

“He Cares For You”

St. John 6:5

March 22, 2020

SERMON 1900

by Michael David Henson

The sermon text is from John 6:5, “Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’”

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first thing we notice with John 6 is that **Jesus truly cared about the physical needs of the great multitude.** In the morning while they were still coming to him and before anyone saw the need, Jesus did. He alone knew their situation. After a day of teaching, their body would need sustenance. We often take God’s provisions for granted—“house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.” The Triune God has been preparing for your needs, long before you ever considered them.

What is truly amazing is **the lack of thanksgiving and trust of those who received bread that day.** Most of those who were coming were not there to trust in the Messiah by listening to His teaching. Verse 2 says that they came because “they saw the signs.” They were simply miracle chasers. At the end of this account, we learn that these miracle seekers sought to take Him by force and make Him king. They wanted this miracle worker to be their bread king. Despite their evil desire, Jesus lovingly fed each and every one of them. And as I said before He was truly concerned for these ungrateful seekers.

Why did Jesus perform miracles? **Because He truly loved the people. He had mercy upon their condition.** Jesus healed the sick of their diseases. Jesus miraculously fed people on at least two occasions. John calls these miracles signs. They are signs because we are supposed to learn from them that Jesus is the Messiah and then listen to His words of salvation.

Even though **Jesus knew their motivation,** He still engaged in a day long work of trying to teach these multitudes. In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, the ones hired last give the excuse that no body has hired, though the foreman has been to the market four times earlier that day. The foreman tells them to just go into the vineyard. Jesus takes them as they are and desires to teach them, that is, bring them to their senses. He desires that they would confess their sins and come to believe.

These multitudes were overly concerned with minor things. With each announcement and snippet of news, we have watched people panic. Their anxiety and worry have gone sky high. Worse though is the response of the church. Rather than bring the Word of God to bear upon a lack of trust, due to fear and of illness and death. The church has given out directions concerning hand washing and acted like health care workers. Don’t get me wrong; We need the health care industry to give us sound

advice for our bodies. We need the food industry to protect the food supply, etc. But we need the church to speak about higher and more important things.

Sickness and disease are the result of the general condition of sin and the fallenness of this world. Our physical world has been infected by our fall into sin. We shouldn't be any more surprised at sickness, then we should be surprised at death. Sickness is a forerunner of death. The wages of sin is death. We see it in ourselves. St. Paul declared, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

You don't know and neither do I, the gracious reason that our God has had in allowing this illness. At times He shows us our need, so that we cry out to Him. He leads us to realize that we are not in control and that "The eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing" (Ps 145:15-16).

In today text, Jesus asks the disciples about securing bread. Now Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do. **Jesus asked so that his disciples would come to realize their need and cry out to Him.** The apostles of all people should have asked their Messiah for help. But they don't. Phillip counts the supplies in the money bag and determines that it cannot be done. That is humanly true, but where is the cry for mercy or the faith-filled comfort of trusting in Jesus' provisions. Andrew does see that God has provided five loaves and two fish, but he ridicules it saying, "what are they among so many?"

Today, we have come to realize that we cannot control this situation. Like a tornado, we can try and minimize the damage, but there is so much that we don't know about it. There are general precautions, but no one is really safe. Neither national borders, nor ten person gatherings, nor masks and gloves will ensure protection.

Second, we have put our trust in men, and it has come up lacking. The government cannot protect us. Neither can they repair the damage which is done to financial pocketbooks, to families who have lost loved ones, or to lost time. We can't even protect ourselves. We have reached out here and there but no human help can rescue us.

Some have tried to seek the human help of the church and her members. Kind of like asking Phillip and Andrew to feed five thousand. But as you see, they got nothing. What I mean is that I can't assure you that the coronavirus stopped at the doors of the church and you are safe with our members and safe eating and drinking here. Do not put your trust in men!

Third, the disciples should have cried out to Jesus for help. They should have sought the mercy of the Messiah. "You, O Lord, can do it." With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The Word of God reveals to us the signs which Jesus did so that we would know that He was the Creator come in human flesh. As Moses foretold, Jesus is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.

Fourth, Jesus took what Andrew considered to be insufficient and He fed 5,000 men not counting the women and children. **Our God has already provided a solution for the sickness and death that has come as a result of sin.** The world may ridicule it, but it rescues from sin, illness, death and hell. The suffering and sacrificial death of the sinless Son of God has secured a medicine of immortality. Through the preaching of the Word, our God offers each and every person eternal life. He desires all men to

be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Through faith in God's promise you need not fear sin, illness, death and hell.

When Pastor Harroun and I were talking about people's anxiety and worry, he told me, "**Death is not that bad.**" That really puts it in its proper perspective. When you are a Christians, you can face illness and affliction, and even death, because God has defeated all of those things and given you the cure—Jesus Christ. St. Paul answers his own question, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24-25a).

We pray that God would restore us to our former health. We pray that he would restore our neighbor, our nation, our way of life, but only if that is advantageous unto eternal salvation. We pray, "Thy will be done." We have been taught by the Word to live in this world, but not be of it. We have been taught to properly use the things of this world, but not cling to the things of this world. We live sacrificial lives in service to our neighbor.

Finally, when we are filled with the knowledge of salvation, **we gather up all of the fragments of God's Word.** He has, indeed, given us all that we need. His provisions of Word and Sacrament, prayer and fellowship were exactly what we needed to receive and keep eternal life. These very means of grace give us a resolute heart so that we proclaim with Simeon, "I can now depart in peace."

Of course, we take care of and make use of the life God has given us. We even seek to take care of our neighbor's life. **But we don't fear the wages of sin—illness and death.** We boldly live in this fallen world, knowing that Jesus is the Prophet who has come into the world, and He will take all believers to be with Him when our work here is done. Until then, each one of us gathers from the Lord's hand what we need. "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need" (Ex 16:18). Let us eat our "food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46).