

The Sustaining One

Drawing Near: “Heavenly Father, You sustain and provide us with all we need. We honor and praise the Holy name of Jesus Christ. Today, will You feed us spiritual sustenance from Your Word that our souls may be edified, blessed and enabled to serve and glorify You? Amen.”

Review the two miracles in Lesson 9. Then read John 6:22-25, 59 which sets the scene for the discourse to follow.

1. In what city and location does Jesus' teaching take place? (Refer to your map and identify.)

The sermon Jesus delivers before the crowd in John 6:26-71 builds and expands on His keynote address in chapter 5 where He claims the Divine right of life-giver and judge. Jesus extends the revelation in chapter 6 by saying that He not only has the power to *give* life but to *sustain* it.

Due to its lengthiness, a broad overview of the entire discourse will be necessary in order to have a complete picture as we identify its various parts. Carefully read John 6:26-71. Among these verses you will encounter several natural divisions. (See segments outlined below.) As you complete the reading of each segment stop and record the **main theme** of that section in the space provided. Continue this process through verse 71. As you read notice the various interjections from the crowd in verses 25, 28, 30, 34, 41-42, and 52.

Once you have finished the overview and recorded the main themes complete the lesson by answering the questions in each section.

John 6:26-40 – Main Theme:

As the scene unfolds we see a crowd apparently devoted to Jesus. They had experienced God's grace and bounty but missed the main point. Jesus ignored their opening question (verse 25) and responded instead to their true motive.

2. In what way was their motive “in error” as they sought after Jesus (verses 26-27)?
3. Identify some examples from your own life of “food that spoils” and “food that endures to eternal life.”
4. What two crucial points does Jesus add in 27b?

After Jesus brings to light the true motive of the crowd it prompts them to ask an important question (verse 28). From Jesus' response, notice how He replaces “their works of God” with a singular “work of God” (verse 29).

5. How might Jesus' definition of the "work of God" serve to transform their perspective?
6. In verses 30-34 the dialogue between Jesus and the crowd continues. **Reread** this section and summarize the main points using your own words.

For background information on "manna in the desert" see Exodus 16:13-17 and Nehemiah 9:20-21. A notable item of interest is that the rabbis in Jesus' day taught that when the Messiah came He would duplicate the miracle of the manna. –*Kruse*

7. Do you ever find yourself wanting a *miraculous sign* in order to believe Jesus? Explain.
8. **Read and meditate** on Jesus' bold revelation in verse 35. In what way does this statement add to His promise given to the Samaritan woman in 4:13-14?
9. Give some thought to what Jesus means when He claims to be the "Bread of life." How is it that believers will never go "hungry" or be "thirsty?"
10. In what way does this promise bring comfort to your heart this week?

This is the first of seven centrally significant "I am" statements mentioned in John's gospel. (See verses 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5.) Independently as well as collectively they furnish some of the most deeply profound evidence for the Deity of Christ. The actual Greek words for "I am," 'ego eimi' refer back to the Divine name in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14). Conjoined to each statement is a rich metaphor that reveals who Christ is in relation to man.

Reread verses 36-40. Notice that after Jesus' endeavor to further reveal truth about Himself He redirects the crowd's attention to the truth about themselves (verse 36).

Verses 37-40 bring increasing clarity to Jesus' invitation in verse 35. Pay very close attention to the correlation between *believing* and personal *salvation*.

11. a. According to verses 37 and 44 who initiates the process of salvation?

- b. What kind of reception can one who comes to Jesus expect to receive (verse 37b)?
- c. Describe the roles of the Father and the Son in carrying out the plan of salvation.
- d. What does Jesus teach us about the security of our salvation from these verses? (Note: The verbs in verse 40 are all in the present continuous tense.)

John 6:41-51- Main Theme:

12. **Read verses 41 and 42.** What statement does Jesus make that the Jews find particularly difficult to accept and why? (See also John 6:33, 38, 50, 51, and 58.)

The *grumbling* (verse 43) is reminiscent of the grumbling toward Moses and Aaron in the desert just before the Lord told Moses He would rain down bread from heaven (Exodus 16:2-4).

13. What do verses 45-47 teach us about the attitude God desires of those who come to Him?
14. Contrast the *manna* given in the desert (Exodus 16:2-4) with the *living bread* that “came down from heaven.” In what way is the living bread superior to the physical bread God provided (verses 48-51)?

John 6:52-59 – Main Theme:

In verses 53-59 Jesus introduces a new metaphor for believing on Him. Read these verses from as many Bible translations as you have available.

15. What do you think Jesus means by “eats my flesh and drinks my blood” (verses 53-54)?
16. Since Jesus satisfies and sustains, what promises does He give to believers (verses 56-58)? (For a fuller understanding of Jesus’ illustration see John 3:14, 15; Matthew 26:28 and Hebrews 4:2.)

John 6:60-71 – Main Theme:

17. Why did many of Jesus' disciples abandon Him after His discourse in verses 25-59?

Note: A *disciple* means one who is a learner and follower. The term disciple is **not** synonymous with "believer."

18. The twelve men that were chosen by Jesus now faced the same crossroad decision that the rest of the crowd faced. What was their conclusion, expressed so eloquently by Peter?

19. Why do you believe Jesus points out that He chose the Twelve and yet one is a devil (verses 70 and 71)?

Personal Reflection: In chapter 6 Jesus contrasts the two appetites found in everyone... the appetite for food that perishes and the appetite for food that endures. Are you still looking to be satisfied by anything less than the *true Bread*?

20. Briefly review the questions and answers from this lesson and share any new insights that you find particularly valuable to you as a disciple (follower and learner) of Jesus Christ.

21. If the Spirit gives life and the flesh counts for nothing (verse 63) and Jesus' words are Spirit and life, what ought to be our central focus (daily) if we are seeking a growing relationship with Him?

In closing meditate on the following Scriptures and delight in Jesus, the true Bread who will satisfy your deepest longings (Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 2:2, 3; Isaiah 55:1-3; 1Corinthians 10:17).