**The Gospel of John:**

**Genuine and Fake Disciples, 3**

*John 6:28-34*

**Context**

This section of scripture sets up a dialogue from Jesus on one of the most remarkable passages in the Gospels. Jesus represents Himself as the Bead of Life. He sets the stage for such a discourse following the feeding of five thousand (vv1-21) only to see a predominately disappointing outcome that followed (vv60-71).

The Apostle John’s description of Jesus’ miracles throughout the gospel narrative is unpretentious and “matter of fact.” He spends greater time and emphasis on the words of Jesus. The miracles of Jesus authenticate His words. His signs and wonders (although astounding) are not enough for salvation. Paul says that “*…faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ*” (**Romans 10:17**).

One must believe by faith the gospel claims (truths expressed in words) of the person and works of Jesus.

**John 6:28-34**—*Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”****29****Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”****30****So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?****31****Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’”****32****Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.****33****For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”****34****Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”*

3 Notable Truths

1. **The natural man cannot understand the things of God**

**John 6:28**—*Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”*

* 1. “Doing” was their understanding of meriting heaven

**John 6:27**—*Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life….”*

**John 6:28**—*Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”*

**Matthew 19:16**—*And someone [Rich Young Ruler] came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?”*

**Luke 10:25**—*And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

**Titus 3:5**—*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit*

* 1. They turn the issue of saving faith into works

**John 6:30**—*So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?*

1. Did they forget what just happened with the feeding?
2. Brazenly demanding more of Jesus to satisfy their desires

This wicked question clearly shows the truth of what is said elsewhere: ‘a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign’ (Matthew 2:39).[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Unbelief is never satisfied

**Luke 16:31**—*But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’*

* 1. Salvation is by grace through faith alone

**Ephesians 2:8-9**—*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;****9****not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**Romans 3:28**—*For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

**Acts 4:12**—*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”*

One might have thought they had had a sign sufficient to convince them. Taught by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, one might have expected a greater readiness to believe. But alas! There are no limits to man’s dullness, prejudice, and unbelief in spiritual matters. It is a striking fact that the only thing which our Lord is said to have ‘marveled’ at during His earthly ministry, was man’s ‘unbelief’ (**Mark 6:6**).[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. **The importance that Christ places to believe in Him**

**John 6:29**—*Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”*

* 1. The distinction between work and faith

Salvation does not come from human effort, achievement, or moral works, but from a faith that inevitably produces good works (**Ephesians 2:10; cf. Matthew 3:10; 7:16-20; 12:33: 13:23; Luke 6:43-46; Ephesians 5:8-9; Colossians 1:10**). A ‘faith’ that does not produce fruit is dead, meaning that it is not really biblical faith at all (**James 2:14-26**).[[3]](#footnote-3)

* 1. The highest of all “works” is believing in Him
     1. Man’s faith is at best weak
     2. Moreover, his faith is never in himself
     3. It is the object of man’s faith that matters
  2. Blessed are those who truly believe in Him
     1. Admitting their sin
     2. Believing in His atoning work on their behalf

1. **The greater privilege we have today**
   1. Manna was a wonderful grace of God to the children of Israel

**John 6:31**—*Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’*

* + 1. It fed the body
    2. It was physical and temporal

**John 6:49**—*Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.*

**John 6:32**—*Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.*

(**Exodus 16:4, 15; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalms 78:24; 105:40**)

* + 1. BTW, it’s not Moses that gave that to you, but My Father
    2. Now My father is giving you The True Bread
    3. They challenged Jesus to provide an unending supply of food with His Messianic claims
  1. Jesus, The Bread of Life, is a far greater grace given

**Bread of heaven=kingdom of God=kingdom of heaven=bread that comes down from heaven**

**John 6:33**—*For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.*

* + 1. He feeds the soul
    2. He is spiritual and eternal (zóé)   
       (cf. **John 1:4; 5:29, 40; 6:53; 10:10; 14:6; 20:31**)

**John 6:47**—*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.*

**John 6:50**—*This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*

**Psalm 34:8**—*O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*

* 1. Their conclusion reveals their spiritual blindness

***John 6:34****—Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”*

1. John Calvin [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. JC Ryle, Expository thoughts on the Gospels, John, Vol 1, p.250. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John Macarthur, NT Commentary, John 1-11, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)