

“What Are You Hungry For?”

Sermon Based on

John 6:1-21

Much of the religion in our world today is anthropocentric religion. God is there for my benefit.

God is there to meet my needs and greed's.

The 5000 fitted that category.

They missed the offer of real life that Jesus came to call us to.

Readings

2 Kings 4:42-44

John 6: 1-21



We continue our series based on the gospel of John.

We've examined the meaning and significance of the accounts of the wine and the whip.

We've asked the question Jesus put to Nicodemus, the woman at the well and the Official from Capernaum.

That question; “Are you seeking a sign or a Saviour?”

Today in John 6:1-21 John asks us a penetrating question, as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago:

What are you hungering for?

This story of the feeding of the 5000 is recorded in all four gospel accounts.

John leaves out things that the others include.

That's because John's priority is that we come to understand who Jesus is and why he came.

In short, Jesus is God in flesh who came to give us life with a capital "L".

John didn't necessarily mean a life of ease and comfort here but eternal life with Jesus, starting here.

And so as a sign of that eternal life Jesus converts water into the very best wine and offers a woman the gift of living water and provides bread for the multitude. Signs of God's love, grace and mercy.

That love, grace and mercy is for all who will follow Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

There is a temptation to see Jesus as the one who meets my temporal needs and makes my troubles go away.

That's what the people had in mind when they sought to make Jesus their King.

All of these events point to the free gift of God's abundant love, grace and mercy.

Kings in those days were responsible for looking after their subject's needs. They were expected to provide peace, security and protection.

It was those things the people wanted when they sought to make Jesus a king.

When Jesus later challenged them to follow him, they wouldn't have a bar of it.

If we are honest we would admit, that is, at times, our approach to Jesus.

Our lives are filled with cravings for financial security, physical well-being and peaceful relationships.

We shop for fulfilment like we shop for groceries.

We load our shopping trolley with things we hope will cure our cravings for that picture perfect family, or that comfortable retirement, or a long and healthy life.

So we make our way to Jesus and throw him in the trolley too.

In the process we miss the point of the first commandment.

In our scramble for the good life we turn to other gods.

Actually those other things are not really the gods at all.

We are our own god. Much of what we do is designed to make our life better. We are the centre of our universe.

In his book "Let God Be God" Philip Watson writes about Luther's understanding of Theo-centric religion and anthropocentric religion.

God centred religion and man centred religion.

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The 5000 fitted that category.

They missed the offer of real life that Jesus came to call us to.

Their eyes were fixed on the bread that goes stale and not the giver of the bread.

In his bestselling book, "What on Earth am I here for" Rick Warren echo's Luther's understanding of Theo-centric religion.

He writes in the first paragraph of the first chapter of his book.

"It's not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfilment ... If you want to know why you were placed on this planet. You must begin with God."

I love the way Jesus closes off every possibility that this miracle could have a human solution.

This is a God thing from beginning to end.

There are three solutions are offered:

A) Send them away.

B) Buy them food.

C) Use the boy's lunch.

None suffice.

The fourth solution is the divine solution.

This sign tells us that Jesus is none other than the God who feed another multitude in another wilderness on manna and quail centuries before.

John's point, you may well ask?

This one who performs this miracle is none other than the God of the universe.

Of course all of these miraculous signs have a much deeper meaning than some divine ration pack from heaven.

The best wine. The living water. The bread of life. They all hold deeper significance than a nice picnic lunch.

That's what John wants us to see, understand, and ultimately embrace.

So, what are you hungry for?

It is a question that goes beyond the midnight munches.

If you will be open to John's deeper meaning and your own deeper needs it will show you that only God can meet those deeper needs.

Finally let me make a brief comment about Jesus' walking on the water in the midst of the storm.

We read in Job 9:8 that only God does this.

"He alone has spread the heavens and marches on the waves of the sea."

Conclusion? Jesus is God. That is John's overarching message.

But there is something else.

John is reminding us that there is no better companion to have amid the storms of life than Jesus.

When we invite him into our boat – our life- he will bring us safely to shore.
Let the words of the prophet Isaiah have the last say.

“Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength?

Why pay for food that does you no good?

Listen to me, and you will eat what is good.

You will enjoy the finest food.” (Isaiah 55:2)

Follow Jesus, my friend.

Not because of what you can get from him.

Follow him because he is the Lord of heaven and earth.

Commit your life to him today. Resolve to become his fully devoted followers.