

## Believe on Him

- We begin today with a very simple account of Jesus' walking on the water
- Then we observe a conversation He had with those that were following Him
- And examine another of His "I am" statements
- Part way through, we highlight one key thing that He was trying to get His audience to understand
- That is, to work the works of God, we must believe on Him
- And that has been the goal of our study so far - and the theme of the gospel of John
- To urge every reader to believe on Him
- To come to belief for the first time, or to strengthen the belief we already have in Him
- We'll emphasize this throughout, starting in verse 15 of John 6...

## John 6:15

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.

- If you'll remember, this verse comes on the heels of His miracle, feeding 5,000 men, plus women and children
- Barnes' notes has a lengthy, but really interesting comment about this verse...

"They were satisfied by the miracle that he was the Messiah. They supposed that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince. They saw that Jesus was retiring, unambitious, and indisposed to assume the ensigns of office. They thought, therefore, that they would proclaim him as the long-expected king, and constrain him to assume the character and titles of an earthly prince. Men often attempt to dictate to God, and suppose that they understand what is right better than he does. They are fond of pomp and power, but Jesus sought retirement, and evinced profound humility. Though he had claims to the honor and gratitude of the nation, yet he sought it not in this way; nor did it evince a proper spirit in his followers when they sought to advance him to a place of external splendor and regal authority."

- I found these thoughts helpful, and a good place to start, because of what follows later in the chapter
- Jesus understands and declares that many of the people following Him are doing so for the wrong reasons
- They follow to gain something of earthly value for themselves
- But for all the benefit that may come from being one of His disciples, we should first seek to bring Him glory
- Believing fully in Him, sharing in the joy of His salvation, recognizing so many others that know not this joy, and seeking to reflect His attributes so that they may also come to believe

- We ought to be seeking this, which is of eternal value, not something we can consume - for ourselves

John 6:16-21

16 ¶ And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

- No doubt, in circumstances like this, it would have been easy for a person to be afraid

- In Matthew it says "they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear"

- This is not what they would have expected, but it was also not a significant feat for the One that controls the winds and created this sea

- He was able to both navigate this storm - on the water

- Or to calm the storm with but a thought

- And to calm the fears of His disciple's hearts

- He was also able to deliver them safely to the other side - instantly

- The picture of His appearance on the water amidst the boisterous winds and tossing waves should be a lesson to us

- He is present and untroubled when our circumstances (like these winds) are contrary

- And whatever may be our destination, He can get us there, without incident

John 6:22-25

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

- These, that had been fed by Him, wondered about the manner of His arrival at Capernaum
- And as we read about them, we see their determination to follow Him
- We're about to learn, based on the knowledge of the Savior, why they followed
- Their reasons for following may be similar to the reasons of some in our day
- We hear preachers on Television and radio insisting that "faith" will mean prosperity - not just for the soul, but for your bank account and your health
- So people come to believe, with their help, or on their own, that to follow Him means to get something for ourselves
- Let's see what Jesus has to say...

John 6:26-27

26 ¶ Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

- The Savior knew what was in the hearts of these followers
  - He could see clearly, without obstruction
  - And He knows our hearts too, by the way
  - The miracles hadn't convinced them of His power to save
  - They convinced them of His power to provide them personal benefit in this life
  - Their concern was for meat that perishes
  - But His concerns were for the everlasting
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- Yes, they were following
  - And they were even believing - to a certain extent
  - But this belief fell far short
  - It was a belief of selfishness
  - A belief to benefit self
  - They were not embracing Him, but rather the things they were convinced He could provide
  - We see this with greater clarity as we continue...

John 6:28-29

28 ¶ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 ¶ Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

- The work of God, in this case, is no work at all

- It is faith
- He asks us, simply, to trust Him
- To hand our lives fully over to Him
- To believe He is who He says He is, that He has done what He says He has done, and that He will do what He says He will do
- This will, no doubt, lead to works, but it starts here
- Just belief
  
- They, seemed to have an understanding of who God was
- But they were not believing on the One He sent
- Notice the next verse...

John 6:30-33

30 ¶ They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

- While Jesus speaks of heavenly things - they again speak of that which is earthly
- Of the food the people of Israel were provided - they say by Moses - in the wilderness
- Will Jesus offer such provision?
- What a trivial question
- While the God of the Universe, the Savior of the World, speaks to them
- They concern themselves with breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Completely overlooking the true bread from heaven, they fixate on this earthly life
- This is a very sad affliction that is common to man

John 6:34-35

34 ¶ Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 ¶ And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

- What is the way in which Jesus is asking these to come unto Him?
- They are already following Him around
- Trusting that He can perform miracles
- Even trusting that He can answer the question, how can we work the works of God?

- Is there something more to discipleship?

- Jesus helps to answer this in other gospels

- Luke 14 may help, starting in verse 25...

“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

- We do not follow Him to improve our lot in life

- To make things better for ourselves

- He speaks of discipleship as total surrender - as full commitment

- For many, even today, it may mean families no longer accept us

- Society no longer respects us

- Some may seek to end our lives

- To have us renounce Christ

- But for those who know the eternal treasure that awaits - everlasting life with Him

- They have forsaken all

- They "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"

- These are true disciples

- Jesus makes a declaration about these that follow...

John 6:36-37

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

- He is not casting them out

- They are not believing

- All that the Father gives to Jesus will come

- These have not...

John 6:38-40

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

- All that Jesus does is the Father's will
- Everyone that believes in Him, becomes His
- He will not let any slip from His hands
- All who have saving faith will also have eternal life
- He has given final victory over death
- And will raise us up at the last day
- There can be no doubt about our future
- We, who are in Christ Jesus, will face no condemnation

John 6:41-42

41 ¶ The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

- There were those listening that continued to question His identity
- They observed the circumstances in which He grew up, failing to see that which He had done and failing to hear that which He had said
- And they murmured...

John 6:43-45

43 ¶ Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

- Jesus knows that they murmur, telling them to stop
- He says no man will come unless the Father draws Him
- There were some really helpful comments from books that I read on this passage
- The first...

“The gospel finds none willing to be saved in the humbling, holy manner, made known therein; but God draws with his word and the Holy Ghost; and man's duty is to hear and learn; that is to say, to receive the grace offered, and consent to the promise.”

- And also...

“This word [draw him] is used here, evidently, to denote such an influence from God as to secure the result, or as to incline the mind to believe; yet the manner in which this is done is not determined by the use of the word. It is used in the New Testament six times. Once it is applied to a compulsory drawing of Paul and Silas to the market-place, Acts 16:19. Twice it is used to denote the drawing of a net, John 21:6, John 21:11. Once to the drawing of a sword John 18:10; and once in a sense similar to its use here John 12:32; ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’”

- Whatever the case, we know that God becomes directly involved
- His Holy Spirit and His written word impact us
- Just as Jesus quotes Isaiah 54:13...

“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

- “This explains the preceding verse. It is by the teaching of his Word and Spirit that men are drawn to God.”
- “not by external revelation merely, but by internal illumination, corresponding to the ‘drawing’ of...” the previous verse
- This is a great truth that encourages us to trust God in our effort to evangelize and make disciples for Him
- He is at work in men!

John 6:46-47

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

- There is One who has truly seen the Father
- One commentary said it this way...

“[Jesus] Hath intimately known or perceived him [the Father]. He knows his nature, character, plans. This is a claim to knowledge superior to what man possesses, and it cannot be understood except by supposing that Jesus is equal with God.”

- And Jesus says without reservation, that salvation comes through Him - and Him alone

- Furthermore, He says...

John 6:48-51

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

- What a waste it would be to eat manna from heaven, but perish
- To have our earthly needs met, but to ignore spiritual needs
- God's provision for Israel in the wilderness was a reflection of His grace and kindness
- He cared for His people
- Jesus is (in many ways) the same
- But God's grace and kindness in sending Him fulfills more than earthly need
- He provides for our most pressing need, forgiveness of sin, reconciliation to God

Christopher Harper, April 2021