

Motives In Following Jesus

It is ironic that John six records both the height of Jesus' popularity with the masses and a major exodus from Him by those same folk. In verse 13 Jesus perceived that the Jews were about to come by force and make him a king; verse 66 states, "Many of his disciples turned back and walked no more with him." The motives of those disciples were responsible for this reversal in loyalty.

Aside from the account of the Spirit's descent upon Jesus at His baptism, and the record of His resurrection, the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle all four gospels record. The miracle created a great commotion; although it was not of the magnitude of the daily manna in the wilderness God gave when Moses guided Israel from Egypt toward Canaan. Still, it was something unseen and unheard of in Jesus' day. It was enough for the multitude. They were convinced Jesus was their long expected Messiah and were preparing to forcibly make Him their king. Jesus resisted their plans by retiring into the mountain and then walking by night across the sea to Galilee's western shore (6:14f).

The disciples would not be dissuaded so easily so they crossed the sea in search of Him and when they found Him in Capernaum they asked, "Rabbi, when cometh thou hither?" (6:25). Jesus responded, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because you saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled" (6:26). Jesus "pegged" their motives correctly. The miracle did make an impression upon them, but the greatest impression was the free food. This was on their mind and when they reminded Jesus Moses had given their fathers bread from heaven, Jesus said that God gave bread from heaven which gave life to the world. Quickly they respond, "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (6:31, 33f). This was their motive in following Jesus and when Jesus made clear that physical bread was not what He came to give to the world, they became offended and disenchanted and turned and walked no more with Him.

Jesus said "Work not for the food which perisheth but for the food which abideth unto eternal life" (Jn. 6:27). There are many reasons why many follow Jesus. Some follow Him because they believe He will bless them with material blessings; some think their physical ailments will be healed if they follow Him. Some are interested in amusement and recreation. One sees such in the spirit of people who seek for a "church home" based upon what that church can do for them or their children and the fact that

truth is taught kindly, yet forcefully and without compromise scarcely is considered at all.

We should "work for the food which abideth unto eternal life." Many passage teach us that such must be our motive when we follow Jesus. David said, "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God" (Psa. 42:1). Solomon wrote, "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). Jeremiah wrote, "and ye shall seek for me and ye shall find me, when ye shall seek for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Jesus said, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Why are we following Jesus?

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