

John 6:22–29

- <sup>22</sup> On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—
- <sup>23</sup> however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—
- <sup>24</sup> when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
- <sup>25</sup> And 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 and said, “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.
- <sup>27</sup> Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”
- <sup>28</sup> Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”
- <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

### ***“What Is Your Life’s Priority?”*** **John 6:22-29**

INTRO:

Several years ago I read about a young man graduating from high school in Oklahoma. Someone asked him what he was going to do with his life. The young man brashly said, *“I am going to become the best catcher that baseball has ever seen.”* That young man’s name was Johnny Bench. Arguably, he became the best catcher that has ever played the game of baseball. When Johnny Bench said he was going to become the best catcher in baseball, he was expressing the priority of his life. To reach this goal, he had to work hard, make sacrifices, and focus continually on this goal. He also had to have a large portion of God-given talent. Now your goal in life may not be the same as Johnny Bench’s, but you probably have one. This is the point our Lord made here in **John 6**.

You remember Jesus fed the 5,000 just the day before. The crowd responded to this miracle by wanting to make Him King. Can you imagine having a king who could provide everything the subjects of the kingdom needed? Who would need taxes when the King could just call it into existence? We pick up the narrative here in **John 6** where Jesus was sending the crowd away. He put His disciples in the one available boat and they have crossed the Sea of Galilee as

Jesus went to a mountain apart to pray. He walked on the water to them in the middle of the night. When our text opens, it is the next day and some of the crowd returned to the spot they last saw Jesus. In this text, we will see three important divisions.

***I. The Crowd's Commitment (v. 22-25)***

***II. The Crowd's Priority (v. 26-27)***

***III. The Lord's Challenge (v. 28-29)***

***I. The Crowd's Commitment (v. 22-25)***

***“On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’ John 6:22-29***

A. The crowd came back the next morning to find Jesus. We can't help but be impressed by the crowd's persistence. First, they searched for Him.

1. We are not expressly told this, but it appears very likely that before they entered into this sequence of reasoning recorded in this text, the crowd searched the area for Jesus.
2. Remember the last time they saw Him, He had just sent His disciples away in the only boat that was there and went away alone into the mountains to pray. They searched the immediate area for Jesus. They covered the ground enough to come to the conclusion that neither Jesus nor His disciples were present where they had last left them.

B. Then they looked for and found some boats.

***“However, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.”***

They probably had to hire them. Then they embarked on the same trip that the disciples had taken to cross the Sea of Galilee to go to Capernaum to look for Jesus there. Once, they got there, they searched the city of Capernaum looking for Jesus and finally found Him.

Capernaum was not a large city, but even in a small town it can take some effort to find someone.

1. These people showed tenacity, persistence, and intelligence in their search for Jesus. Why? We need to remember how first century Palestine differed from today. We live in an industrial society. Theirs was a poor agrarian economy. Bread was the staple of their diet. I have read that close to 90% of their income was required to buy bread. Can you now understand what it meant to these people to see the miracle of the loaves and fish?
2. This is why they so desperately sought to find Jesus. John did not tell us how much time and effort was invested in this search. We can be sure it wasn't just a simple process. They expected the Lord Jesus to be impressed, maybe even flattered that they had invested so much effort in finding Him. But this was not the case.

## **II. The Crowd's Priority (v. 26-27)**

***“Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.’”*** John 6:26-27

A. Instead of praising them, Jesus immediately rebukes their motivation. That is because He knew what was in their hearts. The tremendous effort that they had put forth **(1)** was NOT motivated by love for the Lord. **(2)** Nor was it motivated by a belief in who He was or a conviction of the truth of the realities He taught. **(3)** It wasn't even the result of the miracles that He did in their presence. Their motivation was that they had found a source for a free lunch. They were interested solely in what He could do for them physically and financially. Ultimately, they did not care about who He was or why He was there.

B. This leads directly into a crucial principle. Jesus commands them, ***“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”***

In uttering these words Jesus was speaking to a larger issue than just the immediate motivation of their seeking Him. He was talking to the central priority of their lives.

1. The crowd's priority at that moment was free food for their stomachs. They were willing to put out tremendous effort to find someone who would provide for them in a physical way. If you spent virtually every moment of everyday trying to get enough money to obtain food, you understand why they didn't want to lose their meal ticket.

2. John wrote this to thrust upon us the same question. What is the central priority of our lives? What do we live for? What is the purpose of our existence?

C. Do we spend our lives seeking after the things which belong solely to this life, or do we labor for that which endures for all eternity? This is not the only place in Scripture this question is addressed.

1. In the *Sermon on the Mount* in **Matthew 6:19-21** Jesus spoke to this same issue. ***“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

Which bank account are you trying to build, your *earthly* one or your *heavenly* one?

2. In **Luke 12:15-21**, Jesus told a parable with a very similar message to it. ***“And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool!***

***This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.***

To this man security was spelled savings. But security comes from a proper relationship with God! Are we rich toward God?

3. In **Hebrews 11:24-27**, Moses made a choice that changed the direction of his life. ***“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.”***

Moses chose to live for eternal realities rather than present pleasure and it changed his entire life!

4. What about you and me? What is the priority of our existence? What is it that we are determined to have or become? John has a lot to say to us about this very issue in **1 John 2:17**,

***“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”***

Will we live for the world and its lusts which are passing away, or will we live to do the will of God and abide forever?

### ***III. The Lord’s Challenge (v. 28-29)***

A. The people smarting from this confrontation still want to know what He is talking about. So, they ask,

***“Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He sent.’”***

B. The leaders in the crowd answered in terms they understood as good practicing Jews. Jesus said something about

***“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life.”***

Surely, Jesus must have a grocery list of things they must do to earn His favor. They had no doubt they could do whatever they thought He wanted them to do.

B. Doing the will of God wasn’t doing some tasks or keeping some rules. The transition from living for today to living for eternity started by believing in Christ as the one whom God sent into the world. They had to come to God on His terms. The first step in living for eternity is always salvation, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ alone to save you.

C. They were ready to do what He told them they should do, but they could not believe in Him. Believing in Him meant putting aside everything they were holding on to as their way of pleasing God. Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:7-9**

***“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that***

*comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”*

**What is the priority of our lives?**

Are we living for present gratification, or are we living with eternity's values in view?  
The answer ultimately will make all the difference.

**Hymn #372 *Living for Jesus a Life That Is True***