

John Chapter 6 is a vast passage of Scripture that includes 2 large scale miracles and a complex conversation about the nature of bread and belief.

As you begin your time together, read through the entire chapter. As you read, imagine you are flying high above the chapter so that you can get a good perspective on the big picture.

Discussion Starters:

- Tania spoke about her thoughts and emotions as she read through this chapter. What kinds of thoughts and emotions do you notice as you read?
- Respond to this expression: “We read the Scripture – the Scripture reads us.”
- Talk about miracle stories. How do you respond to these? How do they challenge your sense of expectation of who God is and how he acts in the world? Are you able to identify any ways in which you might place limits on what God can do.

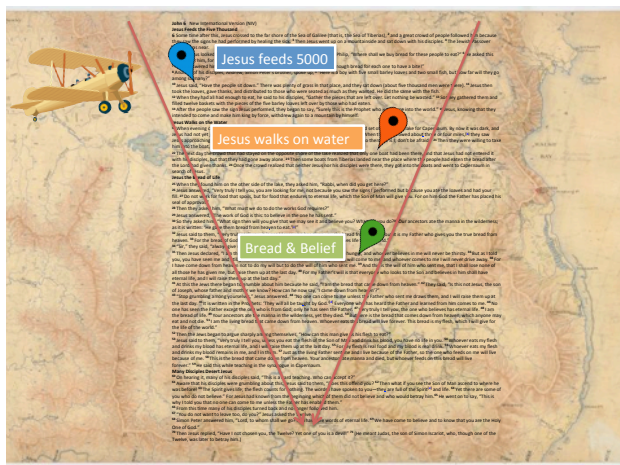


1. Verse 4 “The Jewish Passover was near ...” This is the view from 30,000ft. Rich background to what is happening in this chapter.
2. Jewish Passover annual remembrance celebration of the time when God rescued the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. It is a foundational story for all Jewish people; a story that shaped their lives and was deep in their psyche. It is a dynamic, living story that every Jewish person is able to relate to as a current reality not just a historical fact.

3. Setting within the Passover season – Jewish readers of John’s time would have immediately understood that the way that John records this story is so that they would believe that Jesus was the Messiah because in this chapter and in this story in particular, they would recognize Jesus acting like a prophet, a priest and a king. Jewish people knew that the Messiah would be the fulfillment of those 3 roles: prophet, priest and king.
4. Prophet speaks to the people on behalf of God. Priest speaks to God on behalf of the people. King takes care of his people. For the Jewish people who were once again in slavery to the Romans, a King who would liberate them from oppression is what they were looking for.

Discussion Question

The concept of Prophet, Priest and King is foreign to our culture. Talk about how we might relate to Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King in our time.



With that background in mind, spend some time noticing as many links back into the Old Testament. Some are listed here for you ...

Feeding of the 5000 (verses 5-15)

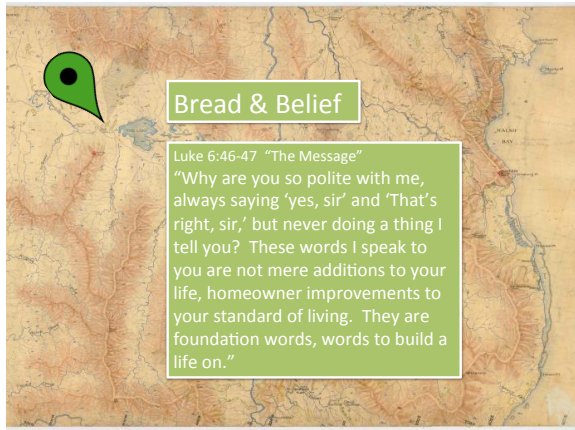
- Only miracle recorded in all 4 Gospels.
- Significance of bread & fish - Numbers 11 & 2 Kings 4:42-44.

Jesus walks on water (verses 16-21)

- Here we see the Disciples again at the end of their own resources. They would have been familiar with storms on the sea, but we get the sense here that despite some of them being experienced fishermen, this storm was frightening.
 - a. Jesus walks across the water to them – echoes of God’s power to part the red sea (look back at Exodus 14 & Joshua 3-5
 - b. Jesus identifies himself “I am” ... God identifies himself personally to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob as “I am”.

Conversations about Bread and Belief (verses 25-71)

- Direct parallels to the Exodus story where we see God providing bread (miraculous provision of food every day for 40 years - manna) during the years of their wanderings in the desert.
- The people grumbling and questioning ... again lots of reminders about the children of Israel and their constant grumbling and doubting of God. As a Jewish reader in John's time you would immediately think "I've seen this before ... there's nothing new under the sun ... it doesn't matter how sophisticated people become, basic human nature doesn't change over time."



In the conversation about Bread and Belief, we notice that Jesus poses questions and receives 2 responses.

- Jesus challenges the people about why they are following him (because they want another free meal and not because they want to believe in Him as the Messiah of God). He gets a "Works" response (verse 28). "What do we have to do to get what we want from God?" We might also call this a religious response (nicodemus – what do I have to do to get eternal life?). Fail to see that God gives freely and on his own terms.
- The people want the benefits of God on their terms. They want the benefits and blessings of God but they do not want the Giver of the blessings and benefits. (Verse 34 ... "Sir ... always give us this bread"). Religion based on exchange economy ... if I do this, then God will do that.

Luke 6:46-49

The Message (MSG)

46-47 "Why are you so polite with me, always saying 'Yes, sir,' and 'That's right, sir,' but never doing a thing I tell you? These words I speak to you are not mere additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundation words, words to build a life on.

- Whole conversation about bread and belief is quite simple on one level. You don't take bread and stick it on the outside of your body in order to satisfy your internal stomach needs. You have to eat the bread and from the inside of your body the outside of the body reflects health. You can't take Jesus and tack him onto the outside of your body in order to really live. We all know that home improvements are subject to seasons and fads and stuff wears out and constantly needs to be

replaced. Belief in Christ is an inside/out deal. We're talking permanent transformation from the inside out.

- Bottom line – belief requires total abandonment. Belief is the act of putting your sense of trust and confidence into something or someone else. True or total belief requires a letting go of control.

Discussion Question:

In a growing relationship with Christ, we recognize that the Spirit will raise some things in our lives from time to time that he asks us to surrender. This is the work of transformation. As you reflect on the crowds of people taking Jesus for granted, does this raise anything for you? Are there aspects of your life where you might be taking Jesus for granted?



John 6:68 is the destination point of the chapter. Here we see Peter express his belief in Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

- Read Psalm 73:25, John 15:4 (The Message) & Ephesians 3:20.
- How does Peter's confession enable you to deepen your belief in Jesus?
- Is your sense of who Jesus is and his capacity to act in the world larger as a result of reflecting on John 6?
- What are the things in your heart that are beyond your own resources? Can you bring them to Jesus and not limit his capacity to act?

