

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

WANT MORE!

John 6:1-21

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Analysis by Marcus Felde

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. 3Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. 4Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. 5When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" 6He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." 8One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people? 10Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. 11Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." 13So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. 14When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

15When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

16When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 20But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

DIAGNOSIS: Sated, Not Satisfied

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Following the Crumbs*

Many people (at least some of whom would otherwise have been on the way to Jerusalem, where the Passover was about to be celebrated by the Judeans), yea, very many people, were following the trail of healings. All they wanted was for their daily needs—represented by bread, or a healing—to be taken care of.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Ready to Crown Jesus the Baker*

They had never had it so easy before, not since manna had been on the menu. They liked the way Jesus himself waited on them, gave them "as much as they wanted." This kind of prophet or king certainly had appeal. Met them where they were! They wanted to seize him (by force if necessary) and compel him to be their king. They liked him a lot.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *He Withdrew*

Withdrawing because he saw how little they wanted from him, only bread, Jesus left the people out there with nothing and no one. Their disappointment was only a foretaste of the starvation in the offing for those whose hearts' desire is not for the kingdom of God to come, but only for their daily bread to come.

PROGNOSIS: Now We're Getting Somewhere! (As in, "the boat reached the land . . .")

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Bread of Life: Before Our Very Eyes*

Right smack in front of the five thousand had been the very Bread of Life, if they had only seen it. To those who do see and desire it, Jesus is as close as the loaf in our hand, and to have him is to have Life. So near. So nourishing.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Advanced Solution) : *Wanting to Take Him into the Boat*

The disciples in the boat, when they knew that the scary one was Jesus and that he did not want them to be afraid, "wanted to take him into the boat." That was a lot better than the wanting of those who were satisfied with a hunk of bread and a fish. The desire of the disciples was for Jesus. That was a faith that would have stood the five thousand in good stead. By the end of the chapter Peter will make clear why they want him in the boat: "You have the words of eternal life."

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *The Whole Loaf*

Unlike some breads which only sustain for a day, this bread (Jesus) will keep us going for eternity. We will not foolishly go wherever crumbs lead, but will follow our Lord, who will see that we get where we are going.