

Reading John 6

My Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, How blessed we are to be able to gather together to remember the sacrifice of Our Lord and Master in bread and wine.

And our reading of John beautifully sets out before us today the words of life and the significance of those emblems before us.

Our Brother Stephen Hill, at our camp studies spent time drawing out the principles in the latter section of this 6th chapter, drawing us closer to Christ.

And to that end we will hope to come as we prepare to partake in this memorial...

But before we do B&S, I would like to focus on a preceding event in this chapter for our exhortation.

But first, let us change our perspective by zooming out for a minute...

The Gospel of John is very different in character than the other Gospels.

If we were to summarise each Gospel in a sentence it would be:

1. Matthew - Presents Jesus as a King. (Matt. 1:1)
2. Mark - Presents Jesus as a Servant (Mark 10:45)
3. Luke - Presents Jesus as a perfect Man (Luke 23:47)
4. John - Presents Jesus as the Word made flesh. (John 20:31)

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

There are things that stand out when we carefully read this gospel, the word "believe", is used over 80 times, and the word love found 39 times with 29 of those being in the last week of our Lords Life recorded in Chs 13-21. And so Johns record is a very personal letter to believers.

The Gospels record many miraculous acts but John only records 8. In fact John in writing calls them signs-why?

Because each miracle or sign is used to show the development of the Fathers purpose in Christ. These signs were to teach humanity its needs, and reveal the only true manner in which they can be satisfied..

(1. Water into Wine.. John 2: 1-11), (2. Rulers son cured.. John 4:46-50) (3. The impotent man made strong.. John 5: 1-47) (4. Feeding the 5000.. John 6:1-14). (5. Calming of the sea (John 6:15-21) (6. Granting sight to the man born blind.. John 9:1-41) (7. The raising of Lazarus .. John 11:1-43-44) (8. Increased harvest of fish (after the resurrection) John 21:1-14).

And so in coming now to the 6th chapter of John, we are commencing the Last year of our Lords ministries indicated by the 3rd Passover mentioned in vs 4, the first being in John 2:23-25 and the 2nd being in John 5:1 (Matt 12:1, Mark 2:23, Luke 6:1-5,

And to start the chapter B&S we have 2 Miracles or signs back to back.. the 4th and 5th sign. The feeding of the 5000, and The calming of the sea..

As such these two miracles are mentioned elsewhere in the Gospels, but the first three and the last three are only recorded in John.

These, in John 6, represent a pivotal moment in the Lords ministry

The 4th showing Jesus is at the height of his popularity where in Vs 14&15 they would have taken him and made him King.... but by the end of the chapter he only stood with the twelve.

And in between these events is what must be the shortest of John's eight signs but the 5th sign is one of the most dramatic..

Mark 6:35 told us that the day was far spent, when they began the feeding of the 5000, so by the time the Lord dismissed the crowds and sent his disciples away on the ship it was late into the night.

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The picture is of a turbulent sea with a wild wind blowing and men battling against the elements with all their might but barely making headway. In fact they are in danger of their lives and remember they are all experienced seamen and fishermen.

But the final scene is one of peace and tranquility as their Lord and Master conquers the forces which would have destroyed his friends, and brought them unharmed to a haven of safety and refuge.

And this sign was given B&S that the reader might understand that God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, will care for all believers, bringing consolation and comfort amid the storms of life.

And as such B&S There is a wonderful parable enacted for us that brings us to now.....

For you see B&S, we are like those disciples in that ship.. tossed by the sea and waves of humanity and blown against by the increasingly powerful winds of human thought and depravity. And we are rowing... (I pray that we are rowing) hard to make our way to a safe harbour.

And do you notice B&S.. that the only way we can make way is...together!.. What happens if someone decides to get out of the boat and make their own way?.. well they drown B&S and are lost.. Peter in Matthew 14:30 shows that. He shows us on an individual basis that unless we trust in our Lord we cannot be saved.. you may not have thought much of it before B&S but what did Jesus do when he saved Peter from drowning? ... He took him back to the boat!! ... You see its FELLOWSHIP B&S.. we cannot make it to the kingdom without each other.... we have to be all in the same boat together all pulling together for Christ.

The significance of these events are further stressed in the link between the 4th and 5th signs, in that Jesus "departed .. into a mountain" V15. whilst his disciples toiled on the sea. And this signified his absence in heaven whilst his brethren toiled through the storms of life.

We might ask at this point , Why did not John record Peters coming to Jesus on the water?

Well this is a parable for the ecclesia B&S its not about individuals. In Peters experience there is another story going on altogether.

As we said B&S it is significant that this sign occurred at even (V16), This represented the beginning of the Age of Gentile darkness, when the light of the earth would no longer be seen (John 9:4-5) During His absence there would be a long period of darkness from the gentile environment, hostile to the Truth (V17). But, from generation to generation, they are to take heart in the sure knowledge that eventually the Lord will return to save them.

Vs 17 tells us that they were headed to Capernaum..

Capernaum = "city of comfort"

And are not we focused on heading to our city of Comfort B&S?

We are told "it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them"- KJV "had not come"..ESV is correct.. Why is this point being made... because the use of that word "yet" indicates an expectation of the coming of Jesus.

And so it is for all disciples down the ages who live in the hope and expectation of the coming of the Lord.

Vs 18 - The sea and the waves roaring....

Vs 19 - the fourth watch - Matt 14:25, Mark 6:48 - 3am -6am

I think B&S it would be towards the middle to late in the fourth watch... Because the disciples saw him in the early morning light, And how fitting that would be 2Sam 23:3-5 , Psa. 110:3, Isa. 60:2, Mal 4:2

We are told in V19, when they had rowed 3-4 miles.. middle of lake.

The disciples stared out from the boat, amongst the raging seas with sea spray stinging their eyes and gloomy sky they could see a form of a man walking, They were terrified. What man could walk on the waters of a tempestuous sea?

Then they recognised their Lord.

With his calm, clear voice he addressed them.. : "It is I, Be not afraid."

It was at this point that Matthew records for us the actions of Peter.. who when he asked to join the Lord.. the response from Jesus was ..Come.

And though Peter's faith was not up to that of the son of God, he at least had a little faith... a faith that Jesus was developing for a greater purpose.

Peter cried unto Jesus.."Lord save me" - and the Lord stretched out his hand and saved him.

Peter learned the joyous feeling of being delivered through surrendering his will to the Son of God. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. O Lord hear my voice.. Psa.130:1-2.

"It is I; be not afraid" ... These are the words which we must remember during all our experiences of the trials and problems of life. Because In spite of Peter's weakness - and because of it - the Lord extended a firm hand and held him up and guided him safely into the boat. The Lord is faithful . He has the power and the willingness to reach out and save all who cry out to him, in the spirit of the truth: "Lord Save Me!"

and so we read that "they willingly received him into the ship.." this is a wonderful expression showing that the Son of God does not force himself upon men but rather we must be willing to come to him.... Josh.24:15, Deut.30:19.

But the correct understanding of the phrase used in John is "they willed him into the ship"

This speaks of their earnest desire for the Lord's presence among them. That has to be our attitude, doesn't it B&S. To be longing for the return of the Just one, being assured that he will deliver us from our fears and trials and will calm and comfort us, bringing us safely to the kingdom.

The disciples in the boat typified the joyful saints who will learn one day that their Lord has come, to terminate their warfare against sin and to deliver them into his kingdom.

And then B&S having reached our sanctuary, our City of Comfort, we will experience an elation such as we have never known.

We have to keep this vision alive B&S, for as Proverbs 29 says.. Where there is no vision, the people perish:

Our Lord died and rose again and in this wonderful sacrifice before us, showed his love toward us, for the joy that was set before him.

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.

He says to us, "Come" .. and freely partake of these emblems in remembrance of Me.

Knowing that very soon He Comes to us upon the waters of this troubled world.. saying..

It is I; do not be afraid.