

Characteristics of True and False Disciples

Scripture: John 6:15-29

Code: 1511B

Turn in your Bibles now to John chapter 6 and we shall examine the passage that is before us in our continuing study in the gospel of John. As we come to our section, this morning, chapter 6 verses 15 to 29, we come to the sequel to what is described in the first part of the chapter. In verses 1 to 14 of chapter 6 Christ performs the miracle of feeding about 15 thousand or more people. Prior to His feeding those people, He had been involved in teaching them all day long and in healing them of many different illnesses. He had been involved in meeting their physical needs in terms of sickness, their spiritual needs in terms of teaching, and capped it all off by feeding them late in the day as they were hungry.

Now in spite of all that they had seen, that is the miracles of Christ, and all that they had heard, that is the teaching of Christ, and all that they had actually been involved in and seen Him literally create fish and create bread right out of His omnipotent hands, in spite of all the tender pity that He had given to them, their reaction was very strange. Oh to be sure, they agreed that most likely He had some divine powers. That's undeniable. And also to be sure they were greatly impressed by His power. In fact, they were so impressed that in verse 14 they said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." What prophet? The prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15 by Moses who said there is coming one from the midst of thee like unto me, unto Him shall you hearken. That Moses had said this, they concluded, was THAT prophet. In other words, they were ready to receive Jesus as their Messiah, as their Deliverer on the basis of what they had seen Him do and heard Him say.

But unfortunately, they were on the wrong ground. Instead of falling in adoration before Him, they decided that they wanted to use Him. They had their own selfish ends. They were a little bit uptight about the Roman yoke. They would just as soon have a political revolution take place and get rid of Rome and they figured, boy if this is a real miracle worker, if this is Messiah, let's pick Him up and haul Him off to Jerusalem and get this revolution going as fast as we can. In effect, they looked at Jesus Christ as if He was some kind of divine genie and they had the mistaken idea that they held the...is the lamp, I guess, that you rub and they would rub it and since they discovered the genie, it was up to them and say, "Genie, number one, we want you to do this..." and their first thought was to make Him king by force and have Him lead a revolution against Rome.

See, they looked at it all backwards. There was nothing of homage. There was nothing of adoration. There was nothing of worship. There was nothing of repentance. There was nothing of a cry for mercy. There was nothing of any of that, it was all all...so You're the one, well come with me, I've got something for You to do.

May I hasten to add that Jesus is nobody's genie. They were empty. They were blind. They were selfish. They were not repentant. They were thrill seekers. They found somebody who could do super magic tricks and they thought...Let's make the most of it. Boy, it's still true today. So true. Many people see Jesus Christ as a prophet, as a great teacher, and they never see their need for Him in terms of the wrath to come. Many people see Jesus as some kind of super miracle worker and if they're not involved in some kind of a so-called miraculous thing, they don't think He's even around. And all they want is to use Him to create miracles. People constantly seeking sensationalism. Other people who are content just to accept Him as whatever He is and use Him for whatever purpose, like the New York nightclub owner who said, "I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the Big Man upstairs." As if God comes to his rescue whenever he gets into problems with his gangland people.

Well don't you ever be misled. Don't you ever be misled by the seeming honoring of Christ that eulogizes His precepts and despises His cross. That's backwards. And Jesus read the minds of this mob like it was spattered on a screen and He knew their plans. Notice it in verse 15. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a King, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." He could read their minds and He knew exactly what they were thinking. They were thinking, "Aha, here's our shot at Rome, here's our political power, let's get Him and force Him to be king." He read their minds, no problem for Him. Remember that, it applies to you and me as well. He reads us like an open book. In John chapter 2 and verse 24 He said, "No man needeth to tell Him what was in the heart of a man," He knew what was in the heart of a man. And because of that, "In Jerusalem He did not commit Himself to those false disciples, He knew their faith was not genuine." And these people saw only a political victory. They saw that maybe they could kidnap this miracle worker and have Him do tricks for their benefit.

May I say to you, Jesus is no utilitarian genie, He acquiesces to nobody's whims and nobody's fantasies and nobody's wishes. He comes to no man on that man's terms. Listen, men come to Him on His terms. No one uses God. No one uses Christ. I always remember the perfect illustration of that was Israel, in the Old Testament got into a problem unfortunately, as they often did, with the Philistines. And Israel had been living in sin, immorality, they had really been in idolatry. They had forgotten and forsaken God. They were living a debauched kind of life and the Philistines were winning the war. And so the Jews thought, "This is not any good, we've got to get God. You guys

run back to Shiloh and get God." Now God was represented by the Ark of the Covenant, His presence. And so they, "Ah, that's all, we'll just get God and God will just...and that will be the end of them." They ran back and they got the Ark of the Covenant. They coming running over and said, "Hurray, the Ark is here, hurray the Ark is here, the battle is ours." And you know what happened, the Philistines stole the Ark. And that's what always happens. Nobody uses God...not now, not then and not in the life of Christ. Christ is not for your whims and your fancies and your wishes. You don't use God. Christ doesn't commit Himself to any man, watch it, until there is...until there is a cry for mercy and repentance. That's when God and Christ commit themselves to somebody. And there wasn't any such thing here. They didn't need to repent because they didn't know they were sinners, they weren't willing to admit that.

And sadly, I think it's true too, that Christians even fall into the same error, don't we? We fall into that...that error of using Christ and it's subtle but it's true. For example, when we want comfort and sorrow, when we want strength in difficulty, when we want peace in the midst of turmoil, when we get really sick and we want help...all of a sudden there's no one like Jesus. And we walk with Him and we talk with Him, we pray, we read our Bibles. Why? Because He's got something we want. But on the other hand, when He comes to us and He makes a stern demand and He challenges us to a great effort and He offers us a cross to carry, we don't want anything to do with it...nothing at all. When we're very sick or in the midst of a terrible situation, we cry out to Christ and we love Him and we read His Word and when He says to us, "Why don't you go visiting Tuesday?" Yuk...just give me what I want, don't mess around with those demands, see.

And we use Jesus.

Just for a second, examine your own heart. It may just be that you love Jesus for what He does or can do for you. And when He comes with demands, we're resentful and hostile to this demanding, disturbing Jesus. That could have been the attitude of these people, and it was. That's exactly where they stood. They only wanted Him for what they could get out of Him. And I'm sure if Jesus had said, "Listen, I'm going here, follow Me." They would have flocked after Him because He was getting them what they wanted. But instead Christ says, "Get away, I don't want you anymore, I want to be rid of you," and He sent the crowd away. Matthew and Mark both tell us He dismissed them and said, "Go away." Jesus Christ never commits Himself to thrill seekers, He never commits Himself to the false disciple. He said, "You leave," and then He went up into a mountain alone to pray to God. Matthew and Mark tell us He went there to pray alone.

Now why did He go away? Well He knew He had to escape the plot of the mob. He knew they were going to try to take Him by force so He told them to go away and He went into a mountain by Himself. Now before He went into the mountain, He did something else. He's told His disciples, Matthew and

Mark both tell us this in the parallel account, He told His disciples to get into a boat and go back to Capernaum across the northern edge toward the western shore, the Sea of Galilee. "Get into the boat and leave." Sent the disciples away and went into a mountain and sent the multitude away. Now He knew He had to get away from the mob and He also knew the disciples had to get away from the mob because it would have been very easy for the disciples to become involved in the carnal enthusiasm of that crowd and to get stirred up on this idea of forcing Christ to do something. And so He just says, "Disciples, leave." He put them away so the influence wasn't there. Then He said, "Crowd, you're dismissed, too," and He told them to leave. And then He went up into a mountain to pray to God.

Now the results following that are in verses 16 to 29. Now in these two passages and they're really two, through verse 21, and then a new account in verse 22 to 29, but in these two sections after Christ has sent His disciples away and sent the crowd away, we see two kinds of disciples...the fake and the real, the false and the true. Both of these sections of Scripture are tremendously analogous to discipleship and in the first section we're going to meet the character and the quality of real true discipleship. In the second section, verses 22 to 29, the character of the phony disciple, and we'll see it very clearly by analogy from what we see here.

All right, get the picture. He has sent the disciples across in the little boat. He has dismissed the crowd. There are no boats left for them to take, assuming they're to walk back to where they began. He takes off into a mountain to pray. And with that we come to verse 16 and the character of real disciples. And there are three characteristics of real disciples here in this account, verses 16 to 21. They are obedient, watch this, they are Christ-centered, and they are true worshipers. They are obedient, they are Christ-centered and true worshipers and we'll see this as we look at the passage.

First of all we shall see that the true disciple is obedient, verse 16. "And when evening was now come, His disciples went down unto the sea." And as I said, Matthew and Mark told us that Christ told them to go there. "They entered into a boat and they went over the sea toward Capernaum and it was now dark and Jesus was not come to them."

Now the disciples have been ordered by Christ to get in a boat and leave to proceed across the Sea of Galilee toward Capernaum, the northwestern shore, and so they did...complete obedience. It also notes for us in verse 16 that it was evening and in the Jewish thinking there were two evenings. The first evening was three o'clock to six o'clock. The second evening was six o'clock to dark and this is the second evening. And so it is nearly dark. They enter into a little boat and they begin the journey across the five-mile journey from where they were to Capernaum.

Now notice the end of verse 17 gives a little note. It says, "Jesus was not come to them." Why does it say that? Well because John knew that soon Jesus would come to them, walking on the water. And the reason John knew it because John's writing this about sixty some years after it happened.

And reflecting back he knew this had happened before Christ came. Also, John wrote about 95 A.D., Matthew and Mark both wrote the same account about 50 A.D., so 45 years earlier this had already been told by Matthew and Mark and John knows his readers will already have read it in Matthew and Mark's gospels so he adds this little note just to put it in perspective and says it was now dark and Jesus was not come to them yet. Christ hadn't gotten there.

So then we see the tremendous test of obedience here. It didn't really make a lot of sense for Christ to send them away by themselves. Perhaps they didn't understand why He sent them away not being able to read the mind of the mob, not being able to understand what they were thinking and what they were plotting. And so when Christ said to them go away, it may have been a little bit mysterious but they obeyed. It may have been more mysterious as to why He sent them and didn't come Himself, why He sent them away and went away up into a mountain. How was He going to get across, there weren't any more boats? Why didn't Christ go with them and why did He send them away?

Well, the Bible doesn't say they fussed with the questions, the Bible says they just obeyed. And here you meet the first tremendous characteristic of real discipleship. Real discipleship is founded, now watch it, founded on an unquestioning, unhesitating trust and obedience. It's not a matter of "Why, God?"...it's a matter of "Yes, God!" It's not a matter of, "I don't understand it," it's a matter of, "I will do it." It's a matter of not my will, but Thine be done, mysterious though it be. And even in an obedience of ignorance, and I like to think rather than ignorance it was an obedience of trust, these disciples moved away from Christ alone into the twilight sea, not understanding. And that is the crux of discipleship, obedience that asks no questions, obedience that expects no explanation, a blind believing obedience.

The first time I ever preached in this church, long time ago, I told you a story about a missionary that is perhaps the greatest illustration of obedience in my recollection. John Payton was his name and he was a young student in England. And he didn't exactly know where God wanted him to go but he felt a call to the mission field and he was a student in seminary at the time. He's just recently been married. And God began to lead him in the area of the New Hebrides islands and the New Hebrides islands were inhabited by man-eating cannibals. And in those days it was a severe test of a man to go to the mission field.

Now Payton didn't argue. Took his little bride, got on a ship and they took off for the New Hebrides. No questions asked. Now I look at my own life, when I was in seminary if God had come to me and said, "Listen, MacArthur, I'd like you to go to an island of man-eating cannibals," you know what I would have said? "Now, God, I just want to share a couple of thoughts with you. God, I graduated from seminary. I made it. I'm...why should I be somebody's lunch? Listen, God, I know a Bible-school dropout. They'll eat him and who will know? His ignorance will never come across. Why

me?"

Well that's what the flesh would say, that's not what John Payton said. He gathered up his little wife and the boat let him off 200 yards from shore in a little dinghy and they rowed to the shore. What do you do when you arrive on an island you don't know the language, you can't speak one word and you've got man-eating cannibals? Well you don't stick a sign in the sand that says, "VBS next Saturday." It's a little more difficult than that.

What do you do? You pray a lot and you stay awake a lot. And that's exactly what they did. And they watched and the natives watched, and then they watched...and it just was a constant thing. And the natives never seen people like that before, of course, were just struck with them. Well several months went by and one day his wife gave birth to a little baby. Two weeks later the baby contracted a tropical disease and died and a day later his wife died and he buried those two side-by-side right in front of the little lean-to he had built on the shore there. And he said in his biography, "I slept on the graves for three nights to keep the natives from digging up the bodies and eating them." And he said, "I said to God, 'Just how far does obedience go, God? What do You want from me?'"

But then through the providence of God a native that was outcast from the tribe found his way to John, scared the tribe was after him and began to communicate in little words. Pretty soon there was enough communication for John to share with him. He began to share the gospel with him...thank you, sir...he began to share the gospel with him, just in a simple level. It took a matter of days to communicate. He learned how to say stone and tree and all of this and pretty soon he told them there was a God who had a Son who died, and so forth. Over a period of about a week or so he led this native to Jesus Christ and that native brought another native. And pretty soon he had a little group of protectors and they would hide him when the natives came to kill him. And his biography reads like a jungle adventure, like nothing you've never read.

Well, as God would have it, John Payton stayed on those islands for 35 years. And at the end of 35 years he said in his biography, "I do not know of one single native that has not made a profession of faith of Jesus Christ." You see, that's what one man does with unquestioning, unhesitating obedience. The cost isn't the question, obedience is. And oh, the beauty of a disciple that's obedient.

And so these disciples in just a simple little way were obedient to Christ and it opened them up to one of the most fantastic miracles that Christ ever did, didn't it? Obedience. There is a second virtue of true discipleship and it's right here, it's this, they desired the presence of Christ. Disciples desire His presence. If I'm a disciple of Christ, I want to be with my Lord, right? If I follow my Master, I want to be where He is. And these disciples, I can see them going around in that little sea in that little boat

saying, "I wish Jesus was here." And I'll tell you something, when the storm came up, they really started wishing Jesus was there. And it doesn't say anywhere that they wanted Him to stop the storm, it only indicates they just wanted Him there. And I just believe that if He had been there just in the boat, storm or no storm they wouldn't have mind it, just to have Him there. You see, that's all discipleship is...discipleship doesn't say, "Jesus, do this trick," and, "Jesus, do magic," and, "Jesus, do a miracle," and, "Jesus, show me a wonder." Discipleship just says, "Just as long as You're here, that's all I need." That's a disciple. They didn't care so much about the power of Christ, they just wanted His presence.

Verse 18 tells us, "And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew," that's a mild way of saying, "there came a storm." Matthew and Mark tell us it was really some storm. West of the Sea of Galilee are some valleys and gorges. The Sea of Galilee is approximately 682 feet below the Mediterranean and firing down those gorges was a tremendous wind that hit the surface of that little sea and it began flipping the sea up and down, the waves became large, the wind was blasting against their little boat as it struggled. They had to pull the sail down undoubtedly and row and pull against the strength of the sea and the wind toward Capernaum. The storm, Matthew and Mark tell us, increased in intensity, the night deepened, they were pushed off course and Matthew says they wound up in the midst of the sea fighting the storm. Matthew tells us that it was the fourth watch, that is from three to six in the morning, that means they have been toiling for at least twelve hours to go five miles, thrown all over that sea. Dark. And I'll tell you, if I know anything about those guys, if I know anything about those disciples, there was one person they were longing for more than anyone else and that was Jesus Christ. And I know it because later on when He arrived they pulled Him into the boat and fell at His feet and worshiped Him. And it wasn't so much they wanted His miracle as they would His presence for in the midst of any storm the presence of Christ is comfort enough, is it not? The true disciple doesn't say, "I want Your miracle." The true disciple just says, "I want You." That's enough

And so, Paul illustrates that when he says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be...what?...content," and why? Because he was in the presence of Jesus Christ which precluded any circumstances. So I'm sure they were desiring Jesus and we'll see in a minute one of them was, I know. Had He been there even asleep, they would have felt secure. But He wasn't there. Perhaps...perhaps they thought He had deserted them. Perhaps they thought they were going to perish, the storm was very dangerous and they wanted Him. But, you know, whenever somebody wants Jesus Christ in that way, whenever they long for His person, He arrives and Christ did in the right time at the right moment He came.

Oh I know Peter, for example, wanted His presence. Over in chapter 6, the same chapter verse 67 it says, "Then Jesus said unto the Twelve, 'Will you go away?'" And Simon Peter said, 'Lord, to whom

shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." You could never get rid of Peter, Peter was always where Jesus was, always. He couldn't stand to be away from Christ. They wanted Him. True disciples wanted His presence.

Well, you see, there really was no problem, Christ was up there in the mountain praying and the little boat was being flipped around in the Sea of Galilee and when the right time came, Christ acted. You see, omnipotence is never in a hurry. Did you know that? Omnipotence can wait as long as it wants cause it's always in control. Christ as the sovereign omnipotent God can wait as long as He wanted because He was in absolute control of that sea, as is illustrated when He finally walked into the boat and the sea just calmed. Because omnipotence is combined with infinite wisdom and infinite love, it always acts at the right time and it did this time. And so Christ came, just at the right time.

And verse 19 tells us what happened. And so when they had rowed about five or twenty...five and twenty, or thirty furlongs, twenty-five or thirty furlongs would be somewhere between three and a quarter and three and three quarter mile...they had rowed that far, they see Jesus walking on the sea. Now one writer that I read this week, Barclay, said that that really means He was walking on the shore. He's the same one who said the feeding of the five thousand wasn't a miracle, it was just when the little boy pulled out his lunch, everybody else pulled out their hidden lunches and they all shared. But then that's his problem, not mine. My Bible says, "They saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat and they were afraid."

Now get this picture, it's fantastic. They're out there being tossed around by this storm and it was Passover time so there would be a full moon, and against the shadow-less, darkness of the Sea of Galilee, that moon in the sky, somebody discerned the moonlit outline of a man walking across the tops of the swirling waves and He was walking right into the fury of the gale, right to the west, right into it. And Matthew indicates that He was moving so fast that it looked like He'd go past the boat...just coming like that across the water. And in Mark chapter 6 it says the disciples said, "A ghost, a ghost." Why did they say that? Matthew tells us they said that because they had forgotten the miracle of the five-thousand feeding cause their hearts had become hardened. They forgot that this could be Christ. They were scared to death. Who in the world would be walking around out here? No one, obviously, but an apparition, a vision, a ghost.

As He came a little closer they saw different, it was Jesus Christ walking on the water. No problem. He met them where they needed Him. And verse 20, "He saith unto them, 'It is I, be not afraid.'" They were in a state of panic. It wasn't bad enough to be in a storm, but here are ghosts walking on water. Matthew and Mark add, "Be of good cheer." Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. And He calmed their fears. Oh that was a glorious moment. And for the real joy of the moment you have to go to

Matthew chapter 14 and I want to show you something. Now I said the second characteristic of a disciple is he longs for the presence of Christ, just His presence. Now I want you to see that illustrated with Peter. Peter was terrific...terrific.

Big he-man Peter was the biggest coward in the boat because when he saw Jesus out there in the water, he...he couldn't care...he couldn't think of anything except getting to where Jesus was. Now in Matthew chapter 14 verse 27, "He answered and straightway Jesus spoke unto them saying, 'Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.' And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it be Thou, bid me to come unto Thee on the water.'" You say why? "Because I am scared in this boat, I want to be where You are." Peter knew wherever Jesus was, that's the place to be. For him just the presence of Christ is enough. He's the same one that said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" I always say, I imagine all through the ministry of Christ He could walk down the road and stop and Jesus would run into the back of Him. Peter was always following Him around. No way He could get rid of Peter. And Peter saw the storm and the boat and he saw Jesus and he didn't care that big fat fisherman can't walk on water, he said, "If You're there, I want to be there." Now the Lord knew that Peter would drown if He didn't superintend this thing so in verse 29 He said, "Come," and I'm sure by that time Peter had already taken three steps, "And when Peter was come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus."

See, I know they wanted Jesus. I know they wanted Jesus so bad that Peter actually jumped out of that boat and went toward Him. And you want to know something? I don't think Peter knew what he was doing because in the next verse he saw the wind...you mean, he hadn't seen it before? Listen, once Jesus got there he only saw one thing and that was Jesus. Now he looked up and said, "There's wind and he was afraid and began to sink. He cried saying, 'Lord, save me.' And then Jesus said to him...at the end of verse 31... 'O thou of little...what?...faith.'" Hey listen, he didn't have so much giant faith that he could walk on water. He saw Jesus, he said, "I've got to get where Jesus is, I'm in trouble, this is a serious storm." And he got out there and he said, "What am I doing in this water?" And he began to sink. It wasn't a matter of faith with Peter, it just a matter of wanting to be with Christ. And, you know, you've got to say it's beautiful, isn't it? There is something beautiful about that desire in the heart of Peter to be where Jesus was, and he never even saw the circumstances.

Listen, the true disciple just wants to be where He is. It's enough that He's there, it doesn't demand anything other. I love to think of John who wrote the gospel of John, that blessed disciple, John who was constantly reclining on the bosom of Christ, you know, it was just enough for John to just put his head on the shoulder of Jesus Christ. That's all he wanted. He didn't say, "Jesus, do this...Jesus, do that...do a trick...do a wonder." No, no, just be there, just be there. Oh what a joyous thing it is that the disciple has the constant promise of the presence of Christ. We've got something these disciples

didn't have, don't we? What did Jesus say? "Lo, I am with you...what?...always, I'll never leave you or forsake you." We've got Him with us.

Well in verse 21, back in John just for a second, I'll read it, it says, "Then they willingly received Him into the boat and immediately the boat was at the land to which they went." There's a miracle, they got in the boat and whish...just like that, Christ got in the boat, Peter got in the boat and immediately was at the land. That boat covered a couple of miles in a flash of a second.

Now back in Matthew 14 we read just this little account, "And when they were come into the boat, the wind ceased then they that were in the boat came and worshiped Him saying, 'Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God.'" And there you have the third characteristic of a true disciple. Number one is obedience, number two is a desire for His presence, number three, worship. Boy, they fell on their face, true worship, humility, a sense of sin, a sense of frailty, a sense of wretchedness, a sense of inadequacy, a sense of relative obscurity, falling at the feet of Christ in adoration. That's real worship. Oh I love that story in Mark 5 about the maniac who was cutting himself and living in the tombs, you know, and Jesus came and Jesus chased the demons out of him. And the Bible says, "He was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." Isn't that a beautiful thing? Why was he at the feet of Jesus? That's worship...that's worship. That's where every disciple spends his time, at the feet of Jesus Christ. Not saying, "Christ, do this for me...Christ, do that for me," just there at His feet worshipping, adoring. And you know something? That's the way it's going to be some day because Paul said to the Philippians in chapter 2 verse 10, "Some day at the name of Jesus every knee shall...what?...bow." That's what He deserves.

Oh the real disciple, obedient, needs only the presence of Christ, and true worship, just to worship. If you really love Him you don't need to see His miracles. We don't need to see any super power expressed by Christ, just to have Him there is enough...to worship. In John chapter 6 I want you to see verses 22 to 29, the character of the fake disciple. You've seen the real thing, true disciple, obedient, Christ-centered, just His presence is enough and true worship. Now I want you to see the very opposite. A false disciple is disobedient. He doesn't want Christ's presence, he wants His power. And thirdly, he doesn't worship Christ, he worships himself. Just the very opposite taught to us in verses 22 to 29.

Notice the disobedience as we come to verse 22. "The day following," now we're in the next day, the disciples and Christ have arrived in Capernaum, now we're going back to the other side where the miracle of the five thousand had taken place. Now we go back to the other side, the day following when the people who stood on the other side of the sea....

Now wait a minute, what are they doing there? Christ told them to go away. Christ told them to disperse and leave. Well, that's just one characteristic of false disciples, they don't obey. Christ had said, "Go away," they stayed there. And so we go back across the shore, the next day they're standing around scratching their heads, in effect, and they're saying, "Wait a minute," it says in verse 22, "They stood on the other side of the sea and they saw that there was no other boat there." They remembered last night there was one boat here. Now we saw the disciples get in that boat, Jesus didn't get in. Where is Jesus? See, that's the idea. Except that one into which the disciples entered, just that one boat, and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the boat, but that the disciples were gone away alone. Now they're trying to figure out where is Jesus. The disciples went, Jesus didn't go. There aren't any other boats. You see, the initial problem is they shouldn't have even been there. They were disobedient. They said, "Thou art the prophet of which Moses spoke, we will make You King." All this homage, they didn't care about Him. The Apostle Paul says, listen to this, Romans 6, "His servants ye are whom ye...what?...obey." They were fakes. They should have been long gone. They were sitting there scratching their heads saying, "Where's Jesus? Where did He go?"

Well, in verse 23 they got a little help on their quest because nevertheless, it says, "There came other boats from Tiberias," which is on the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee, a whole fleet of boats came from Tiberias. Eventually some of the multitude had dispersed, there was only a portion remaining, the disobedient ones. "But boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten...where they did eat bread after the Lord had given thanks." Boats arrived. Probably they had heard from some who had left that this had happened and they all...all these boats come up there and they arrived. Well this kind of helps out these poor people who are trying to figure out where Jesus went because verse 24 says, "When the people therefore saw that Jesus wasn't there, neither His disciples, they took boats and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus."

Now what happened was, all the boats of Tiberias got there and all these people just got in their boats and they all went to Capernaum. It was a perfect solution. They loaded up with all the multitude that was still hanging around the grassy area over there, and they took them all to Capernaum seeking Jesus. You know, if all we had were those three words "seeking for Jesus" we could say this is a beautiful story...seeking for Christ. But, you know, the problem is, they sought Him for all the wrong reasons...all the wrong reasons. They sought Him because they wanted to use Him for what He could do for them. They were...they were fake, they weren't for real. They didn't want to obey, they wanted Him to obey them. And a true disciple is characterized by obedience. Boy, Jesus points this out so many times in John's gospel. For example, in chapter 14 verse 15 it says, "If you love Me, keep My...what?...My commandments." In verse 23 it says, "If any man love Me he'll keep My words." Over in chapter 15, for example, and verse 10, I think it is, "If you keep My commandments you abide in My love." Verse 14, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." And He goes on and on with this. The character of true discipleship is obedience. They showed their colors, they didn't obey Him.

So they come to Him in verse 25, and this is really something. "And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, 'Rabbi, when camest Thou here?'" In effect they're saying, "How did You get over here?" The disciples, they thinking, took the boats, only one boat, You weren't in it. We were lining the shore. You didn't walk or we would have seen You. How did You get here?

And I can imagine, Christ doesn't answer them, incidentally, He never does. He's got enough problems with them trying to make Him King. If He tells them what He's just done, He'll really have a problem with them. But can you imagine what He could have said?

"How did You get here?"

"I walked."

"We were lining the shore, we didn't see You come along."

"Who said I walked on the shore?"

"Where did You walk?"

"I walked across the sea."

Can't you imagine what must have gone through their minds if He had said that? But it's true. "And while I was at it, I picked up the disciples in a boat, whichhhh, brought them along with Me."

Do you want to know something? Jesus never...now watch this...Jesus never commits His power to the fake disciples. You see, when the true disciple seek only His presence, he also gets His power, doesn't he? When the true disciple seeks only the presence of Jesus Christ, he also gets all His miracles. The fake disciple who wants only His miracles gets neither His miracles or His power...or His presence. Christ kept sending them away. "Come back when you're for real," you know.

And so, Christ doesn't even answer them. And then we come to their second problem, they desired His miracles not His person. That's the character of a fake disciple as opposed to the true. They didn't care about Jesus person. Free food, that's the whole deal. Hey, guys, it's breakfast time, let's find Jesus. That's the whole deal.

You think that's not true? Look at verse 26, "Verily, verily I say unto you," Jesus says, "you seek Me not because you saw the miracles." At first, at least, you saw the miracle, at first you were, you know, it was all right a little bit, a little bit was there, you know, you at least saw the miracles. "Now you seek Me because you ate of the loaves and were filled." Listen, at least at first you had some

supernatural thoughts, now all you want is food. Boy, what a crummy crew this was. They couldn't even see the person of Jesus Christ, all they could see was their fat stomachs. And you know what, something interesting about this, Jesus' choice of words is absolutely tremendous. Notice at the end of verse 26 He uses the word "were filled," that's one verb in the Greek and it comes from the Greek word *chortos*. *Chortos* means grass or hay. This is the word that was used when they foddered the animals. You know what He says to them? "You're like a whole lot of dumb animals who are all foddered up and you're back for another load." He compares them to a lot of foddered animals, just fed, that's all you care about. And they had even started out on a level of miracles and deteriorated to the level of their stomachs. It was breakfast, let's find Jesus. Can't you imagine what they probably thought? Boy, if we can...if we can get this guy to knock off Rome, what a welfare state we can have. Can't you imagine the food lines? Jesus stands there, "What would you like today?" Shew....How about you?...shew and creating all this...steak for you, okay? You know. That's exactly what they had in mind. They wanted Jesus to become utility. Not so Jesus Christ. The fake wants everything he can get from Christ, the real gives all he had, right? And the words of Jesus indict them.

In verse 27 He gives them what is called a *mashal*(?), another one of those veiled statements like He gave to Nicodemus and the woman at the well and the Jews at the temple. He says, "Labor not for the food which perishes," that is physical food, "but for that food which endures unto everlasting light which the Son of Man shall give unto You for Him hath God the Father sealed, or approved, or authenticated." In other words, "You Jews are satisfied with physical things. Why don't you seek something that really satisfies the inner man?" It doesn't mean anything to have your bodies satisfied if your soul's not satisfied. Jesus said, "Seek for spiritual content, spiritual reality, spiritual nourishment, spiritual food." That's not exactly a problem foreign to our civilization, is it? Boy, is our civilization hung up on food. I mean, it gets to be a game, right? You know what it is now? It's not a question of, "Thank You, Lord, for providing this food," it's "Gee, Lord, what do I want tonight?" And you can drive to any one corner and have your choice of 15 different things. Food franchise business is one of the biggest businesses in the United States, getting bigger all the time. People have become preoccupied with eating. You know, it's a strange thing...we are...another symptom of the fact that we are wrapped up in satisfying the body and missing the food for the soul.

You say, "Well yeah, where did He get this food?" Well it says right there, "The Son of Man gives it." He gives it, He has it to give. And then He adds this thought, which was important to the Jewish mind, "For him hath God the Father sealed." The Jew knew that all good things came from God, right? And so what Jesus is saying is this, "God has approved Me as the dispenser of His good thing. I am the One authenticated and approved by God to give out His supply of soul-nourishing content, spiritual reality." And only Jesus Christ can satisfy the hunger of a soul. This thought launches Christ into the rest of the chapter, a great discourse on the bread of life.

Well we see a third thing about these disciples, false disciples, they worship themselves, not Christ. Look at verse 28, "Then said they unto him," notice the word "we," "What shall WE do that WE might work the works of God?" What an assumption. They're saying, "How do You do these tricks of making food? What do WE have to do to have this power, to have this constant nourishment?" You see, they were all wrong to begin with, they couldn't do anything. It's always...with the Jewish people it's always this "what do we do, what works, works, works, works?" Quite an assumption that you could do anything.

But Jesus smashes works with one devastating unbelievable smash. Verse 29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, 'This is the work of God that ye...what?...believe on Him whom He has sent.'" You want to do some works, then believe. That's the only one you can do. So He smashes their works and says believe. Ah, all they wanted to do was...well what can we do to work the works of God? Nothing but believe...believe, no works.

Well, that's the message. Very simple this morning, the message is this, if you're a true disciple you're obedient, right? If you're a true disciple you want His presence, His power comes along. You just want to be where He is. If you're a true disciple You worship Him at His feet, adore Him.

On the other hand, if you're a false disciple you're disobedient. If you're a false disciple you don't care so much about His person, you just want what He can do for you. You're a false disciple. You don't really worship Him, you worship yourself, satisfy yourself. And I say to you, true disciples, worship Him, worship Him. To you false disciples, believe...believe, believe that He is, that He is of God, that He died for you, that He can change your life. And God shall satisfy the hunger of your soul.

Father, we thank You, this morning, for Your Word.

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