

Christ Is Quite A Different Saviour Than Most People Desire.

Text: John 6:1-15

1) What Kind Of Saviour Most People Desire

Suggested Hymns:

2) What Kind Of Saviour Jesus Is

243, 452, 158, 259, 387

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 6:1-15, ¹ *After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.* ² *Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.* ³ *And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.*

⁴ *Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.* ⁵ *Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"* ⁶ *But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.* ⁷ *Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."*

⁸ *One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,* ⁹ *"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"* ¹⁰ *Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down."* *Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

¹¹ *And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.* ¹² *So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."*

¹³ *Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.* ¹⁴ *Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."*

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

In today's Gospel we are told that the people intended to take Jesus by force and make Him a king. The time seemed to be favourable. The Passover was near.

From all parts of Judea, and from other parts of the world the Jews were flocking to Jerusalem to celebrate the great annual feast which, according to their Law, they were required to celebrate in their magnificent temple at the capital city.

Thousands among the common people took Jesus for the great Prophet of whom Moses had spoken, saying, "***The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.***"¹

They looked upon Jesus as the promised Messiah, as the long-expected Deliverer, who would restore the glory of the house of Israel. A gloom rested on the whole nation because of the shame of having been conquered by the Gentiles and being held in bondage by the mighty Romans.

And since the whole nation was inspired with a fervent desire to cast off the Roman yoke and to be an independent people again, would not the Passover have been the most opportune time to proclaim a king?

It is very likely that the multitudes coming to Jerusalem to worship would have made an attempt to expel the Roman intruders, and hailed with delight the man who would restore the throne of David and Solomon.

But what are we told of Christ? When He perceived what the people were about, "***He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.***" Jesus was not the kind of saviour they expected and desired. He was not a worldly king.

And Christ is the same today, although most people expect of Him something different. The subject of our consideration is *Christ Is Quite A Different Saviour Than Most People Desire*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. What Kind Of Saviour Most People Desire.

At the time of Christ there were two classes of men who desired a different kind of saviour than Jesus was.

The one class were those who persecuted Christ. This class was composed of the Sadducees and Pharisees, two different sects at variance with each other, but one in their opposition to Christ. The Sadducees were the agnostics and scoffers of those days. They did not believe the resurrection, or angels, or spirits.

Their sole aim was to enjoy this life, to eat, drink, and be merry, and not to worry about the hereafter. They looked upon those people as fools who said that there was a heaven and a hell. Still, they also desired a saviour. But the saviour whom they had in their minds was to be a man who would teach them how to enjoy this life still more, and who would procure for them more of the pleasures of this world.

There was quite a contrast between these and the Pharisees. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, in heaven and hell, in a retribution after this life, and showed great piety. But they wanted to get to heaven by their own righteousness.

The saviour whom they desired was to be a man who would preach morality, admire their outward holiness, keep aloof from tax-collectors and sinners, and make the Jews the leading nation of the world in external magnificence and splendour.

Since Jesus did not come near their standard of the Messiah they opposed Him, and the same thing was done by the Sadducees, who looked upon Jesus as a man who was far behind the times.

Aside from these outspoken enemies of Christ there was another class of men who did not oppose Christ, and yet desired a different kind of saviour than Jesus proved to be.

These are described in the following words of our Gospel, “*¹ After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.*”

The miracles which Jesus performed convinced the multitude that He must be, at least, a great prophet, and all the threats and blasphemies of Pharisees and Sadducees could not keep them from following after Christ and hearing His preaching.

Still, Jesus was not the kind of saviour they were wishing for. This is plainly shown in our Gospel. All those miracles which Jesus performed before their eyes, all the divine sayings which they had heard from His lips did not move them to proclaim Him their King and Saviour.

But no sooner had He fed them in the wilderness with a little bread and fish and supplied their wants in a miraculous way, so that even more was left over than the original supply — no sooner had Jesus performed the great miracle of feeding five thousand men with only five barley loaves and two small fish, than the people shouted in ecstasy, “*This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.*”

Now they admitted that Jesus was the Prophet promised by Moses, the true Messiah. Even such was their excitement over what Jesus had done for them, that they made ready to take Him by force and make Him their king at once.

Why did not the previous miracles of Christ produce upon the people the effect which this miracle of feeding them produced? The reason is obvious. The people desired a saviour who would give them plenty to eat, a saviour not of the soul, but of the body; not for heaven, but for the earth.

When, therefore, on the following day Jesus met some of them at Capernaum they said to Him, “*Lord, give us this bread always.*”² That shows plainly what kind of saviour they desired. They were bread-Christians and wanted a bread-saviour.

But the same state of things exists to this day. To this day the same two classes of people are to be found, who at the time of Christ, desired a different kind of saviour than Jesus was.

We have Sadducees in our days. These are the unbelievers who mock and scoff at every form of religion, who say that there is no God, who deny heaven and hell, and claim that man has no more soul than an animal.

Jesus is not a saviour to their taste. Their saviours, the people whom they admire, are those who assail and denounce the Bible, the Christian religion, and everything in connection with it.

We also have the Pharisees. These sometimes lay claim to the Christian name. They are the self-righteous who protest most vigorously if you tell them that they are lost and condemned sinners, and that they cannot get to heaven in any other way than by faith in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus is not a saviour to their taste either. Their saviours are those who proclaim shallow morality, praise the achievements of man, and urge people to show sympathy to their fellow men, presupposing that, if there is a yonder life, man must get there by his own efforts.

And then there are those in our days who are very much like the people whom Jesus fed in our Gospel. Like the multitude they follow Jesus into the wilderness. In a certain sense they separate themselves from the children of this world. They go to church and hear the preaching of the divine Word.

But what is it they seek with Christ? Redemption from sin? Life everlasting? Far from it. To say it in plain words, they seek with Christ nothing but bread and fish. They expect Him to give them the riches and pleasures of this world, to permit them to enjoy this life to their heart's content, to do the same things which the children of this world call their greatest delights, and thus to participate in the world's evil lusts.

And when they are told that Jesus is not such a saviour, that Christians must crucify their flesh and the lusts thereof: then they feel disappointed and offended. Their conduct shows that Jesus is not the saviour whom they desire.

2. What Kind Of Saviour Jesus Is.

And now, in the second place, let us see what kind of Saviour Jesus really is.

St. Mark also has an account of this great miracle. He says that, when the multitude came to Jesus, He *was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*"³

So from St. Mark's account we see that the first thing which Jesus did was that He administered to the spiritual needs of the people. He fed their immortal souls with the bread of life. His heart was filled with compassion toward them, not so much because they were in bodily needs, but, above all, because they were as sheep having no shepherd for their souls to lead and guide them.

From this we see what kind of Saviour Jesus is. He is a Saviour, first of all, for the souls of people. Those who come to Him and receive Him as their Saviour are required, first of all, to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

First of all, to look upon Him as the Saviour from sin "*who has redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, purchased and won us from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that we may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.*"

All this is well known. But where are those who desire such a Saviour and wish to be His disciples in the manner indicated?

Ah, these are comparatively few. There are many, indeed, who follow Christ into the wilderness, as did the multitude in our Gospel, many who hear the preaching of His divine Word, many who perform the outward works of Christians, say their daily prayers, give to the poor, show kindness, support the church, and help to extend the kingdom of God.

But if the inmost thoughts of their hearts were exposed, how many would we find doing all these things from pure, untainted love of the Saviour, because He first loved them and did so much for them?

How many would we find doing these things with cheerfulness of heart and with rejoicing that they can, in some way, show their gratitude for the great work of the redemption wrought upon their immortal souls?

They do, indeed, in their way, believe in the Bible and call Jesus their Saviour. But when they are informed that Jesus is a Saviour of the soul, and that they must give Him their hearts, serve Him alone, shun the world and its evil lusts, and set their affection on things above, where Christ sits on the right hand

of God, then it becomes apparent that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and Mary's Son, is not the Saviour whom they really desire.

Still, we must not think that Jesus showed no care for our bodily needs. Though providing, first of all, for our immortal souls, He does not neglect our mortal bodies. Having taught the multitude and shown them the way to eternal life, He also administered to their bodily needs.

He gives them bread to eat and by a miracle of His divine power not only supplies their present wants, but also furnishes enough food for them on their way home.

Our Gospel tells us, *"⁵ Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."*

⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

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¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."

¹³ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

From this we see what kind of Saviour Jesus is. He is such a Saviour who will never forsake those who trust in Him. He will in some way provide for them all that they need for the support of this body and life, and even if He would have to do so by a miracle.

Jesus does not promise them riches, not an abundance of goods and earthly possessions. But He will from His vast stores supply them with the necessities of life.

Jesus therefore says to all His followers in Matthew 6:25–26, ²⁵ *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”*

But above and beyond this Jesus provides for our immortal souls. To the multitude by the seaside He had preached words of eternal life before He fed them to sustain this temporal life.

And for all mankind Jesus came into the world to seek and to save those who without His saving grace would have been lost forever. And to this day He rules in His kingdom of grace by His Word, calls and enlightens and sanctifies and preserves in saving faith, through His Holy Spirit, those who will be gathered around His throne in the kingdom of glory.

Tell me, then, my friends, could we wish for a better Saviour than Jesus? A Saviour who takes charge of our immortal souls, and providing for us richly and daily, and does not neglect the mortal body?

Is it not the height of folly to desire a different kind of saviour than Jesus is? What would we be benefited, if we had a saviour who would give us all the riches and pleasures of this world, but who would desert us in the hour of death, and leave us to our fate, which is eternal woe and misery for all the children of men who die in their sins and have not obtained forgiveness of their transgressions?

“What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”⁴

May this, then, be our prayer,⁵

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,

O receive my soul at last. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Deuteronomy 18:15

² John 6:34

³ Mark 6:34

⁴ Matthew 16:26

⁵ Hymn 158