



# IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

**SERIES: JOHN (GOSPEL OF TRUTH)**

**LESSON: APPROPRIATING CHRIST'S POWER AND SUFFICIENCY**

**JOHN 6:1-15**

**3/7/21**

## MAIN POINT

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Jesus is God. He creates something out of nothing.

## JOHN CONTEXT

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As we have learned from our study of the gospel of John, the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel is not a complete biography of the life or the ministry of Jesus (Jn. 21:25). John, the disciple of Jesus, writes the purpose of the book in chapter 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John tells us that he is providing signs that will help us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. As we interpret the signs, we should be able to conclude some information that will guide us on our journey of faith.

Before we read John 6, let us consider the full picture of the Jesus's activity in the region of Galilee and the attitudes leading up to it. Because the Gospel of John is not a complete biographical record, we can look to the other Gospels to gain more insight into activity surrounding this sign in the northern part of Israel. According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus had been teaching in the synagogues about the truth of God and the kingdom of God. The disciples saw Jesus calm the storm when they were passing over the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 4:35-41). Jesus healed a demon possessed man and they saw the many demons enter a herd of pigs (Mk. 5:1-20). Jesus healed a woman of an ailment when she touched his garment while in a crowd. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, asked for Jesus to make his daughter well because she was at the point of death. When Jesus spoke to the young girl, she immediately got up and began walking (Mk. 5:21-43). After this, Jesus went to his hometown of Nazareth and taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath and people were astonished by his wisdom and his works. Mark chapter 6 says that many people who were there took offense at Jesus. Finally, Jesus had sent out the twelve apostles to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal people. The Scripture says that they proclaimed the gospel and healed people everywhere! Afterward, the disciples returned to tell Jesus of all that they had done and Mark records that they were tired, and they withdrew to a remote area. Luke tells us this area was near Bethsaida (about 25 miles from Nazareth). The people recognized Jesus and the disciples, and they followed him and formed a large crowd to see him (Mk. 6:1-13).

## INTRODUCTION

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When I consider the practical usage of signs in the world around me, the most obvious sign I think of is one found on the interstate that provides clear and concise information. It would be very hard for me to miss it because it is large enough for me to read from a distance. I can easily understand it because it has letters that are in my native language and there are arrows pointing the correct direction. The information is reliable because it was put there by a trusted agency, the Arkansas Department of Transportation. When I read the sign that tells me the exit that I need to take is in 1 mile, I trust that the sign is a reliable and I choose to follow the sign so I will get where I need to go.

**What are some obvious signs or locations of signs that stand out to you? Where is there a need for a sign but one isn't there?**

To understand how the signs John mentions should be interpreted spiritually, we can look to other areas in the Bible to understand how God used signs, in the form of miracles, and apply that interpretation in the signs and/or miracles that Jesus performed. In the story of the Exodus, many miracles and signs of divine power were on display. Before the seventh plague, Moses went to Pharaoh with a message from God:

*13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For this time I will*

*send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.” - Exodus 9:13-14*

God told Pharaoh that the purpose of the plagues was so that Pharaoh would know that there is none like him in all the earth. God wants people to recognize his power and uniqueness.

Before the eighth plague, God had a message for Moses and his son and his grandson.

*1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, 2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.” – Exodus 10:1-2*

God told Moses the purpose of the signs are for Moses and his family so that they would know that God is the Lord. We can draw the conclusion that when they accept that God is Lord, their attitude will be that God is Lord of their lives and fully submit to His lordship.

In 1 Kings 18, we see a similar opportunity for God to show his uniqueness with Elijah and the prophets of Baal. After the prophets of Baal failed to consume the sacrifice with fire from Heaven, Elijah called on God (1 Kings 18:36-37) and said,

*O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back.*

In Exodus and 1 Kings, what God accomplishes through signs and miracles is that people recognize God’s power, that there is nothing that compares to him, and for the people who he calls his own, he desires that they would submit to him as Lord of their life.

Returning to our study of the book of John, we will look at a very well-known miracle that Jesus performed, the feeding of the five thousand. We will see how the people saw this miracle of Jesus and how they reacted to the sign.

## **EXPLANATION // ...believe Jesus is the Christ...**

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Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:1-3**

**Imagine a famous singer is going to performing at Simmons Bank Arena or an A-list movie star is in town to film a scene for an upcoming movie and you hear that they are staying at the Capitol Hotel. Who would you go out of your way to catch a glimpse of or to have a chance to interact with or take a selfie with? What other people would be there? Would you call your friends and invite them to join you? Imagine the frenzy outside the hotel and in the lobby. Can you sense the energy? Is**

**your goal to meet them to have a lifelong relationship with them or to satisfy some curiosity or longing that you have to see someone famous or that you admire?**

Can you imagine what is going on in the minds of those in the crowd? They have heard stories about Jesus. Maybe they have seen him teach in the synagogue and recognize his authority. Perhaps they are eager to hear more. Maybe they have witnessed the miracles of healing or witnessed people cleaned from the demon possession and hope to see if Jesus will do it again. They were looking for Jesus and were seeking him to possibly satisfy some personal longing. However readers may question whether they were there to follow him.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:4-9**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he decided to test the disciples who had seen many examples of his divine power.

This passage draws a noteworthy parallel to an event in the wilderness in Exodus 16:4. The Israelites were walking in the wilderness only as a result of 10 plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. They were delivered out of Egypt and the Egyptian army was destroyed, only by the hand of God. These were not trivial events, they were miraculous events and the Hebrew people had firsthand knowledge of them! After they departed, they knew that YAHWEH was with them to guide them in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. All of these are signs of power, but from a practical standpoint they were now in the wilderness. Feeding an entire nation would require tremendous resources and the people didn't believe God's power would transcend to meeting their physical needs. They were not trusting God as their Provider. God told Moses that he was about to rain bread from heaven (manna) and it would be a test for the people. As previously discussed, God used signs to help his people know that He *is Lord*.

Jesus had turned water into wine, calmed storms, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk. The disciples had seen enough signs that they should not have questioned Jesus' ability to feed the large crowd. The problem for Phillip was that this was a practical matter, and it would involve a lot of resources to feed them. Jesus knew that Phillip's response would be practical, but this would be a small test to measure his understanding of who Jesus is.

**How might you discern between when God is providing a test vs. when He is not?**

**We can be honest. If you were in Phillip's situation would you have picked up on what Jesus was thinking?**

**On a scale from 1-10, how often do you notice or pick up what Jesus is doing? Do you tend to pass test through trial and error or with first try?**

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:10-13**

In providing the fish and bread in abundance such that there were twelve baskets of fragments left over, Jesus demonstrates his equivalency with the Father. In Exodus, God provided quail and manna in the wilderness where there was no food to be found. There is no one other than God who has created something from nothing and in performing this miracle Jesus clearly shows his power is equal to God's.

John records how the people ate "as much as they wanted" and that there were "twelve baskets . . . left" over. Not only did Jesus miraculously multiply the bread, he went above and beyond. Similar to how he made the *better* wine, filling the large jars of water to the *brim*, so too, Jesus again provided an abundance (See John 2:1-12).

We know that the bread is symbolic and that the goodness of bread can be satisfying to the depths of our souls. Whether it be simple buttered toast, or a light and flaky croissant, the most amazing yeast rolls, or some homemade sourdough bread. God in his love has given us such a wonderful gift. But the satisfaction is gone when our stomach is empty. Jesus is the bread of Life who truly satisfies us. More of that will be coming later in chapter 6.

**Do you tend to think it was coincidence or planned by Jesus that there were *twelve* baskets left and the fact that there were *twelve* disciples? If planned, what do you think Jesus wanted to communicate?**

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:13-15**

There are two distinct groups who witnessed this event: the disciples and the crowd.

At this point, the disciples may not believe with all their heart the true nature of Jesus, but they are hearing about His intimate relationship with the Father and as they are experiencing an intimate relationship with the Son of God. When the disciples look at Jesus, they view him from the lens of a friend because they have literally walked with him and spent a lot of time with him. They know him as a friend because Jesus invited them into that relationship. At the end of John chapter 6, many of the people who had been following Jesus in Galilee turned back and no longer walked with Him. Jesus asked the twelve disciples if they also wanted to go away as well. Peter answered, "Lord, to who shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we

have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” Their focus was on Jesus and a true relationship with him.

From the crowd’s perspective, it is clear they understood a miracle had taken place. The disciples could have told the people about the miracle as they distributed the food. Perhaps, the disciples could have told the people they would keep bringing the food until it runs out! Curious onlookers would have seen that the food was coming from Jesus and there was not an additional supply chain other than Jesus. When all the crowd had eaten their fill and the twelve baskets were collected, the conclusion is reached that some kind of power from God is associated with Jesus, but they didn’t recognize him as God, but a prophet – not equal with God.

We could consider it a lack of faith, or a lack of knowledge of who God is. This generation of Israelites had not seen God speak through a prophet. The last prophet the Israelites had heard from (other than John the Baptist) was Malachi. And that was roughly 400 years ago! Perhaps in their minds, a prophet coming to them was exciting enough.

They did not recognize Jesus as the manifestation of God on earth because they weren’t looking for God. They had just had their stomachs temporarily satisfied and now were looking for the next thing Jesus could do for them. Someone with power like this could help end the Romans occupation and the tax collection that they were weary of. If they had been focused on God instead of themselves, they would have understood that only one being had previously created something out of nothing – God.

**What stands out to you about Jesus in this story?**

**Do you notice any similarities and differences between the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4)? If so, what are similarities and differences? What conclusions can we draw?**

**Woman at the Well**  
**Samaritans**

**Living Water (4:10)**

**Disciples bring food but Jesus  
Has food they don’t know about  
(4:31-33)**

**Jesus stays several days (4:40)**

**Many Samaritans believe Jesus is  
Messiah (4:41)**

**Feeding Five Thousand**  
**Jews**

**Bread of Life (John 6:35)**

**Jesus tests the disciples to  
provide the food. (6:5-6)**

**Jesus withdraws (6:15)**

**Jews believe he is prophet and  
want to make him king (6:15)**

## **APPLICATION // ...have life in His name.**

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Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Divine signs of power are used by God to declare his preeminence and to invite people into a relationship with Him as Lord of their lives. Jesus demonstrated His divinity in this act and most of the people missed it because they weren't looking for God. Are there signs from God in your life but you miss them because you aren't looking for God to be there?**

**There are many situations where we lift our voices to God asking for help with things we cannot control. Like Phillip, our practical nature as well as our pride keeps us from calling on God when the need is something in the realm of human capability. Because of who Jesus is and what He has done, He is worthy to be the Lord of every aspect of our lives. Have you ever limited his ability by not calling on him to help?**

## **PRAYER**

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Close in prayer, asking God to press this truth that was studied.

## **COMMENTARY / RESOURCES**

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### **John's seven signs:**

- Turns water into wine (2:1-12)
- Healing the royal official son (4:46-54)
- Healing a man who had been lame for 38 years (5: 1-17)
- Feeding 5,000 with a few loafs and fish (6:1-15)
- Jesus walking on water (6:16-21)
- Healing the blind man from birth (9:1-44)
- Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).

### **A worship song to go along with the lesson:**

Only King Forever, by artists such as 7eventh Shine Down and Elevation Worship, have lyrics describes a spiritual attitude for how we can view our Lord and Savior. If you are having trouble allowing Jesus to be Lord of your life, James 4:6-10 describes a path for you to make God a priority in your life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPi8Z7W41il>

*Only King Forever (Lyrics)*

Our God, a firm foundation  
Our rock, the only solid ground  
As nations rise and fall  
Kingdoms once strong now shaken  
But we trust forever in Your name  
The name of Jesus  
We trust the name of Jesus

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher  
You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher  
You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious

Unmatched in all Your wisdom  
In love and justice You will reign  
And every knee will bow  
We bring our expectations  
Our hope is anchored in Your name  
The name of Jesus  
Oh-oh, we trust the name of Jesus

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher  
You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher  
You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious

We lift our banner high  
We lift the name of Jesus  
From age to age You reign  
Your kingdom has no end

We lift our banner high  
We lift the name of Jesus  
From age to age You reign  
Your kingdom has no end

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher  
You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious

You are the only King forever  
Almighty God we lift You higher

You are the only King forever  
Forevermore, You are victorious