

Feed me till I want no more

Week 34 ~ Notes for November 6th

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Preparation

Read John 6: 22-66 several times in a variety of translations

1. Jn 6:22-25 Setting the scene – by the lakeside
2. Jn 6:26-34 The questions of the crowd and the answers Jesus gives
3. Jn 6:35-36 In the synagogue: Jesus makes an “I am” statement
4. Jn 6:41-58 The Jews (aka Pharisees) murmur and dispute with Jesus
5. Jn 6:60 The reaction of the disciples

Please note that the additional document (“Notes from Commentaries”) provides additional information which some might find of interest.

Background

Following the feeding of the 5000 the crowd discovers Jesus. This provokes fierce debate between (a) the crowd on the lakeside and Jesus and (b) the Jews in the synagogue and Jesus. The summary of these “discussions” that John records here has been, and continues to be, one of the most significant passages of scripture for Christians through the ages.

Discussion

There are a number of discrete sections in this passage. We will consider as many of these as time allows but not in the order given by John; we will start with what is, arguably, the most important section first, and then *if* there is any time left, then we will go back to some of the others.

Questions

1. What does Jesus mean / how do we understand his statements as recorded in vv 48 - 58:
 - a. “I am the bread of life” (vs 35, 41, 48, 51, 58)
 - b. “... it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” ... “This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat of it and not die” (vs 32b – 34; 50)
 - c. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever” (v 51)
 - d. “The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (v 51)
 - e. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you . . . Those who eat my flesh and drink have eternal life ... for my flesh is true flesh and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.” (vs 53-56)
2. Do the disciples’ reactions in vs 60, 66 surprise you? What do think about Jesus’ response in vs 61-65? How does the response of the crowd described in vs22-66 compare to responses of crowds today who encounter Christianity? How should we react to such responses?
3. Read vs 25-34 and imagine you are in the crowd in Capernaum. What would you have made of the conversation? What meaning(s) would you take away from it?
4. What does Jesus mean / how do we understand his statements as recorded in vs27 - 28

The crowd asks what works they had to perform. Note the meanings of the words in capitals:

“what must we

DO (simply actions)

so that we may

ACCOMPLISH, CARRY OUT, WORK HARD (manual labour)

N.b. There are hints of BEING SEEN TO BE WORKING and of gaining reward, payment)

the

ACTIVITIES, TASKS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS

N.b. There are hints of PROOF OF WORKING BEING DEMONSTRATED

of God?”

5. V 29 What do you understand by Jesus’ answer to the crowd’s question?
“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent”
6. V 42 Was the Jew’s question a reasonable one? Why / why not?