

Shopping For Jesus

By Pastor Greg
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6:22-69

Bunkertown COB

(Sermon begins with a video of a young girl's faith through several storms in her life)

This young lady impresses me. Enduring a battle with cancer and a hurricane, she continues to reach out to God, looking for His guidance and His leading in her life. Her faith is not conditional. Her love and trust in God remains despite her circumstances in life, unlike those we see leaving Jesus one day.

When we last saw Jesus, He had just come walking to the Apostles on the water. The day before this is when Jesus had taken a small offering of fish and bread and fed more than 5000 people. After the incident on the sea, they finally land on the other side. The folks who had been fed couldn't find Jesus anywhere. So they all travel across the sea to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

Think about it; a whole crowd of people looking for Jesus. It's a preacher's dream come true; to have a church bursting at the seams filled with people who can't wait to meet Jesus. But all is not quite what it seems.

In that Synagogue in Capernaum we see Jesus talking with the crowds once again. But He knows why they are there; that's why He starts describing Himself as the "Bread of Life", and forever changes the way people look at Jesus.

Throughout this long passage it appears Jesus was trying to get the people to understand why God sent Him in the first place. He did not come so that they could have the best life possible, but so that they may have eternal life. Like the woman at the well, these people were thinking only of their immediate comfort and care. But Jesus is trying to get them to think for eternity. Look what He says in verse 27, "**But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given Me the seal of His approval.**" ¹ And in verse 40 He says, "**For it is My Father's will that all who see His Son and believe in Him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.**" ² It appears many of these people were just waiting for Jesus to

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

publish some best selling book about how they can have their best life now. But I believe what Jesus was trying to do was change these people from being shoppers into believers.

Up until this point, Jesus had been doing so much for His crowd of followers. He healed them, He gave them food and water, He forgave their sins; He was the God that most people want. You've heard the arguments, "If there really was a God then why is there so much suffering/pain/hunger/disease/death in this world". Jesus was the champion of the small guy; the underdog. He went head to head with the leaders and came out on top every time. He sided with the oppressed. And to those He helped, He was loved and admired. But not because of who He was but because of what He did for them.

The crowd was fed. They heard words that brought peace to their soul. And many were made healthy again. But the minute Jesus asks them to recognize His deity (that He is God) and that He alone has been given authority to grant eternal life, most of them wander off in disgust. Listen to this whole story and I think you'll begin to notice that most of those who followed Jesus were simply looking for someone to make their life better, not a Lord or Savior.

(Read John 6:22-69)

You want to know what I see here. I see that not much has changed. Still today there are many who come to Jesus looking for what He can do for them. There are people who hope and pray that Jesus will help them get back on their feet financially, that He will heal their broken bodies, or that He will fix a broken marriage. But what if He doesn't? What if Jesus doesn't heal that loved one or make your marriage better? Would you continue to worship Him and give Him praise? See, this is the difference I see in a lot of Christians. There are many who simply come to Christ or come to Church for what they get out of the relationship. But this is not what it means to be a follower of Christ. To be one of His followers means that you have given up your life and have surrendered it into His hands. You actually believe that no matter what happens in this life, Jesus is good and He is Lord. It's what caused the man who built his house on the rock (Luke 6:48) to not only weather the storm but to lift up his hands in praise while the storm raged.

You and I really need to come to Jesus surrendering to Him as Lord. Because if we don't we run the risk of becoming legalistic in the way we view others. If it's true that Jesus is just waiting to bless you or that He wants you to have an abundance in life, what does it say about the person who is poor, or sick, or in a broken relationship? Obviously we can't say there is something wrong with Jesus, so it must be the individual. Apparently they must not be right with Jesus, or they do not have enough faith. But I tell you the truth, it takes more faith to be a Christian who is sick than it does for one who is healthy. It is the stronger believer who can praise Jesus while facing the storm than the one who praises in the calm.

Another thing this crowd did was refuse to accept that Jesus had authority to grant eternal life. Many of those following heard what He said, but look how they responded. **"This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"**³ (John 6:60). And it wasn't the comment about eating His flesh that bothered them; it was His claim to be the One who can grant eternal life. It was so difficult for them to accept the Deity of Jesus that many of them left rather than surrender themselves to Him as savior. Isn't this Joseph's Son they asked (John 6:42). Oh, they were ready to crown Him as King (John 6:15) and they were willing to call Him a miracle worker (John 6:30), but they would not make that final step which says Jesus is the One who can grant eternal life.

The truth is that we either treat Him as these people did, thinking He was just some miracle worker, or we fall at His feet and call Him Lord and Savior. And to call Him Lord and Savior means that we surrender our lives to His authority (that we don't follow Him around simply because He is the one who gives us what we want) and we recognize that He alone is the One who will grant eternal life.

I believe we are left with two choices here. We either become part of the crowd that turns away and deserts Jesus or we speak the words of Peter and say, **"You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."**⁴ (John 6:68-69)

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁴Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.