

Hungry No More
John 6:1-35
January 4th, 2026

1. The crowds were _____ by a miracle. (6:1-15)
2. The disciples were _____ by a miracle. (6:16-21)
3. The greater point of the miracles is that Jesus alone _____ and gives _____. (6:22-35)

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 6:1-35

1. In what way was Jesus testing Philip in vv. 5-6? What kind of a test was it? What should Philip have already learned about Jesus that should have led to a different response?
2. Why would Jesus not let them make Him a King by force in v. 15? What did they still misunderstand about Him?
3. Why were the disciples frightened in v. 19? How can grappling with the true nature and identity of Jesus blow our minds today as well?
4. The crowds followed Jesus to get more food (v. 26). Can you think of similar motivations today that lead people to “follow” Jesus but fall short of the right motives?
5. How is Jesus similar but superior to Moses in vv. 30-35?
6. What is it about physical hunger and bread that serves as a good analogy for spiritual hunger and Jesus as the bread of life?

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Big idea: Jesus is the bread of life that satisfies spiritual hunger for those who believe.

Intro:

When have you felt really hungry?

If you're like most of us this past month, you can't really remember what it's like to be hungry after an unending diet of Christmas goodies.

But you know the growling, aching pain. You may have experienced the weakness that comes along with hunger. Hopefully it was from a lack of planning or intentional dieting, not an empty cupboard, but you may have experienced that as well.

What is your body telling you with those pains?

Telling me that I need to eat! And I need to eat something substantial.

Everybody understands hunger pains and the need for food. Jesus uses this simple analogy to communicate something about Him and our real needs.

Similar to the woman at the well in John 4 when he said, "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

They know shepherds, so He explains He is the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

They know doors, so He explains that He is the door that we enter to get to God.

Great teachers use language that is understandable to their audience, and that's what Jesus is doing.

But there's more going on in John 6. Multiple miracles are stacked together, highlighting Jesus' identity. He alone can satisfy our spiritual hunger because He is our Creator.

1. The crowds were **fed** by a miracle. (6:1-15)
 - a. Setting the stage for the statement that He is the bread of life, Jesus feeds a crowd
 - b. John tells us the Passover is near.
 - i. Moody - Why this detail? Because the Passover was the time above all when the Jews remembered their great prophet Moses, and how through him God had provided them with rescue, leadership, and provision, with manna from heaven, even through their wandering years in the desert. It was the season when the thoughts of the Jewish people went especially to the prophet—and perhaps also to the prediction that one day (could it be soon?) there would be another prophet like Moses, who would come as a king to lead God's people into the ultimate promised land. There would have been a spiritual atmosphere around at this moment even among the more earthly-minded of the people of Israel, as is often the case at the great religious feasts, like at Christmas and Easter in Western countries.
 - c. Matthew's gospel tells us that Jesus had just heard that his cousin, John the Baptist, was beheaded and so He was trying to withdraw by himself to a secluded place.
 - i. **Matthew 14:13-15** Now when Jesus heard *about John*, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard *of this*, they followed Him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴ When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

- ii. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."
 - 1. His response was compassion, not frustration, irritation
 - 2. He spent the day healing person after person
 - iii. They stayed so long and late in this secluded place that they were hungry. Notice that the people didn't leave, even though they were hungry. They wanted to be around Jesus.
 - d. Jesus tested Philip with the question of buying bread, to give a sense of whether Philip is starting to learn who Jesus is and what He can do.
 - i. Philip thinks practically – it would cost more than half a year's wage to buy enough food for that many people!
 - ii. Have you ever been responsible for feeding a large group of people and you worry there will not be enough food?
 - 1. Anya, Russian translator, saying one of her favorite American phrases is when we say something like, "We want to have some extra food just to be safe." Safe from what? What do you think is going to happen?
 - e. Andrew points to the five loaves and two fish, but immediately recognizes it isn't enough for the crowd. (v. 8)
 - f. Jesus simply multiplies the food to feed the crowd.
 - i. Jesus was showing himself as the creator God at work! He was producing bread from nothing, violating the very principles of the universe that all matter needs to come from somewhere.
 - ii. 12 baskets left over when all had been fed.
 - iii. We provided the food for the rehearsal dinner at our son's wedding last week. We didn't want to run out so we slightly overestimated the number of people who would be there. The restaurant also apparently builds in more cushion to make sure there's enough. Some people couldn't make it. The result was we had so much extra food. We ate bbq chicken and mac and cheese for two days afterward and still had more to give away. It was an abundance.
 - 1. After Jesus' miracle, there was an abundance of food.
 - iv. They weren't any more accustomed to miracles in their day than we would be today.
 - g. The crowd thought Jesus was only a prophet (v. 14)
 - i. **Deuteronomy 18:15** "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.
 - ii. Is Jesus a prophet? Yes. But He's much more. It's accurate, just insufficient.
 - iii. This showed what they were looking for in a messiah.
 - h. The crowd wanted to make Jesus an earthly king. (v. 15)
 - i. The people wanted to make Him become their king because He fed them (v. 15)
 - ii. Carter: What was Moses's greatest accomplishment? His defining legacy was leading the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt and bringing them to a new land, the land God promised them. Here's a crowd of five thousand Jewish men, chafing under Roman oppression. They recognize

the second Moses, and they think, *Finally! Finally we'll be free from Rome. No longer will we be slaves in our own cities. Let's make Jesus king and take back the kingdom (see John 6:15).*

- iii. They were missing the most important things about who Jesus was. So Jesus would have to teach them another way. Mark 6:52 tells us that even the disciples hadn't understood the point of the miracle because their hearts were hardened.

2. The disciples were **frightened** by a miracle. (6:16-21)

- a. Jesus pulled away from the crowd and the disciples went ahead of him on a boat (6:16-21)
- b. Sends them out, sea gets stormy
 - i. Sea of Galilee is 700 ft below sea level and the hills on the edge rise to 2,000 ft, so the combined 3,000 ft elevation change leads to high winds on the lake, quickly creating violent storms.
- c. They're afraid (v. 19). What are they afraid of?
 - i. No where does it say they were afraid because of the stormy sea. At least half of them were experienced fisherman. They may have been afraid, but that isn't mentioned.
 - ii. They were afraid of Jesus!
 - 1. John says they were terrified when they saw Him walking on the water. Mt. says they thought He was a ghost and cried out in fear.
 - 2. When was the last time you were so scared you actually cried out in terror?
 - 3. They were terrified by the figure of a man walking on the water.
- d. Why did He do this? Was He just showing off?
 - i. He wants them to see who He really is. He's not just some man who can make food out of nothing, as amazing as that is.
 - ii. Who can suspend gravity and walk on the water? He's sovereign over His creation.
 - iii. Who can calm the storm immediately when he steps into the boat?
- e. The disciples realized that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 14:33)
 - i. Only God can subvert the laws of nature— which is what they declare in Mt. 14:33
 - 1. **Matthew 14:33** And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"
 - ii. He's showing that he is the true king over all the world. He's not just a prophet. He's not just some little king who hands out bread to people.
 - iii. Worship is the only appropriate response when someone see who Jesus really is.
 - 1. Wise men after Jesus' birth (Matt 2:11)
 - 2. Canaanite woman (Matt 15:25)
 - 3. Blind man whom Jesus healed (John 9:38)
 - 4. Women who came to the tomb after the resurrection (Matt 28:9)
 - 5. Thomas the disciple after the resurrection (John 20:28)

- iv. The contrast between these disciples at the miracle and the crowds is striking, and about to become even more apparent.
- 3. The greater point of the miracles is that Jesus alone satisfies and gives life. (6:22-35)
 - a. The crowd looked for Jesus in the place he had left them. Since they couldn't find him they got in boats to go look for him (v. 22-24)
 - b. Jesus knows their hearts – they just want more food. (v. 25-26)
 - i. Find out that their mind isn't on Jesus but on their bellies. He fed them the night before; it's now time for a late breakfast or lunch.
 - 1. "They were moved not by full hearts, but by full bellies." (Leon Morris)
 - 2. Bellies that are now beginning to feel quite empty.
 - ii. Jesus knows their motives and digs right in. He ignores their question and gets to their hearts.
 - iii. They seek him not because they saw the signs
 - 1. **John 20:30-31** Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.
 - 2. Not just magic tricks and not just compassionate provisions for needs
 - 3. They were signs to point to Him. And they missed it.
 - c. Jesus tells them to look beyond their tummies to eternal life (v. 27-29)
 - i. Don't just work for food that perishes but "food" that lasts.
 - ii. What is the work?
 - 1. Go to church?
 - 2. Give 10%?
 - 3. Be kind?
 - 4. Don't lie?
 - iii. The work is simply to believe in Jesus (v. 29)
 - d. Now they want another sign, another reason to believe (v. 30-34)
 - i. He had already been healing people for days
 - ii. He already fed 5,000+ on 5 small loaves of bread and some fish
 - iii. Jesus fed them for a day, they want 40 years like the manna in the desert!
 - iv. For everyone who says, "If only God would do more miracles today, everyone would follow Jesus." This example shows that's not the case.
 - e. The Bread from heaven (v. 32-35)
 - i. God the Father gives true the true bread out of heaven
 - ii. The true bread gives life to the world.
 - iii. They respond, always give us this bread!

- iv. Jesus, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
- f. So what does it mean that Jesus is the "bread of life?"
 - i. Just like everyone feels hunger pains telling them they need to eat, so everyone feels spiritual "hunger pains" telling them that they need Jesus.
 - 1. He says they will be hungry no more – what kind of hunger is He talking about?
 - ii. Hunger pains
 - 1. Hungry for meaning
 - a. Wonder about the purpose of life (common in middle school age)
 - b. "Who am I?" man asks. "Why am I here? Where am I going?" Since the Enlightenment, when he threw off the shackles of religion, man has tried to answer these questions without reference to God. But the answers that came back were not exhilarating, but dark and terrible. "You are the accidental by-product of nature," he is told, "a result of matter plus time plus chance. There is no reason for your existence. All you face is death."
 - c. Modern man thought that when he had got rid of God, he had freed himself from all that repressed and stifled him. Instead, he discovered that in killing God, he had also killed himself. For if there is no God, then man's life become absurd. (William Lane Craig)
 - d. Man is the only creature who asks "Why?" Without God there is no answer. (William Lane Craig)
 - e. 39 times in Ecclesiastes the phrase "vanity" is used to describe life in this broken, fallen world. Things don't seem to make sense. They seem futile as Romans 8:20 says that all creation was subject to futility.
 - i. Like eating sugar wafers when hungry. It doesn't satisfy.
 - 2. Hunger for righteousness
 - a. Wonder why we can't do the right thing
 - 3. Hunger for hope
 - a. Sadness over someone who has died
 - iii. Just like real food is the only thing that can satisfy your physical hunger pains, so Jesus is the only thing that satisfies your spiritual hunger pains.
 - a. **Jeremiah 2:13** "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water."
 - 2. In the same way, Jesus is the only thing that takes care of your spiritual "hunger pains."
 - a. Without food what happens to us? We starve and die.
 - b. Without Jesus, the bread of life? We starve spiritually and we are dead spiritually.

- c. His death took care of your sins
 - 3. Just as food is useless unless eaten, so also spiritual truth does no good unless internalized.
 - 4. Just as eating is prompted by hunger, so responding to spiritual truth about Jesus is prompted by spiritual hunger pains.
 - a. A desire for truth, righteousness, forgiveness, peace, meaning – all of this God awakens in a person to show them their need for Him.
- g. How do we respond?
 - i. Come and believe – just like come and eat
 - 1. **John 6:37** "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.
 - 2. **John 6:40** "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
 - 3. **John 6:51** "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."
 - ii. Worship and follow Him
 - 1. Jesus isn't just a prophet. He's Lord. He's creator. He's God. He's King.
 - 2. That should stir our hearts to joyful obedience.

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