

## Jesus' Fifth Sign

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Signs / Sign; Johannine Sign; Jesus says he is the bread of life; Jesus Feeds 5,000 People; Miraculous Feeding / John 6:1-15; John 6:22-71

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## Introduction

The Apostle John wrote *The Gospel According to John*. Jesus had done thousands of miracles. John selected just seven of these miracles, which he called “signs,” to help his readers “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing [they] may have life in his name” ([John 20:31](#)).

Each of the seven signs points to a different truth about Jesus.

The first sign was in [John 2:1-11](#), where Jesus turned the water into wine in Cana in Galilee. That sign showed that Jesus is the Christ who initiates the new covenant.

The second sign was in [John 2:12-17](#), where Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem. That sign showed that Jesus is the new temple.

The third sign was in [John 4:43-54](#), where Jesus healed the official’s son in Capernaum (although Jesus was in Cana in Galilee at the time of the healing). That sign showed that Jesus is the Son of God who grants life by the word of his power.

The fourth sign was in [John 5:1-15](#), where Jesus healed the invalid at the pool of Bethesda. That sign showed that Jesus is the Son of God who makes people spiritually whole.

Today, we are going to look at Jesus’ fifth sign, the feeding of the multitude.

I am going to read [John 6:1-15](#), although most of our exposition is going to be from Jesus’ explanation of that sign in [John 6:22-71](#).

## Scripture

Let's read [John 6:1-15](#):

**<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup> Jesus then 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. <sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"**

**<sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.**

<sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup> Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup> They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes

down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.<sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.<sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.<sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.<sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.<sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”<sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”<sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?<sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?<sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.<sup>64</sup> But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)<sup>65</sup> And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.<sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,<sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.”<sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

## Lesson

The fifth sign in [John 6:1-15, 22-71](#) teaches us that Jesus is the bread of life who is sovereign over the gift of eternal life.

Let's use the following outline:

1. People Want a Bread That Perishes (6:26-27)
2. The Bread of Life Is Not Earned (6:28-29, 47, 63, 65)
3. Only Some Will Eat the Bread of Life (6:37, 64-66)
4. Those Enabled to Eat of the Bread of Life Will Eat (6:44)
5. Those Who Eat of the Bread of Life Will Never Lose It (6:56, 39, 40, 44, 54)

## I. People Want a Bread That Perishes (6:26-27)

First, people want a bread that perishes.

The feeding of the multitude was an astonishing sign.

Jesus went into the hills on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. John said that “a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick” ([John 6:2](#)).

This crowd grew to be extremely large. John said that there were about 5,000 men in the crowd ([John 6:10](#)). Scholars suggest that when one adds the women and children in attendance, there were somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000 people in the crowd.

You know the story. Jesus fed this vast multitude with five barley loaves and two fish that a boy had brought for his lunch that day.

We read in verses 12-13, “And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.’ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.”

This is an astonishing miracle. It is the only miracle that is recorded in each of the four Gospels.

John noted in verse 14, “When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, ‘This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!’ ”

If we had never read the Bible and got that far in our reading, we might have said to ourselves, “Ah! Finally! The people are getting it. Jesus is the Prophet who is

to come into the world! He is the Messiah. He is the Christ. He is the Son of God. He is the Savior of the world.”

But our expectation would be dashed because in the very next verse we read that Jesus was able to see right through the thinking of the people. John wrote in verse 15, “Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.”

The next day the crowd found Jesus on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ([John 6:25](#)).

Jesus answered them in verses 26-27, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

The people raced after Jesus because they saw him as a miracle worker. They even wanted to make him king.

They thought that Jesus would supply all of their temporal needs, such as food.

But Jesus here urged people to find a solution to their greatest need, which is a spiritual need.

God created people in such a way that we all have needs. We seek to fulfill those needs in all kinds of ways.

Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BC) was an ancient Macedonian king and conqueror who desired to create one of the largest empires in history. Despite his numerous victories and vast conquests, he reportedly wept because there were "no more worlds to conquer" at a relatively young age, highlighting his unquenchable ambition. He died at the age of 32.

Howard Hughes (1905 - 1976) was an American business magnate, aviator, and film producer. Hughes was known for his insatiable desire for wealth, power, and perfection. He constantly pursued new ventures and became increasingly reclusive in his later years, never finding contentment.

Elvis Presley (1935 - 1977), the King of Rock and Roll, achieved immense fame and success in his music career. However, his desire for more led to excessive

drug use and an ultimately tragic end, as he never found satisfaction in his achievements.

Steve Jobs (1955 - 2011) was the co-founder of Apple Inc. Jobs was known for his relentless pursuit of innovation and perfection in technology. Despite his remarkable achievements, Jobs often expressed dissatisfaction and a desire to create even greater products until he died of cancer.

These are examples of individuals from various walks of life whose needs were never satisfied.

All people crave to have a deep and lasting satisfaction in their lives.

They seek it in all kinds of ways but many never find it.

Jesus alone can satisfy spiritual needs—as well as temporal needs—because the Father has set his seal of approval on him.

Sadly, though, people want a bread that perishes.

## II. The Bread of Life Is Not Earned (6:28-29, 47, 63, 65)

Second, the bread of life is not earned.

Even though Jesus rebuked the people for wanting bread that perishes, they wanted to know how to acquire this magical bread.

They asked Jesus, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ([John 6:28](#)).

You see, the crowd believed that they needed to do something like Jesus did so that they could have bread for ever.

The people were used to doing things that they believed made them acceptable to God.

But Jesus asserted something profoundly opposite to their thinking. He said in verse 29, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

In other words, faith—faith alone—in Jesus alone is required for the gift of eternal life.

To make this crystal clear, Jesus repeated the requirement of faith alone in verse 47, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”

“But,” someone may say, “isn’t faith a work?”

No. Faith is not a work. It is a gift from the Spirit.

Jesus clarified this point in verse 63a, where he said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.”

Furthermore, Jesus said in verse 65, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

All the religions of the world believe that they earn eternal life by something that they do. Their obedience, their good life, and their good works earn them a place with God in heaven for eternity.

Only Christianity believes that eternal life is a free gift that is received by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

### III. Only Some Will Eat the Bread of Life (6:37, 48, 64-66)

Third, only some will eat the bread of life.

Jesus made it clear that he is the bread of life. He said in verse 48, “I am the bread of life.”

Jesus was speaking to the crowd of Jews in Capernaum who had followed him after he had fed a vast crowd with five barley loaves and two fish.

Jesus had already stated that he was “the bread of life” in verse 35. And he had just referred to “eternal life” in verse 47.

Jesus was making it as clear as possible for his hearers (and readers) that believing in him was the only way to receive that nourishing, sustaining, and maintaining power that provides eternal life.

Jesus said in verse 37, “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”

Jesus stresses the sovereign action of his Almighty Father.

The Father has sovereignly elected a vast number of people to believe in Jesus. Every sovereignly chosen person will come to Jesus. That person cannot do anything but come to Jesus for salvation.



Jesus also made it clear that only some will eat the bread of life. He said in verse 64a, “But there are some of you who do not believe.”

John added a parenthetical comment in verse 64b, “(For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)”

Jesus continued in verse 65, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

The real issue was not the truths that Jesus was presenting but rather their unbelief.

Jesus affirmed that the source of salvation is his Father.

Jesus’ point is that only some will eat the bread of life.

#### IV. Those Enabled to Eat the Bread of Life Will Eat (6:44)

Fourth, those enabled to eat the bread of life will eat.

They will be drawn by faith and they will find Jesus irresistible.

Jesus made this clear in verse 44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

This is one of Jesus’ most precious statements.

He affirmed that all human beings are incapable of making any kind of spiritual decision to believe in Jesus.

The reason is that since the Fall all human beings have a moral inability to receive the gospel. That inability must be overcome by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

But, according to Jesus, the Father has given many people to Jesus. They are the ones who will be born again and enabled to exercise faith.

Moreover, every person who trusts savingly in Jesus will be raised up by Jesus on the last day.

When I was a student at the University of Cape Town (UCT), I was very active in a student ministry on campus called the Student YMCA.

I had become a Christian just before I arrived at UCT and I thrived as a new Christian in that student ministry.

After several years, I began leading a small group Bible study. One particular group that I led used to meet in the home of a retired lady. The group was well attended with about a dozen students. I think attendance was high because of the tea and scones we were served each week!

At one point, a new student attended. I think he was interested in one of the girls in the group. He did not profess to be a Christian but he enjoyed participating in the Bible study.

One day, we came across the truth in our Bible study which is in verse 44a, where Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” The new student vehemently denied the doctrine of irresistible grace. He insisted that he was the one who would make any decision to follow Christ. He would never be compelled to do so.

Later, his girlfriend invited him to an evangelistic meeting. He knew that the gospel would be preached. He knew that he would be invited to place his trust in Jesus and become a Christian.

So, he was especially careful to make sure that he would not make any such commitment.

“However,” as he told us after the evangelistic meeting, “when the preacher invited us to trust in Jesus, I found that I could not help myself from putting my trust in Jesus. All my defenses were stripped away. I found myself—despite my previous decision—coming to Jesus. And I did so joyfully!”

That is what Jesus was teaching here. Those who are enabled by the Father will eat the bread of life.

## V. Those Who Eat the Bread of Life Will Never Lose It (6:39, 40, 44, 54)

And finally, those who eat the bread of life will never lose it.

Jesus stated this four times in his discussion with the Jews.

He said in verse 39, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

He said in verse 40, “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

He said in verse 44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

And he said in verse 54, “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Realizing that he would soon be gone from this world one day, Moody said to a friend, “Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of Northfield is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone higher, that is all—out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal, a body that sin cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned into his glorious body. I was born in the flesh in 1837; I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die; that which is born of the Spirit will live forever.”

Moody understood the truth that Jesus would never lose him.

What a glorious promise is given to those who believe in Jesus!

## Conclusion

The fifth sign in [John 6:1-15, 22-71](#) teaches us that Jesus is the bread of life who is sovereign over the gift of eternal life.

The five points in this message are in fact the so-called “Five Points of Calvinism.” I did not tell you at the start that I was going to teach the five points of Calvinism because I wanted you to see how each point is grounded in the word of God.

The first point is Total Depravity. That means that every part of us is tainted by sin. That is why we never have our needs fully met.

The second point is Unconditional Election. The Father elects us because of his love for us and not because of any choice of ours. We do not earn our salvation. We receive it as a gift.

The third point is Limited Atonement. Jesus has given his life in substitutionary payment for the elect.

The fourth point is Irresistible Grace. Those whom the Father has elected to salvation and those for whom Jesus has paid the penalty of sin are those to whom the Holy Spirit will grant the gift of salvation.

And the fifth point is the Perseverance of the Saints. Those who are believers in Jesus will be raised on the last day with Jesus. They will continue in their walk with Jesus for all eternity.

The question for you is: Are you chasing a bread that perishes? Or, do you want the bread of life?

If you believe in Jesus for your eternal destiny, you can have the bread of life. Amen.