

Intro:

- We're all looking for provision. We work to earn provision through money to buy food, clothing, shelter for ourselves and our families. When we hear the word "provision" or "provider" we generally think about temporal things (think of the millions who tried to get their hands on some of the \$1.6 Billion Powerball jackpot). But as Christians, we know there is a greater provision that we need; an eternal provision.
- In our passage this morning we see that (Main Point) Jesus is our compassionate and powerful provision.

Background:

- John 6 is the longest chapter in the New Testament. It contains 2 more miracles that point to Jesus as the Messiah (The savior promised in the Old Testament).
 - 1) Jesus miraculously multiplies a boys lunch to feed a multitude of people. This is the only miracle of Jesus that is recorded in all four gospels and
 - 2) Jesus walking on water in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee.
- And as we will see, there is rich Old Testament imagery in these 2 events that take us back to the book of Exodus to see again, as we have already seen in John, that Jesus truly is the promised Savior.

3 Things We See... The compassion of Jesus, The power of Jesus, and the provision of Jesus

I. The Compassion of Jesus

A. Compassion for those in need (v.1-5)

1. Large crowds are following Jesus because they witnessed miraculous healing of the sick. While John doesn't explicitly use the word "compassion" Mark 6:34 says that "he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd." The word means to be moved deeply and inwardly with concern. Mark also tells us that Jesus taught them many things.
2. Jesus immediate concern was that "these people may eat" (v.5) You might expect Jesus to say, "We're done here. I'm tired. I need to rest. I've done enough for you." But Jesus was always concerned and compassionate toward those in need.
3. Likely poor: We know this because only those in poverty would eat bread made from barley.
4. Application:
 - a) We should have eyes like Christ for those in need: It's sanctity of human life Sunday. There is no one in the history of the world who values human life like Jesus. We as Christians should reflect Christ in this.
 - b) MLK
 - c) Have you ever been in need? Be it physical or spiritual, Jesus sees you and he is moved deeply and inwardly with compassion for you in your need.

B. Compassion for the doubters

1. Phillip:
 - a) Verse 5: Jesus said to Phillip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”
 - b) Verse 6: John tells us that Jesus said this to test him because he knew what he would do.
 - c) Verse 7: Phillip reveals his lack of faith even though He has witnessed Christ heal and perform miracles. “Two hundred denarii would not be enough for each of them to get a little.”
 - d) DA Carson: “Phillip’s response betrays the fact that he can think only think at the level of the marketplace, the natural world.”
2. Andrew
 - a) Verse 8-9a: Andrew finds a boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish. At first it looks like Andrew may have faith that Jesus will multiply the meal. but he doesn’t..
 - b) Verse 9b: “But what are they for so many?” Both Phillip and Andrew have witnessed the miraculous knowledge of Jesus, the miraculous power to heal the sick, to turn water into wine. Yet they’re still lacking faith.
3. Yet Jesus is both compassionate and patient with them. He’s not frustrated.
4. Application
 - a) If you’re here and you are a skeptic, know that you’re not alone.

C. Compassion for the fearful (v.16-21)

1. Verses 16-21 John writes the account of Jesus coming to the disciples walking on water in the midst of a storm. Verse 19 says, “When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.”
2. Matthew and Mark tell us they were frightened because they thought they saw a ghost.
3. It’s likely they were also fearful because of the storm.
4. But notice how John doesn’t say anything about Jesus calming the storm. His focus isn’t on what Jesus does to calm their fears, but who Jesus IS. Jesus calms his fearful disciples by assuring them of his presence. Verse 20: “It is I. Do not be afraid.
5. **ILL>** When a child comes into Mommy and Daddy’s room in the middle of the night and is fearful because of a bad dream, what is the most comforting thing for her? The compassionate presence of her dad or mom.
6. Application
 - a) R.C. Sproul: it certainly illustrates what happens when Jesus comes into our lives. Life is a time of pulling against the oars, against resistance, trying to get somewhere. However, we're not getting anywhere and we're about to be engulfed. But as soon as Jesus gets in the boat, we're home free. That's what happens when Christ comes into the lives of His people. He doesn't take away all difficulties and make our lives beds of ease, but He gets us through the darkness. He gets us through the violence. He carries us through the storm.

- b) Are you fearful? the future, anxious about your career, fearful of rejection: from others or even from God. Come to Jesus and find a compassionate savior who calms your fears with his presence.

II. The Power of Jesus

- A. Jesus shows that he has sovereign power over creation by taking bread and fish and multiplying it for thousands. The text tells us 5k men were present (v.10) meaning with women and children the number was likely 15k-20k people.
- B. He shows again his sovereign power over creation by walking on water. Verse 21 even hints at another miracle. After Jesus get's in the boat "immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going."
- C. At this point many in our day would say, "now, surely these weren't real miracles. This can't be true. You guys don't actually believed this stuff."
 - 1. Scholars have said Jesus didn't really multiply bread and fish. There were actually people who didn't want to share their lunch with others so Jesus taught a lesson on being generous and the people were moved to share with others. He goes on to say that Jesus didn't actually walk on water, the disciples just saw him on the shore as if you can actually see 3-4 miles at night in the middle of a storm.
 - 2. Remember this isn't just one man (John) writing this. Matthew was an eye witness who wrote about it, Mark likely wrote his gospel with Peter as the source (who was an eye witness), Luke wrote his gospel by investigating eye-witnesses.
 - 3. Not to mention the fact that even the enemies of Jesus acknowledged his miraculous power: John 11:47-48 the Pharisees say, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him."
- D. Applications/encouragements
 - 1. ILL/ Disclaimer: The Power of Jesus is not "The Force."
 - 2. Do you believe in the power of Jesus? Back to DA Carson's comment on verse 6 "Philip's response betrays the fact that he can think only at the level of the marketplace, the natural world." Is this true of you?
 - a) Redeeming Grace in Arlington: As I studied this week, I realized how weak my faith is in the power of God to grow his church!
 - b) For you it may be: that person who you want to see come to faith in Christ, that sin in your life that you want to, by the grace of God, overcome. Or you may be here, and your not a Christian and you're thinking, "I've messed up too bad to come to Jesus." Don't sell Jesus short on his power to work in your life.
 - c) Remember John's purpose with this book: John 20:31 "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."
 - d) Tozer: "How completely satisfying it is to turn from our limitations to a God who has none."

3. The Compassion and Power of Jesus do hand in hand: It should encourage us that Jesus isn't MERELY compassionate, but powerless to work in our lives. Nor is he MERELY powerful, but without concern for weak sinners like us.

III. The Provision of Jesus

- A. Jesus provided for the physical needs of the people by multiplying the bread and fish. Verse 11 tells us that these 15-20k people ate "as much as they wanted." But the point of text is not that Jesus will meet every physical need.
- B. There's a dangerous line of thinking that points to passages like this and says, "God will give you whatever you want, whenever you want. Just believe in him." But Jesus himself had no place to rest his head, was abandoned by his friends in his dying hours, and was ruthlessly murdered for following the Father. And a similar fate followed the disciples. So what does this miracle point us to?
- C. Ultimate provision of spiritual need
 1. The Jewish audience who witnessed this miracle knew their Old Testament very well. They would've recollected the story of God miraculously providing mana (bread from heaven) through Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 16).
 2. John told us in verse 4 that this happened at the time of the passover, a celebration remembering God miraculously delivering the people from slavery through Moses (Exodus 12).
 3. They saw Jesus as the prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18. That's why they try to make him King (v.15). But they misunderstood why Jesus came.
 4. As we will see next week Jesus didn't come merely to provide physical food and physical healing. He came to give life. The miracle is not that you can come to Jesus to get earthly things, but that you and I as earthly, broken, dead beings can come to Jesus and get life!
- D. Application/ Encouragement:
 1. Is Jesus your provision? Or are you looking to other things to satisfy? What are you feasting on. Jesus? or something else?
 2. Spend some time this next week evaluating, "What do I spend most of my time thinking about?" Whatever that is, chances are that's what you're looking to for satisfaction. This amount of money, that relationship, this career? These are all good things to be enjoyed rightly but that only happens if Jesus is our provision.
- E. Let's together see Jesus and believe in Jesus as our compassionate and powerful provision
- F. John Piper: "[It's] not mainly that Jesus GIVES bread to satisfy our stomachs, but that he IS bread to satisfy our souls."