



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N5 January 29, 2023

“The First Supper” John 6:1-15

THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3



What does his *fourth sign* reveal about Jesus and us?

In his thesis and purpose statement found in John 20:31, the Apostle writes: “Jesus performed many other *signs* in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John records *seven* signs in the body of his Gospel: 1) changing water into wine (2:1-11); 2) healing an official’s son (4:43-54); 3) healing a disabled man at the Bethesda pool (5:1-15); 4) feeding the 5,000 (6:1-14); 5) walking on water (6:16-21); 6) healing the man born blind (9:1-7); and 7) raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).

On the connotation and use of *sēmeia*, translated “signs,” in the Gospels, one commentator writes: “The New Testament uses several words to denote what we call ‘miracles’. One of the most common, *dynamēis* (‘mighty works’) is not found in John; another, *terata* (‘wonders’, ‘portents’, ‘miracles’) is found only when linked with *sēmeia* (‘signs’), as in ‘signs and wonders’; but this combination is found only once in the Fourth Gospel (4:48). John prefers the simple word ‘signs’” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 175). And commenting on Jesus’ *first sign*, another adds: “Rather than using the Synoptic term for miracle [i.e., the term used by Matthew, Mark, and Luke] (Gk. *dynamis*), John consistently refers to Jesus’ mighty works as ‘signs’ (Gk. *semeion*). A miracle underscores power and is generally received with awe (cf. Mark 6:2: ‘Many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things? . . . What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!”’). A *sign* is revelatory, disclosing something from God, something hidden before. The signs are not merely acts of power and might, they unveil that God is at work in Jesus and indeed is present in him. Thus John remarks that

through this sign Jesus reveal his ‘glory.’ This is an essential affirmation for John, and it moves to the center of what he affirms about Jesus. Jesus is not merely a man; he is more, he conveys the presence of God in the world (1:1), and since he radiates the presence of God, he appropriately shows forth God’s ‘glory’ (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 92-93, italics added).

The similarity between the *first sign*, changing water into wine (2:1-11) and the *fourth sign*, feeding the 5,000, is striking. After each one, people are said to believe in Jesus. After the first, John writes: “What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him” (2:11). And after the fourth, he writes: “After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is coming into the world’” (6:14). What’s more, the link between both signs and John’s thesis and purpose statement is quite clear. In both cases, people saw miraculous signs and believed. The time would come, however, when generations of followers who had not seen signs, would nevertheless believe and by faith see something of the glory of the Son. Jesus himself said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (20:29).

Many contemporary Christians hear the gospel and believe in Jesus, having never read John’s Gospel. They know neither that he changed water into wine nor that he fed more than 5,000 people with a lad’s lunch of “five small barley loaves and two small fish” (6:9). But that doesn’t mean that they don’t need to know these things. Disciples are learners and as they learn more about the words and works of Christ, the more they are transformed into his likeness by what they hear.

Read John 6:1-15

1 *Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), 2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. 3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near.*

5 *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*

7 *Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"*

8 *Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, 9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"*

10 *Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). 11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.*

12 *When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.*

14 *After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the temporal connecting phrase "some time after this" in v. 1.
- Circle "far shore" in v. 1.
- Underline the temporal connecting words "then" in vv. 3, 11, "when" in vv. 5, 12 and "after" in v. 14.
- Box "because" in v. 2, and "for" in v. 6 indicating *reason*.
- Bracket the direct quotations in vv. 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14.
- Circle "test" in v. 6.
- Bracket "more than half a year's wages" in v. 7.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 9.
- Underline "plenty of grass" in v. 10.
- Highlight the phrases indicating *abundance*: "as much as they wanted" in v. 11; "enough to eat" in v. 12; "pieces that are left over" in v. 12; and "filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over" in v. 13.
- Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- In the margin next to v. 14 write, "See Dt 18:15."

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The crowd followed Jesus “because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed.” What do you infer from that?
2. John tells us that Jesus questioned Philip to “test” him. What do you think the word “test” means in this context?
3. Paraphrase Philip’s answer— put it in your own words.
4. Relate Andrew’s comments to what Philip said.
5. What do you think was going through the disciples’ minds when he told them to sit the people down?
6. How does the size of the crowd contribute to the story?
7. There’s an implicit contrast between verses 7-9 and 11-13. What is it?
8. Why twelve baskets of leftovers— why not ten, twenty, or more?
9. Did the crowd get or miss the point of the miracle? Explain.
10. **Discussion:** This miracle narrative clearly tells two stories. Talk about the *upper* story about Jesus and the *lower* story about the disciples.

Commentary On The Text

The apostle John reveals the thesis of his Gospel and its purpose in 20:31. His thesis is *Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, through whom eternal life is obtained by believing in his name*. His closely related purpose is to *record various signs performed by Jesus so that his readers might believe in him and thereby obtain eternal life*. He very deliberately structures his Gospel to establish his thesis and accomplish his purpose. It unfolds around seven discourses (3:1-21; 4:1-42; 5:16-47; 6:25-71; 7:1-52; 8:12-59; 10:1-42), seven “I am” statements (6:35; 8:12; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1), and seven signs (2:1-11; 4:43-54; 5:1-15; **6:1-15**; 6:16-24; 9:1-42; 11:1-57). The feeding of the 5,000 recorded in 6:1-15, the only miracle of Jesus contained in all four Gospels, is the *fourth sign*. About it one commentator writes: “The importance of this sign is clear in that all four Gospels contain an account of it. Apparently John was familiar with the other evangelists’ versions of this miracle as well as being an eyewitness of the event. His story complements the others (cf. vv. 5, 15). This miracle demonstrated Jesus’ authority over quantity. It constitutes further proof that Jesus was the Son of God” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on John,” 2023 ed. 171, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/john.pdf).

John introduces the miracle by telling his readers that it occurred in Galilee on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. While the events recorded in chapter 6 occurred in Galilee, those in chapter 5 occurred in Jerusalem (5:1). John doesn’t explain how Jesus got from Jerusalem to Galilee; however, his reference to the passing of “some time” (6:1), together with the reference to “one of the Jewish festivals” (5:1) – perhaps the fall Feast of Tabernacles – suggests six months may have intervened between the two chapters.

As for the miracle itself, a crowd of people came looking for Jesus because they had seen him perform miraculous healings. When he saw them coming, Jesus used the opportunity it afforded to teach his disciples a lesson about himself and about them. He asked Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” knowing that enough couldn’t be bought to satisfy them all. In the first place, there wouldn’t be enough bread in any of the small nearby villages to feed such a large group; besides, the disciples didn’t have enough money, more than eight month’s wages, to buy it even if there were! Jesus also knew that he could turn the situation into a teachable moment for the disciples. Mark tells us that Jesus told the disciples, “You give them something to eat” (Mk 6:37). Maybe he said this after Philip and Andrew said what they had to say. In any case, the disciples were convinced they couldn’t meet the needs of so many people. Little did they know that they were about to learn otherwise until Jesus instructed them to “Have the people sit down” (v. 10).

In the face of Philip’s pessimism, Andrew noted that a boy in the crowd had “five small barley loaves and two small fish,” adding, “but how far will they go among so many?” The disciples would soon know the answer to his question. When they followed Jesus’ instructions and gave him what little food they had, he made it *more than enough* to satisfy the appetites of 5,000 men not to mention the women and children. After the crowd had eaten its fill from Jesus’ lavish provision, twelve full baskets of leftovers were collected, so that no food was wasted.

Did the crowd get it? Did the crowd understand the significance of what Jesus did? Yes and no. They rightfully identified Jesus as the Prophet like Moses. Moses fed the people and led them out of Egyptian bondage. Jesus fed the people, and he would lead them out of Roman bondage. But they wrongfully expected him to do that immediately. “And if he was unwilling to assume the prerogatives and responsibilities of such leadership, they were more than willing to force the issue by fomenting a rebellion, crowning him king and daring the authorities to respond – thus forcing him to assume the mantle they had in mind for him” (Carson, 272). Jesus would not put the crown before the cross and so he withdrew from them.

The point of the *upper story* of this narrative is evident. Containing the *fourth sign*, it clearly confirms John’s thesis: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, sent into the world by the Father. Jesus himself said as much. “The very works that I am doing testify that the Father has sent me” (5:36). Moreover, Jesus is the Prophet to come (Dt 18:15, 18), the one who provides life-giving bread in the wilderness like Moses provided life-giving manna in the wilderness. However, unlike Moses, *Jesus himself* is this life-giving bread. He, who calls himself “the bread of life” (vv. 35, 48) in his *fourth discourse* (6:25-71), is the one who gives *eternal* life to all those who believe in him.

The point of the *lower story* of this narrative is also evident. We who believe in Jesus don’t have all that it takes to follow him, that is, to be his disciples. All we can do is give him what we have, so that he can make it what it takes. One author puts it this way, “While this miracle was performed to satisfy the physical hunger of the crowd, Jesus was primarily instructing the Twelve concerning the nature of the ministry for which they were being prepared. They would face multitudes who were shepherdless sheep and starved spiritually. It would be their responsibility to ‘give them something to eat’ (v. 37). The followers of Christ do not have the ability of themselves to meet the spiritual need of people, but when they make available what they have to the Lord, the Lord can take it and multiply it and use them to minister to the multitudes” (J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 233).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 **Some time after** Lit., “after these things” (NASB) or “after this” (ESV). About six months after the events in the previous chapter if the feast mentioned in 5:1 was the Feast of Tabernacles (see Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 59). “Though **some time after this** is indefinite, it can be learned from the Synoptics that Herod Antipas had killed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29; cf. John 3:24), the disciples had preached throughout Galilee (Mark 6:7-13, 30-31), multitudes of people were curious about Jesus, and Herod Antipas was seeking Jesus (Luke 9:7-9). So the time between the events in John 5 and 6 was probably six months” (Edwin A. Blum, “John” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 293) – that is, about a year before Jesus was crucified.

v. 1 **far shore** I.e., “the east side of the Sea of Galilee since the far shore is normally determined from the west side, the dominantly Jewish side” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 267). “The setting of the story is the Sea of Galilee, which John clarifies for those readers who may not know Israel, calling it also the Sea of Tiberias. Tiberias was a new city on the west shore of the sea, founded in about A.D. 26 by Herod Antipas (the regional ruler of Galilee and son of Herod the Great)” (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 191).

v. 1 **near** Why would John note that the Jewish Passover was near? Maybe to account for the crowds that followed Jesus. Perhaps some of the people had gathered from different parts of northern Galilee to make their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Maybe to link Jesus to the Passover since John sees him as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). Maybe to link Jesus to Moses, a former deliverer and leader of Israel (see Carson, 268-69; Burge, 192-93). “This was John’s second reference to a Passover feast during Jesus’ ministry (cf. 2:13, 23; 11:55; 13:1). Evidently this event happened two years after Jesus’ first cleansing of the temple and one year before He died on the cross. It would have taken place in April of A.D. 32” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on John,” 2023 ed. 173, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/john.pdf).

v. 2 **followed** The imperfect tense of the verbs suggest that “the multitude ‘kept following’ Jesus because they ‘continually saw’ the signs that He ‘habitually did’” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel*

According to John, NICNT, 342). “A great crowd of people (cf. Mk. 6:33-34) followed him, not so much because they wanted to obey him, but, like those described in 2:23-25, because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick” (Carson, 268).

v. 2 **asked** “Jesus was not at a loss for a solution to the problem; he wished to educate the disciples by calling their attention to their responsibilities and by leading them to propose some plan of action” (Merrill C. Tenney, “The Gospel of John” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 9:71).

v. 5 **Philip** It made sense to ask Philip since he was from Bethsaida nearby (Jn 1:44).

v. 6 **test** “The verb *perirazō* (‘test’) is commonly used by the Evangelists in the bad sense of ‘tempt’, to solicit to do evil. The word itself, however, is neutral, and is entirely appropriate here” (Carson, 269). “John also explained that Jesus’ question was a test in Philip’s discipleship training, not an indication that Jesus wondered what to do initially” (Constable, 174).

v. 7 **wages** Lit., “two hundred denarii” (NASB) or two hundred days’ wages, which amounted to about eight months’ pay.

v. 9 **barley loaves** Barley bread was cheap. “The two fishes were something of a tidbit which would make the coarse barley bread more palatable” (Morris, 344).

v. 10 **plenty of grass** I.e., “another personal recollection of detail, and confirmation that the event took place in March or April (*i.e.* near Passover) when the grass is still green, before the hot summer sun burns it brown” (Carson, 270).

v. 10 **five thousand** Since women and children were also there (Mt 14:21), Jesus may have fed twice as many people. “Since the area was desolate and the time was Passover, Jesus was like Moses with the people in the wilderness who needed a miraculous feeding” (Blum, 294).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Believe in Jesus, the Son of God, who takes what we give him and makes it enough to meet the needs of others.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Though my husband isn't what you would necessarily call a fisherman, we love to recount his "multiplying fish" experience. After all, everyone has a fishing story! He went on a fishing excursion with his work peers and of the dozen people on the boat, no one could catch anything except my husband. He would hit the jackpot and pull one fish after another while the rest of the boat stood and watched. They would move him to another spot to let someone else take a turn. While they wouldn't catch a thing, his new spot would prove to be another jackpot. The one thing he prayed for was to take fish to our new neighbors, a young couple with limited resources and two toddlers. When he came home, he shared his catch with this sweet young couple, then began sharing with all the houses on our street. Though he gave away more and more fish, the freezer was still full, as if he hadn't given away anything at all. In fact, it felt like the fish were multiplying and bursting out of the freezer every time we opened it. When we are generous with our resources, something supernatural happens. The returning blessings seem to be greater than the sacrifice. When we share our resources with our kids - time, attention, laughter, praise, love - the blessing far outweighs the "sacrifice." Our desire is to intimately know, love and appreciate our kids, building a solid relationship that bears the test of time. Watch how this relationship multiplies as you invest your resources in them. What can you give today? We can't wait to see God at work!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read John 6:1-15

1. How much food did the little boy have?
2. How many people did Jesus feed?
3. How much did the people eat?

What Do You Think?

Do you think the people really understood who Jesus was? Why or why not?

What Do You Do?

Can you multiply chocolate? Grab a candy bar and learn how at [youtube.com/watch?v=BrprduGzo9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrprduGzo9E). Explain how we can multiply candy using this cool science experiment. Talk about how Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes.

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God/perfectly man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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