things. And they say, this is a hard thing to hear, you know.

And Jesus speaks to them of being offended. But we have to realize that these are Jews in the northern region of Galilee at the time of the Passover feast. In other words, their mind is filled with images of the Passover.

Eating the Passover lamb, eating the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, which was a part of that sacrifice. Of the blood of the lamb being shed. And so in their minds, because of the closeness of their feasts, their minds are filled with the image of a lamb being sacrificed, of blood being shed, of the eating of that sacrifice, and these images.

And he comes in and he's not speaking to a bunch of Gentiles like you and I, for the most part, Gentiles in this room. He's speaking to people who are deeply steeped in the Jewish religion. And he assumes a base of knowledge in their lives when he speaks to them.

And then Jesus lifted up his eyes and seeing a great multitude coming toward him, he said to Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? Now this miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle that's recorded on all four of the gospels, which must mean that this is a miracle that we need to be reminded of continually. Now, each one of the writers of the gospels, they look at the miracle from a different vantage point. John's vantage point is a very interesting one, because when John looks at the

miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, he's looking at it from the realization that he is going to, in a very short order, be talking about Jesus in terms of eating his flesh and drinking his blood and these kinds of imagery.

And that it sets a context now for introducing Jesus as the lamb or as the bread of life. And so they come this multitude and Jesus turns to Philip and he said, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? Now here's his motivation behind the question. It's not like Jesus is drawing a big blank at the moment and he's turning to man.

Wouldn't it be terrible if you know you're praying to the Lord and all, and then he said, well, gee, what would you do? What would you think? You think it's worse than I thought. But this, he said, verse six to test Philip for he himself knew what he would do. Now we know from chapter one of the gospel, according to John, that Philip was Beth from Bethsaida, which was a city there in that Galilee region, right near the sea of Galilee.

So this is Philip's old stomping grounds. In other words, if anyone among the 12 knew where the bakeries were, then Philip would have known where the bakeries were there. I mean, it was, he was the best hope among the 12 for finding someone who could solve this need to feed this hungry crowd in the natural, in our own wisdom, in our own strength, in our own resources.

And so he asks them the question, but not that he needed wisdom, but that he wanted to test Philip. Of course, the Lord never tests us to fail, but what he's going to do with Philip here is he's going to let Philip come up with the best solution that he can come up with. And then God's going to top it.

You ever done that in your life? What would you do? Well, I would do this. And I mean, if I, if I did this, then I'd be perfectly happy. And then we let the Lord do what it is that he's going to do.

And he tops it by a hundred miles. You have to preface the prayer with Lord. This is what I would do.

But if you've got something better in mind, you go for it. I mean, in terms of, and so it's a test, the ongoing education of the disciples, the strengthening and the purifying of their faith. And I think that this is very interesting because he tests Philip by putting him in the middle of a situation that is way beyond his resources.

Have you ever been there? If you haven't, then you've been a Christian for less than 48 hours, probably all been there. We think it's the end of the world, you know, but it's very common for him to put us in a place where we are way beyond our resources. And why does he put us there? Why does he put Philip in that place there? So that he might learn what Philip will do in such a situation? No, he knows what Philip will do.

So that Philip might realize what his first tendency is in such a situation. And Philip's, and when he puts Philip in this situation, it's to reveal what Philip really trusts in when push comes to shove. Not how many verses he knows or all of these kinds of things, but when you really get in that place where it's an impossible situation and he throws it on your lap, and then we find out what we really believe in as the solution to the problem.

And sometimes the revelation isn't that flattering. It isn't going to be with Philip and Andrew here. Now, Philip, of course, none of us know anything of these tendencies, but Philip answered Jesus in verse seven and said, 200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may have a little.

And this is astonishing. It may be that Judas, who is the treasurer at this point, it may be that Philip went over and find out how much is in the treasury. You got 200 denarii in the treasury.

So what does Philip do? He's a bean counter. He's an accountant. God bless you if you're an accountant.

But the first thing that he does, I mean, there's a lot of work in verse seven. He has already counted the crowd. He's counted the resources.

He knows how much bread the money can buy. And he realizes given the size of the crowd, how much each person would be able to get as a result of the resources that he has. It's his mind.

It works like an accountant here. And he begins to analyze the whole thing. And that's the personal tendency of Philip here.

He analyzes everything, but the power of God. Now, remember, he has been a witness to all of these miracles that the Lord has already done. He's a kind of guy who loves to calculate, but he forgets to put the Lord into his calculations.

Now, I know this is completely foreign to all of us, but the rational response of Philip in all of this would have been. As Jesus comes with a question, where will we buy bread that we may, that these may eat after all of the miracles that he's seen, it'd be like do a miracle. You've done miracles all over the place.

What am I sweating? Denarii and loaves of bread and what bakeries are open this time of the day and whether they've got any of the banana dreams left there at the 7-Eleven to serve for dessert or any of these kinds of things. Sorry if you don't know what they are, one for dessert every year in high school, the cafeteria. It'll be the one thing that some of you will remember about the Bible study tonight.

I know what I'm working with here. But that would have been the thing to just look and say, why, what are we even talking about? You're a miracle worker. Whatever you do it, you're God.

Yet he doesn't do that. God's got this long record of faithfulness in their lives already here. Jesus has that in their lives and yet they forget.

If you're in that place tonight and here you are in an impossible situation. God's got you there and you're counting your beans. You're counting the stocks.

Took a serious hit. They estimated the value of the stock, the paper that was lost on that first day that the stock market opened. I forget, it was almost a trillion dollars in worth.

More money than it cost us to fight the entirety of World War II. That's how much money went out of people's portfolios or out of their pockets, out of their retirement. And so here we can be in some kind of a difficult situation.

We begin to think that, okay, this has got to happen and all this kind of stuff. And we begin, and we forget this incredible track record of God's faithfulness in our lives. And that when he needs to do a miracle to accomplish his will and to make sure that every one of his promises is yea and amen toward us, he's going to do that.

And so here is Philip with a great forgettery that we all know something about. The children of Israel, of course, in the Old Testament, every time they ran into a new pinch, after all those things God had done to

deliver them out of Egypt, every time they got in a pinch, they went to Moses and said, we're going to die out here. You brought us out here to die.

After all that God had done with all the promises that he had given to them. Now, Philip has done all of his calculations. And then in verse eight, one of Jesus' other disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, Andrew said to Jesus, there's a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many? Now, somehow Andrew, and Andrew's a little bit different than a Philip.

Andrew somehow begins, as he hears this challenge that's been put to Philip, he begins to kind of work the crowd to see what kind of resources are out there. And so he finds a little kid out there that's got five loaves, little barley loaves and two fish. And as Jesus has posed the question, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? Andrew comes along and in essence says, well, we really don't need to buy anything.

We've got a kid here with five loaves and two fish. And then I think it dawns on him how stupid it sounds. And he says, but what are they among so many? And that's the second tendency that we feel when God calls us to do something that's beyond our resources.

And we count up our resources and see how feeble they are in the face of what he's called us to do. One of the great tendencies is then to look and to begin to feel stupid that I ever thought about God using me in this way or whatever. I mean, how could I have even thought in those terms at all? And, you know, you just kind of kick the dust and say, well, you know, well, there's a kid over here with five loaves and two fishes.

And I wonder that is so amongst so many, you know, forget I said it. Then Jesus said, D minus D minus. Looks like a job for God again.

And Jesus said, make the people sit down. And there was much grass in the place again, late spring, the time of the Passover. And so the men sat down and number about 5,000.

And Jesus took the loaves. And when he had given thanks, he distributed them to the disciples. And so he gives thanks models saying of grace, of grace, thanking the father for our meals.

I love it when I'm in a restaurant. And I see people bow their heads and thank the Lord for the meal that he's provided. You know, a meal is doubly and triply and quadruply, if there are such words, when it is enjoyed.

When it is enjoyed with the knowledge that it has come from him. I know that sometimes people are made fun of in it. And when somebody asked you to pray for a meal and you pray for every missionary known to man.

And the meal's got to be put back in the oven to, you know, that you don't want to go there as a badge of spirituality, get, you know, get to the point, but, but pray for the meal, you know. And you really think about the marvel of God's creation. I mean, you think about what you ate for dinner for lunch tonight.

And I mean, where it came out of God's creation and all of the places that it went in order to have it sit before you on that table. All that God went through in providing the means for which it could grow and all in order that we might enjoy it. The importance of prayer.

I've seen a lot more people pray these days since the bombings, so to speak, with the airplanes and all. I was listening to the Fresno State game for a few minutes yesterday, just to see how they were doing and all. And I mean, it's a Valley team.

It's okay. It was sanctified. And the sports casters, they, they called the game.

All the way through, at least all of the halftime show that I heard. And most of the third quarter without giving a score, that's criminal. But that, that's just a peeve of mine.

No, it wasn't the Fresno State game. It was a Notre Dame game and television. And the fellow had a seizure on the sidelines.

And the teams dropped down to their knees to pray. And usually a camera is as quick as can be to move from that scene. And they showed the scene and the announcer who usually they don't acknowledge that kind of thing.

They acknowledged it with a respect. The people were praying for this need. Someone told me that attended the second service that they had watched some of the pregame shows for the NFL games today.

And I know that he was listening. He was looking probably for religious programming on television and not really interested in football. But he happened to come upon the pregame show where Terry Bradshaw was on.

Maybe you saw it. Quick show of hands. But as he related the story to me that toward the end of the thing, Terry Bradshaw pulled his Bible out on national television and called on Christians to read Psalm 10.

And it's beautiful to see God's people acknowledging him. And so Jesus took the loaves and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to the disciples. The disciples were never asked to provide the multiplication of the bread.

They were just asked to distribute it. That's what God calls us to do. He never calls us to produce something just to distribute what he's already provided.

And he distributed them to the disciples and the disciples to those sitting down and likewise of the fish as much as they wanted. This is called Thanksgiving Day. Now, when I was growing up as a kid, the end of the month meant eat anything left in the cupboards.

And it's amazing the concoctions you can come up with. Thanksgiving was always a great day because that was the day you could stuff yourself. And a kid, you know, a kid can eat a lot and then and then not feel, you know, stuff, but you just would get stuffed on that.

And that's kind of what happened to them here. They ate as much as they wanted. And remember, as we mentioned this morning, that was in a day where for you to go to bed at night full, your belly full meant that you were a prosperous kind of person.

And so here is this crowd, 5000 men plus women, plus children, and they are stuffed as much as they wanted to eat. And so verse 12, when they were filled, literally gluttoned, he said to his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost. And as we've seen in the other gospels, God's supernatural provision in our lives is not an excuse to waste any of it.

When he provides over and above what we need. It's still never to be wasted. And therefore, they gathered them up and they filled 12 baskets with the fragments of the barley loaves, the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.

Now, the word baskets in verse 13 is an interesting one because it's the same word in the original language that is used for the basket that the apostle Paul was placed in in Damascus and lowered over the wall. We're talking about big baskets. And so here they are, these 12 baskets with the fragments of the miracle left over.

And then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, this is truly the prophet who has come into the world. And therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to the mountain by himself alone. And so they have come to the conclusion that this is the prophet, that this is the Messiah who was supposed to come.

They, you know, esteem that he ought to be the king and they want to make him a king by force. And one of the interesting things is Jesus at this point is at the pinnacle of his popularity. In other words, if Jesus came into the world to merely be an earthly king, could have accomplished it right here, but he didn't come into the world just to be a king and certainly not on the terms that they were thinking of.

And so as they come and they want to by force make him a king, he departs from them to the mountain by himself alone to get alone. And when evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark and Jesus had not come to them.

Now we know from the other gospels that Jesus told them to get into the boat and to go to the other side. And so they get into this boat and they begin to make their way across the Sea of Galilee toward Capernaum under his instructions. And then Jesus goes up onto the mountain to continue his prayer.

Time to be alone with the father. So they're in this boat and thus soon in the middle of this storm as a result of obeying the Lord. Now it's interesting in verse 15 that here is this crowd that at one moment, at this moment in time, they're ready to make him the king of Israel.

In less than 24 hours, they're going to turn on their heel and walk away from him. The fickleness of a crowd when he does not live up to their expectations but lives up to the father's expectations concerning what the Messiah ought to be. And so the disciples head out onto the sea heading over to Capernaum.

It's now dark. Jesus isn't with them. In verse 18, then the sea arose because of a great wind that was blowing.

So a tremendous storm comes on the Sea of Galilee. And so when they had rowed about three or four miles and were told from the other gospels that Jesus comes out to them on the Sea of Galilee during the fourth watch of the night between three in the morning and six in the morning, they were probably launched out onto the Sea of Galilee to go to Capernaum early in the evening. So they have probably been rowing.

And many of these men are skilled fishermen. They've been rowing for upwards of eight hours. And all the distance that they've made is three or four miles.

And they're in real danger out in the middle of this storm and out in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. And as they're in that condition, then they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat and they

were afraid. That would be weird.

Here the waves up and down and up and down. The wave goes up and you can see him or you can't see him. The wave goes down and you can see him.

And I mean, this, you know, they'd never seen anybody walk on water before. And so here he is making his way. They don't recognize that it's him.

And Jesus said to them, it's I do not be afraid. He comforts them in the middle of that storm with the consciousness of his presence. To their credit, God has called them to go from one place to the other, even in the midst of the storm.

And no matter how bad the storm got, they continue to obey him. No matter how hopeless it seemed to them at that moment in time that they could ever as tired as they were now, make it the rest of the way to Capernaum. But when Jesus came to them, he found them doing what he had called them to do.

And when he gets on that boat and it is another miracle within a miracle, they find themselves instantly at Capernaum. And you may be here tonight and God has called you to do something. And in obeying what he has called you to do, to obey him in some situation, you find yourself in the middle of a storm.

And you are only halfway to where you are intending to go. And you know that in and of yourself, you don't have what it's going to take to get to where it is that God has called you to get. And it's so easy at that moment in time to think that I'm going to fail here.

I am not going to make it. It is so far away. God's promise is going to be proven false to me.

He's given me a command that he has not coupled with it, the power to obey the command. But what they did not know and could not know, is that if it is necessary for him to walk on the Sea of Galilee, to get there in order to cause what he has called a person to do, or a group of persons to do, to be done, then that's what he'll do. My responsibility is to give myself completely to what God has called me to do.

And if you're here tonight and you say, Pastor, my margins are that thin right now. I'm in the fourth watch of the night, and I am three or four miles into an eight-mile journey. And it's one of the worst storms I've ever been in my life, and I'm about to give up hope.

This passage is intended to infuse hope into your life. You stay faithful. God knows what your thresholds are.

It's a good coach, in any form of athletics, that pushes the athlete beyond the limitations that they've set upon themselves. One of the great regrets in my very mediocre athletic career, was that I did not have more coaches who pushed me beyond what I thought were my limitations. In fact, I only had one.

And half the other guys on the team hated him so much because he did push us. They whined and they minimized what he might have otherwise done with that team. We set these very severe limitations upon what we think can be done and what God can do through us, and God is always going to push us past that.

The old saying, God must always push us beyond our own resources to discover his. And that's an easy thing to say, isn't it? Yes, God must always... And then it's another thing to be pushed beyond my resources to discover his, and he'll always be faithful to do it. And so to stay faithful in what God has called

us to do and to be.

And even if you look at it and say, if the last next four miles are like the last four miles, there's no way that I'm going to make it. You don't know when Jesus comes into the situation. And takes you the rest of the way.

And he comforts these disciples with his presence. They were in the middle of a storm, in the middle of his will, in that storm. But they were never out of his sight.

They were never out of his prayers. And so he said to them, it is I do not be afraid. And then they willingly, and the word is eagerly, and received him into the boat.

I tell you, that's what I do too. Excitedly get into the boat. They received him into the boat.

And immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. The place that Jesus had commanded them to go to.

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