

JOHN 6:22-29
TRUE FAITH!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 6 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Here in John chapter 6 we have seen Jesus feed 5,000 men plus women and children with just five barley crackers and two small pickled fish that a young boy gave to Jesus. That means that this crowd of people could have been upwards of some 15,000 to 20,000 people!

As impossible as this task was, so much so that even the disciples did not know what to do except send the people home, Jesus accomplished. And Jesus was showing them that through Him all things are possible.

It was a long day of teaching by Jesus as the people sat and listened. And make no mistake about it, by the end of the day they were hungry. And Jesus fed them and not only fed them, but we are told, **“So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.”** John 6:12-13.

Did you see that. They not only ate, but they were filled. And the word **“filled”** speaks of being stuffed like you are after a Thanksgiving meal!

Not only that, not only were they filled but the disciples gathered up 12 large baskets of leftovers!

Again, this was just with five barley crackers and two small pickled fish! Snack food that was turned into a feast by Jesus!

And make no mistake about it, this impacted the thousands of people who witnessed this miracle. But, as we will see, miracles don't save, Jesus does, and that is going to be a problem for them as they will see Jesus for the wrong reasons!

You see, at this point the people were stirred up. They were excited to see what Jesus could do. So much so that we are told in John 6:14-15, **“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.”**

They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, not God in the flesh but the Prophet that Moses spoke about in Deuteronomy chapter 18!

Thus, they wanted to make Him King, they wanted to be fed by Jesus and if Jesus could do this, then He could deliver them from the Roman bondage that they were in.

And as Jesus saw all this taking place, He told His men to get into the boat and travel to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He did not want them to get caught up in this! As they went, Jesus stood back and watched them from a mountain.

And as they are on the Sea of Galilee a storm comes and the winds are blowing and they are rowing and going nowhere!

And Jesus, who was up on a mountain watching them, walks out to them on the Sea of Galilee and He stopped this windstorm and immediately they were at their destination. The fear that the men had was because their eyes were on the storm and not Jesus!

It is after this, as they are now in Capernaum, that our story picks up here in John chapter 6, starting in verse 22.

I have called this study – ***TRUE FAITH!***

And the reason being is that we are going to see the faith of the crowds of people that were fed by Jesus, some of them, and then the faith that Jesus is calling them to!

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into four main points and they are,

SEEKING JESUS – JOHN 6:22-24

SEEKING JESUS FOR THE WRONG REASONS – JOHN 6:25-26

JESUS CORRECTS THEM – JOHN 6:27

WHAT SHALL WE DO – JOHN 6:28-29

Before we get to our text this morning, let me share these words from Ray Stedman, who wrote,

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John is the setting for one of the great discourses of our Lord, his word on the “bread of life.” Bread, of course, is the symbol for that which sustains and maintains life.

During the French Revolution, when the mobs of Paris were rioting and demonstrating outside the palace of Queen Marie Antionette, protesting the poverty in which they lived, the queen inquired of her courtiers [nobles or aristocrats] what was the trouble.

They said to her, “They have no bread.”

Marie Antionette is remembered for her hard-hearted and indifferent reply, “Then let them eat cake.”

In this story in John's gospel a crowd of people are saying to Jesus, in effect, "We have no bread," but his reply is very different. Jesus' discourse takes place in the synagogue at Capernaum, on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

- <https://bit.ly/3kpdIMN>

And that is what we will be looking at – ***TRUE FAITH!***

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 6, beginning in verse 22 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we continue our study through the Gospel of John.

JOHN 6

VERSE 22-24

Remember during the night the disciples were traveling to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

But where were they going. According to Mark 6:45 we are told, "**Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.**"

But in John 6:16-17 we are told, "**Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.**"

Not only do we see two different locations mentioned, but when Jesus fed the 5,000 men it was in the area of Bethsaida, so how can this be that they were going to Bethsaida?

The simplest explanation, and I like simple, is that Bethsaida extended and spread across from the eastern side of the Jordan to the western side of the Jordan and according to John 12:21 the western side is called “**Bethsaida in Galilee.**”

So they were moving towards Bethsaida in Galilee and then, John 6:16-17 tells us they were going to move onto Capernaum.

And in Matthew 14:34 we see that they ended up in Gennesaret.

So where in the world are Jesus and His men?

And according to France, “***Gennesaret was a region (not just a town) on the western shore south of Capernaum.***”

So they are in Capernaum and the crowds of people are still in Bethsaida, on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

At this point I believe that some of the crowds of people that Jesus fed, went home. But many stayed and they had witnessed the miracles that Jesus did and the feeding of all those people with just five barley crackers and two small pickled fish!

And here they are, the next morning, looking around for Jesus and His men!

We will see why they were looking for Jesus, the specific reason, in a few minutes. But they were looking for Him and that is a good thing – ***SEEKING JESUS!***

Now think about this dilemma that they were in.

They saw the disciples of Jesus get into the boat late in the evening. There was only one boat there and Jesus did not get into it, only His men did.

And if Jesus did not leave with His disciples and there was no other boat around, where was He?

Keep in mind that they did not witness Jesus' walking on water and getting into the boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee with His disciples. So they are confused where He is at.

We are also told that in the morning there were boats that had come from Tiberias. Why they came, we are not sure.

It could have been that they were on the Sea of Galilee during the storm and were blown to this area, it is possible.

In regard to that, one writer wrote about these other boats that came from Tiberias, ***“The fact parenthetically introduced, verse 23, that boats from Tiberias had put in on the east shore, is an incidental confirmation of the truth that a gale had been blowing the night before.”***

(Dods)

Others feel that these boats had family members aboard and they were just coming to pick up their family there in Bethsaida. That too is possible.

We are not sure, but there were a good number of boats that were docked there in Bethsaida.

Now for these crowds of people who were looking for Jesus, they did not find Him there in Bethsaida and they got into these boats and traveled to Capernaum.

First of all, if there were 15,000 to 20,000 people there, or even 5,000 men alone, how could they get into these boats and travel to Capernaum?

Like I have said, I think at this point the crowds dwindled down, people walked home, and the remaining crowds got into these boats and were transported to Capernaum.

Maybe some even walked to Capernaum, we are not told that, but it is a possibility!

Clarke makes that point as he wrote, *“That is, as many of them as could get accommodated with boats took them and thus got to Capernaum; but many others doubtless went thither on foot, as it is not at all likely that five or six thousand persons could get boats enow [enough] to carry them.”*

Now why did they even think of going to Capernaum?

Because Capernaum was the home base for Jesus’ ministry, and it was the logical place to look for Him!

It is also possible that some of the people heard Jesus tell His men to get into the boat and go to the other side, to Capernaum.

So they are now on the other side, and I want to take a minute to focus on this idea of – ***SEEKING JESUS!***

What do you think of when you hear the word *“seeking”*?

For me, it speaks of actively pursuing, that you are looking for something, that you are searching something out.

Now let’s apply that to God.

Before we were saved, God was already seeking us, His Spirit is ***WITH US***, drawing us to Jesus. But we too must seek Him.

Think about a time before you came to Christ, before you were saved, and how something in your life caused you to think about God, to wonder if there is a God, or whatever it might be.

For me, it was the birth of my son and God used that miracle to show me He was real, that there is a God!

Remember what Jeremiah 29:13 says, “**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**”

If you are searching for God, seeking God, He will reveal Himself to you!

Now after we are saved, do we still need to seek God?

Of course we do.

Let me give you this example to show you what I mean.

There are two siblings and they both love their parents very much.

One of the siblings calls them every week, remembers to send birthday cards, comes to visit on Christmas and Easter.

That person is a good son or daughter.

Now the other sibling goes and visits his/her parents every few days. Takes them to the doctor when needed. Even attends church with them. This sibling loves his/her parents and is a good son or daughter.

Now, which one will know their parents better?

The one who is actively pursuing them, seeking them, spending time with them!

The same is true with our relationship with the Lord. How much time do we spend with Him? Are we truly seeking Him or just going through the motions? Or maybe we are seeking Him only when we want something from Him!

In Deuteronomy 29:13 we are told, “**But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.**”

Do you see that as we seek the Lord, He will reveal Himself more and more to us! Maybe some feel so distant from the Lord because they are not seeking Him. And remember, the Lord did not move away, you did!

And I think as we seek the Lord it fills our hearts with joy in knowing how much God loves us. We are told in I Chronicles 16:10, “**Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!**”

Also, notice the focus that we are to have, as I Chronicles 22:19 tells us, “**Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. . . .**”

And as we do seek the Lord, notice what we find, “**. . . If you seek Him, He will be found by you . . .**” (I Chronicles 28:9, II Chronicles 15:2)

And let me say this. If we don’t seek the Lord, we are the ones who miss out on what God has for us. And many times, as we are not seeking the Lord, we are filling our lives with things that can lead us into trouble as we are told in II Chronicles 12:14, “**And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.**”

I think you get the idea. God wants us to seek Him, pursue Him, to search out the things of God found in the Word of God.

Now, for all these people who were fed by Jesus and *SEEKING JESUS*, we are going to see that they are *SEEKING JESUS FOR THE WRONG REASONS!*

VERSES 25-26

Let me start out by saying this. What was the question that they asked Jesus?

We see it here in John 6:25, “**. . . ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’**”

But Jesus did not answer that question. You see, the answer to that question would have been, *“I walked across the Sea of Galilee in the nighttime to help My men who were in a fierce windstorm and were rowing nowhere. And when I got to them, in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, I got into the boat, the wind stopped, and we were immediately and miraculously transported to this area. That is how I got here!”*

But He did say that. Instead, he told them, **“... ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.’”** John 6:26.

Jesus is getting to the heart of the issue. They wanted to know how He got there and what was for breakfast and Jesus wants them to know how you get to heaven and be filled with not physical bread, but the – ***BREAD OF LIFE!***

Now keep in mind that it was not just this crowd of people that were with Jesus.

In Matthew 14:34-35 we are told, **“When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.”**

So here is another large group of people and what it says here in Matthew, it seems like that crowd kept growing and growing.

And, according to John 6:59, this long teaching by Jesus, the most of this chapter, takes place in the synagogue in Capernaum. John tells us, **“These things He said in the Synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.”**

Think about this for a minute. Jesus has spent the previous day speaking to them about spiritual things and now they are focused on the physical. I don't know if they were hungry or

not, that is not the issue. The main issue here is Jesus and they missed Jesus and wanted what He could give to them!

And this was truly a matter of the heart as Maclaren points out for us, *“They were quite unaffected by the wisdom of His words and the beauty of His deeds, but a miracle that found food precisely met their wants, and so there was an excited but impure enthusiasm, very unwelcome to Jesus.”*

Make no mistake about it, they were – ***SEEKING JESUS FOR THE WRONG REASONS!***

Now, as Christians, what can we glean from this? What is the Lord trying to show us here?

I think the point that the Lord is making is that of being – ***CARNALLY MINDED!***

I know, it is a word we don’t like to hear, but if you are more interested in the physical than the spiritual, then you are – ***CARNALLY MINDED!***

Let me share with you what Paul had to say in Romans 8:5-9, **“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

What is the passion of your life? What are you seeking?

For the carnal Christian, it is all about self and satisfying self. And isn’t that what we see so often today with Christians. Even the church has developed this mentality of giving the people what they want, meet their fleshly needs and leaving them spiritually dry and starving!

And the comparison is interesting.

For the carnal Christian, they are preoccupied with things that will satisfy their body appetites, the lust of the flesh.

If you can spend three hours watching a sporting event, and then complain about the sermon being an hour long, you are carnally minded! Sorry, that is just the reality. Look at your passion, look at what you enjoy, and if it is not the things of God, the you are carnally minded!

I know, ***“Joe, you need to read the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People!* You are going to offend people by talking like that!”***

Keep in mind that Paul said it, and I am just expounding on what Paul is saying, so if you are mad at me, get in line, but the reality is, you are mad that God has this in His Word!

Now yes, the unsaved person is at war with God also, they are controlled by their fleshly or bodily appetites, but so can Christians and we need to be careful what we are seeking!

One writer put it like this, ***“These people are completely consumed and dominated in their thinking by the things that gratify their fleshly desires. There is no desire or thought of future rewards or future glory, they live for the moment and for the pleasure they can get now. They are hedonists and materialists, who have no desire for spiritual things except to give God lip service at the appropriate times.”***

And yes, there in Romans Paul is comparing unbelievers with believers, but let’s face it, we all deal with this battle of the flesh and the Spirit in our lives and whatever we give into will control our lives!

Think about this word **“carnal”** for a minute. It is the Greek word SARKIKOS and it means ***“to be dominated by the inclinations of the old fallen nature.”***

That is interesting and that is the battle. That old nature tries to resurrect itself and the more we feed it the more we will succumb to it!

Alan Redpath gives us this interesting insight into the carnal Christian. He wrote, *“The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven but - he is travelling third class.”*

And again, this is where the church has failed. You see, for these people God exists to make them happy and bless them with all kinds of material treasures - as they are all about laying up for themselves treasures on earth.

And that is exactly the point that Jesus made here in John chapter 6 with these crowds of people who were only interested in getting fed physical food and there was no real interest in spiritual food, no interest in the – **BREAD OF LIFE!**

For the mature Christian, the Spirit-filled Christian, their focus is not on this physical world but by taking up their cross every day and following where Jesus is leading them. They are denying themselves on this earth and living to give glory to God. They are serving the Lord while they are here!

And let me share this with you. If you think that everything that goes wrong in your life is some kind of Satanic plot to destroy your earthly happiness, because it truly is all about being happy, then you are carnal.

I am not saying it is easy when difficulty comes our way, but listen to what James said in James 1:2-8, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”**

Here is the difference between spiritual believers and carnal believers. It is how we deal with the trials that we face in life.

For the carnal Christian their view of Christianity is based on how God blesses them, it is an earthly perspective of things. When things go well, God is good, when they go bad, God where are you!

And they tend to believe that all the bad that happens to them is some kind of Satanic plot to destroy their earthly happiness, like I have said. And thus, you must ***“Rebuke”*** the devil so that you can enjoy those blessings once again.

You see, in their mind God exists to make them happy, to bless them, and the focus is on all kinds of material things.

Now, on the opposite end of the spectrum is the spiritual believer whose focus is on the eternal and instead of laying up treasures on this earth, they are storing up heavenly treasures by taking up their cross, by denying themselves and it is all for the glory of God as they represent God on this earth!

For the spiritual Christian, trials are necessary for their spiritual growth and development. It is not some kind of Satanic plot, but it is part of God's plan to help equip them to serve the Lord.

Now let me also say this. Satan can use those trials in our lives to tempt us to sin, but God wants to use them to help us to grow! Satan can throw all kinds of things at us to trip us up, to cause us to sin, but God is using those same things to test our faith, to trust in Him, to grow by!

And thus, James starts out running here and he tells us “**. . . when you fall into various trials**” not “*if.*”

You see, trials are all around us, you can't escape them and that is not the issue. The issue is how you handle yourself through them.

Trials are going to happen, not might, not if, but “**when**” they do happen, then you need to walk accordingly. Trials are unavoidable.

God will give to us exactly what we need for each trial that we are going through!

Remember what Paul said regarding faith and how it grows in Romans 10:17, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**”

You see, our faith grows as we read God's Word, as we apply God's Word to our lives and then the evidence of our faith is seen in how we endure trials. God is showing us what is inside of us, what we are made of you might say!

James tells us that God is working out in our lives, through these trials, “**patience**” or HUMPOMONE, (hoop-om-on-ay') in the Greek and it speaks of active endurance.

Trials produce endurance or patience in our lives. And each time we face a trial, as we endure through it, our endurance will be strengthened, it will grow as we learn to depend more upon God and less upon our own strength. You see, being steadfast, immovable in a trial just shows that we trust in the Lord and His promises to us.

Why are we – ***SEEKING JESUS?***

May we seek Him to know Him more and more and to trust Him more and more and to grow in Him more and more!

Yes, it is not easy, but God does not say that we alone are to do this. We are to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us so that He can work through us.

But, if we are - ***SEEKING JESUS FOR THE WRONG REASONS***, we are going to be very disappointed because God does not want that kind of relationship with us. He does not want us to think of Him like some kind of Santa Clause that is just going to give us what we want, that is not the God we serve. We need to desire Him!

Now with how they approached Jesus, asking for food, that is all they were interested in, you would think Jesus would be angry at them, but I don't believe He is angry with them because we see here that – ***JESUS CORRECTS THEM!***

He wants to get them back on track, He wants them to see what is eternally important and not just something to satisfy the flesh.

Let's read on and see what Jesus has to say.

VERSE 27

Remember that Jesus just finished exposing their hearts by saying the only reason they were coming to Him is to have their bodily appetites satisfied, and that is empty faith.

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

Jesus made a contrast between material things and spiritual things. It is almost universally true that people are more attracted to material things than spiritual things. A sign that says free money and free food will get a bigger crowd than one that says spiritual fulfillment and eternal life.

- David Guzik

Now in saying that, let me ask you this. Does Jesus provide for our material needs?

Of course He does but that is not the biggest issue.

You see, Jesus wanted to give them eternal life, but they were thinking on the physical level even though they should have received what Jesus was saying because the Father has set His seal upon Him. And this seal was a mark of ownership and a guarantee of the contents, the Father has done this!

And the miracles that Jesus did verified who He was, the Messiah!

Remember, the day before Jesus spent all day teaching them the things of God, but again, they forgot about the spiritual and were focusing on the material and we see that – **JESUS CORRECTS THEM!**

And the way that this verse is written in the Greek is interesting. Jesus is emphatic about this, and he is basically telling them, ***“Make absolutely sure about your salvation, make it a passion of your life, it needs to be the object of your intense desire, the true obsession of your life and not this physical food!”***

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

Satisfying one’s physical appetite is not the most important thing in life. Man consists not only of body, but of spirit and soul as well . . . Man should not live as if his body were all. He should not devote all his strength and talents to the feeding of his body, which in a few short years will be eaten by worms.

Rather, he should make sure that his soul is fed day by day with the Word of God. **‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ (Matt.4:4)** We should work tirelessly to acquire a better knowledge of the Word of God.

When the Lord Jesus said that God the Father had set His seal on Him, He meant that God had sent Him and approved Him.

When we set our seal to something, it means that we promise that it is true. God sealed the Son of Man in the sense that He endorsed Him as One who spoke the truth.

- Source Unknown

Now let me also say this. Jesus did advise them not to labor for food that perishes and because of that, some feel that they should not work and just have someone else provide food for them! That is wrong. We are to work for our food, provide for our families!

Make no mistake about it, seeking the things of God is the most important thing and yet, we tend to make physical food the most important. We spend so much time on preparing the things we are going to eat or deciding which restaurant to go to and when it comes to spending time with the Lord, we will see what we can do! That is wrong!

We do need to work to provide for ourselves and our families, that is what the Scriptures teach us. If you don't work, you don't eat. Now if there is some kind of physical problem with you working, God is not coming against you and telling you that you should not eat. Not at all. But there are far too many people who can work and choose not to and that is wrong!

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:13-14, **“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”**

Jesus is that living water that will quench our spiritual thirst and here in John chapter 6 we see Jesus say to them in verse 35, **“... ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”**

Bread and water, that which is needed for our physical lives, Jesus provides for our spiritual lives! He is the bread of life and our living water that we need!

Ray Stedman sums this up for us as he wrote,

One of our pastors told me of a recent Barbara Walters' television program he watched in which she interviewed three celebrities: Johnny Carson, Johnny Cash, and Walter Cronkite.

Johnny Carson, he told me, came across as the typical jaded playboy hedonist. Everything he said telegraphed the fact that he was living for pleasure, but, having tried everything and been everywhere he was fed up with the whole thing.

Walter Cronkite was the suave humanist, the worldly philosopher. Now retired and wealthy, he is enjoying life as best he can. He was looking at life rather philosophically, but all he really was saying was, “That’s the way it is!”

Johnny Cash, on the other hand, admitted his background of alcoholism and dope addiction and the fact that he had virtually destroyed a marriage and wrecked his life. But he openly said he had found Jesus.

There was peace in his eyes and contentment in his voice. He spoke of a hope for the future which neither of the others had.

Johnny Cash made very clear that he had found what Jesus is talking about right here - the bread of life - bread that lasts beyond the mere satisfaction of physical hunger.

Thus Jesus had to correct that view of life - as he still corrects in our twentieth century day - this majority, popular view that the only reason to work is to get enough money to make us comfortable. That must be corrected because it will not work. He directs the crowd to put their energy into learning about “the bread which endures to eternal life.”

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It is so easy to lose our focus, but our Lord is so gracious and merciful with us that He will correct us just as we have seen that – ***JESUS CORRECTS THEM!***

Now, in hearing all of this, notice the last point that will come forth – ***WHAT SHALL WE DO?***

VERSES 28-29

Now did you hear their response to what Jesus said to them about seeking after spiritual things, eternal life?

They said, “**... ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’**” John 6:28.

Are you kidding me? How can they ask that kind of a question to Jesus?

Because Judaism had become a legalistic religious system and thus, they felt that they need to work hard, do good things to gain God’s approval or receive His blessings and eternal life, you had to work hard and be very good!

In fact, for the Jews, if anyone was going to make it to heaven it would be a Scribe and a Pharisee, they were holy men of God, or so the people were led to believe with their pious behavior!

That is the same question that people have today - “*What do I need to do to get into heaven?*”

And as we look at the religions of the world, they are all based upon a works salvation or a works to get you here or there.

Look at the millions of gods the Hindus embrace.

The Buddhists have their 8 steps to Nirvana.

Islam has its 5 pillars of faith.

Roman Catholicism has its sacraments and Purgatory!

Even in Judaism they had the Law to keep.

In other words, it is a works relationship and yet, how much works, what kind of works will get me in and for that matter, what works will keep me out?

No one knows and thus, just work a little harder and maybe you will get in!

I know that many call Christianity a religion and maybe some of you have done that before.

But let me share with you what religion is. The word “*religion*” comes for a Latin word that means “*to bind.*” And the idea here is to bind someone to an obligation!

And an obligation is nothing more than a duty, something that a person should do, the right thing to do!

So religion ends up being a binding duty or obligation to do the right thing so you can appease God and get into heaven or get the blessings of God.

That is not Christianity!

Christianity is not do this and do that! Christianity is, very simply – *IT IS DONE!*

The work was completed by Jesus, and we receive it by faith. And we will deal with that more in a minute!

As I have said, every religion in this world is work based or it is based upon human achievement.

How does God feel about the good that we have done?

Let me share some Scriptures with you to show you what God feels about our efforts to be saved, to get into heaven.

In Romans chapter 3 we are told, “**There is none righteous, no, not one . . . There is none who does good, no, not one. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**”

Romans 3:10, 12, 23.

I think that is very clear, none of us are good before a holy and righteous God, we are not righteous before Him, we have sinned and thus, we come up short from entering into heaven, far short!

In Ecclesiastes 7:20 we are told once again, **“For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.”**

God says that there is not even one just man on this earth and yet, we believe by our good works we can enter in.

And if you think good works will do the trick, listen to what the Lord says in Isaiah 64:6, **“But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.”**

In other words, all the good we have done before God is nothing, like filthy rags and those filthy rags can't make us clean because we are already dirty!

In Psalm 14:1-3 we are told, **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”**

Man tries to get into heaven apart from God and they will never make it. God sees what they are really like. They are corrupt, have done abominable works, they have not done good before Him, not even one person!

I hope this is clear to you, that you can't work your way into heaven because God demands perfection and we fall far short of that, far short!

Remember,

RELIGION SAYS – DO!

CHRISTIANITY SAYS – DONE!

Make no mistake about it, there is no hope in trying to work your way into heaven, it can't be done because there are none who are good, not even one. And please understand, that is not my opinion or what some other Bible teacher has said, that is what the Lord has told us in His Word, the Bible!

Now, once again, listen to this question. They asked Jesus, “... ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God.’” John 6:28.

And listen to what Jesus says in regard to what works do we need to do? He said to this crowd of people, “... ‘This is the work of God ...’” John 6:29.

Now this gets people listening. Jesus is going to tell us what work we need to do to get saved, to get into heaven.

Please don't take this to the wrong conclusion. Listen carefully to what He has to say to these Jewish people about legalism. He said, “... This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’”

Again, we need to keep in mind what they were thinking and then how Jesus answered their question, because they are still thinking on the physical level, trying to work their way into heaven.

And Jesus tells them the only work that is needed to be saved is to **BELIEVE** in Him, put your faith in Him.

In other words, if you believe in the Father, you will believe in the Son.

Now the problem comes with this word “**believe**” and there are many people who believe in Jesus. We see the Mormons, the Jehovah Witnesses, and many other cults including Islam believe in Jesus.

So does that mean that they are saved?

Absolutely not.

Remember what James said in James 2:19, **“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble!”**

I know that may be hard for some of you to believe but James nails it here when he speaks of the demons believing in the true and living God – they have faith is the point that James is making but they are not saved by this faith!

What do I mean by that or what is James saying about these demons and faith?

James’ point is that passive faith is not the kind of faith that saves, and he points to the demons who believe the facts about Jesus and the gospel. They understand that He is the virgin born Son of God who died for the sins of mankind and rose from the dead. They know that He is Almighty God, they spent time with Him before they rebelled against Him! But they are not going to heaven!

Remember the story of Jesus as He encountered the demon possessed man in the area of the Gadarenes in Mark chapter 5.

When Jesus came upon this man, we are told in Mark 5:6-7, **“When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’”**

You see, these demons are fallen angels who sided with Lucifer when he rebelled against God, and he took one-third of the angels with him in his rebellion.

Thus, they know who God is, and they know their final destiny, but they are not saved, like I have said.

Their faith is empty because they have no works, there is nothing to show that their faith is real! Their faith is not active!

You can't see faith without works is the point that James is making here!

And now James is going to look at Abraham and the faith or I should say the works of Abraham.

Listen to what we are told in James 2:20-24 about the faith of Abraham. James wrote, **“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”**

James goes back to the Old Testament, and he is using it to demonstrate what he has already said about the character of living faith, showing that a faith that is not accompanied with works is a dead faith that cannot save.

And please understand that it was not the works of Abraham that justified him for in Genesis 15:6 we are told, **“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”**

Then years later we see his faith that was demonstrated by his willingness to offer his only son, Isaac, showing that he did trust God.

In Hebrews 11:17-19 we see the faith of Abraham in action as Paul tells us, **“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”**

Faith and works cooperating together as we see here in the life of Abraham!

Now, if there is no evidence of this new life, then there is no genuine saving faith!

Spurgeon put it like this, *“The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul.”*

And this belief is not just acknowledging who Jesus is, it is living in obedience to what He has said. Works don’t save us but the identify who we are serving!

Make no mistake about it, salvation is a gift of God, a grace gift that we must receive by faith. We see this in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

Also, Paul tells us in Titus 3:5, **“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”**

And in Romans 6:23, and this is from The Living Bible, we read **“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

The work has been completed for us by Jesus on the cross of Calvary, we just must receive that grace gift into our lives by faith!

In fact, the Greek word that John uses for “**believe**” is PISTEUO, (pist-yoo’-o) and it means to commit or to put your trust in and specifically, it is putting our trust in Jesus. And that trust is seen in our obedience to Him. Works don’t save us, but they are the evidence for our salvation!

So we have seen here that in life, there are two kinds of food. The physical food, which is necessary for the body, but it is not the most important!

And then there is food for the inner man, the spirit and this is essential if we want to not only come to saving faith but then to grow and mature in the faith.

We need to focus on the life that Jesus gives to us, the Bread of Life, who gives to us eternal life with Him! We need to have **TRUE FAITH** and not a faith that is only interested in getting something from Jesus, but one that worships Him!

As we read on, we will see Jesus speaking of Himself as the Bread of Life and they are going to struggle trying to understand this, as we will see.

Let me close with this for you to think about.

We are told,

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day’s pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award.

But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award - yet receives such a gift anyway - that is a good picture of God’s unmerited favor.

This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.