

JOHN 6:1-15

JESUS IS THE KING WHO MEETS YOUR NEEDS.

In the name + of Jesus.

They wanted Jesus to be king. They had seen his miracles, which is why they had followed him into the middle of nowhere. When he saw the crowds who had come, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Then he fed the multitudes – well over 5,000! – with only five small barley loaves and two small fish. **“How far will they go among so many?” (John 6:9)** Andrew had asked. Jesus had the answer. **Jesus ... distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. (John 6:11)** I think we can all understand why they wanted Jesus to be king.

But **Jesus, knowing that they intended come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (John 6:15)** The King of Israel did not want to be king. The King of the Universe refused their honor. It was not because Jesus was unworthy of the honor. It was because they did not honor Jesus rightly. So Jesus sent the crowds away. He told the disciples to get in the boat and go on back to Capernaum. He went up to the mountain to pray.

A crowd of thousands had witnessed an amazing miracle, and yet they still missed the lesson. Who is this that supplies daily bread? Who is this that takes up our infirmities and heals our diseases? Their answer was partly true: **“Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” (John 6:14)** Yes, just as the Lord provided bread in the wilderness in the days of Moses, so Jesus just provided bread in the wilderness to the thousands. Yes, the Prophet!

But if Jesus is the Prophet, then why crave bread? If Jesus is the Prophet, then why settle for having sicknesses cured? What is the role of a prophet? A prophet proclaims the word of the Lord. A prophet reveals God’s mercy. A prophet declares the wonders of God which mean forgiveness and salvation. And the 5,000 replied, “Blah, blah, blah. When are we going to eat?” And so, Jesus would not be their king.

Feel free to criticize the 5,000 all you want. They were foolish. Later in John 6, Jesus told the crowd what his miracle shows, what it means that he is the Savior, and why it mattered for them. When Jesus taught that, they wanted no part of him. They wanted a King who would keep them fat and happy right now. The world was their home. They did not want to be bothered with heavenly things. When Jesus told them that heavenly things were all he was about, they left him.

Feel free to criticize the 5,000 all you want; but make sure that you see yourself in their number. Make sure you feel the sting of your own criticism. We do not look at Jesus much differently. He just does not seem to fit into our daily lives. We receive our bills in the mail. We try to figure out how the amount in the checkbook is going to match the amount on the billing statements. We continue to spend and shop and purchase because we have a hearty appetite. We try to find joy and contentment with our worldly goods, but our appetite is never satisfied. Our goods do not bring joy. We are not content. The checkbook is never put away. We are always hungry for more. It’s no wonder people think that sermons about Jesus are not relevant. Jesus has no interest in

being the king who merely fills bellies. If we try to make him such a king, he will withdraw and send us away. And we will deem him irrelevant.

This is what the Lord says: **“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:2)** What has your appetite gained you? When has your hunger finally been satisfied? Why do you still go on and on, chasing after worldly things? They have never helped anybody. They have never loved anybody. They have never saved anybody. And yet, we crave them – dying people chasing after dead things. Repent.

“Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world,” (John 6:14) the crowds said. They were right. Jesus is the Prophet. A prophet greater than Moses has come. Through Moses, God promised and provided bread from heaven that would sustain the people for a day. But Jesus is the Bread from heaven which a man may eat so that he will not die. Jesus is the living Bread which a man may eat and be satisfied. So, blessed are you who hunger and thirst for righteousness; for you will be filled. Jesus is the King who meets your needs.

Jesus has come for all people. He did not come to merely feed the 5,000. He came to pay the sins of all. This is the kind of King Jesus is – a King who pardons those who have sinned against him. Jesus is the King who saves his people and brings them into his eternal, glorious kingdom. Ironically, when Jesus served as such a King, the people rejected him. **“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. (John 19:14,15)**

Remember what Jesus came for. See, your king comes to you. See, your king comes for you. See, your king comes to save you. Because Jesus craves your salvation, he suffers and dies for your sinful cravings. Because Jesus hungers and thirsts for your righteousness, he drinks the cup of God’s wrath. **“Shall I crucify your King?”** Pilate asks. The Father answers, *“Yes, so that sins of the people will be paid for. Yes, so that they will be purified in his blood. Yes, so that they will dwell in my heavenly kingdom.”* Jesus satisfies his Father’s commands. He delivers you from your enemies. He fulfills all that is necessary for your salvation. Jesus is the King who meets your needs.

And Jesus’ gifts never run out. **Jesus ... took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. (John 6:11)** He continued to multiply it so that all were fed. So that all were filled. Indeed, the leftovers were greater than the loaves Jesus began with. If this is how Jesus is with that which feeds bellies, how much more generous he is with that which saves souls! He continues to multiply his mercies upon you. Because you continue to sin, you will continue to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Because your sins do not go away, you will always crave forgiveness. Therefore, Jesus is always present to satisfy your cravings. He presents a banquet that never runs out. The Bread of Life continues to be multiplied week after week, year after year. Jesus does not skimp on forgiveness. He does not send you away hungry. He is the King who meets your needs.

Jesus is not a King who just hands out goodies to you. Oh, he promises that you will have what you need to live. He has taught you to pray for your daily bread, and his prayer never falls on deaf ears. Thank God for your daily bread; but recognize that the manna and the quail will not save you. Worldly goods will never satisfy you. And all who feed their bellies eventually die anyway.

But here is the living bread which a man may eat and never die. Jesus Christ gives you what you need. He consumes God's wrath. He satisfies God's commands. He fills those who hunger and thirst for salvation. He does not hand out his mercy in morsels. He multiplies it. He makes sure you are full. Here is abundant – in fact endless! – grace for all your needs.

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.