





2018



READING JOHN

2018

SEQUENCE

- John 6: reading and reactions
- Introductory considerations
 - * The Multiplication
 - * The Walking on the Water
 - * Quest
 - * The Bread of Life Discourse
 - * The Outcomes
- And so...
- Prayer

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

John 6 in the lectionary

(16th Sunday) Mk 6:30-44 July 22, 2018

(17th Sunday) Jn 6:1-15 July 29
(18th Sunday) Jn 6:24-35 August 5
(19th Sunday) Jn 6:41-51 August 12
(20th Sunday) Jn 6:51-58 August 19
(21st Sunday) Jn 6:60-69 August 26

(22nd Sunday) Mk 7:1-23 September 2

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Series

Multiplication for 5000
Walking on the sea

*(Skip to what follows in Mark
after the second multiplication)*

Request for a sign
Remarks on bread
Faith of Peter

Passion theme, betrayal

John

6:1-15
6:16-24

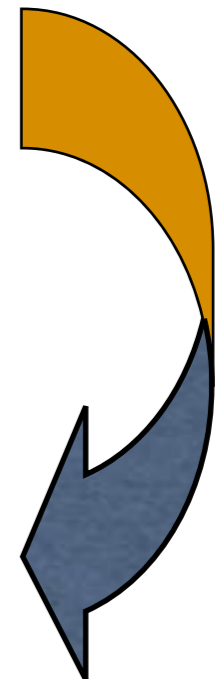


6:25-34
6:35-59
6:60-69

6:70-71

Mark

6:30-34
6:45-54



8:11-13
8:14-21
8:27-30

8:31-33

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The Sign of the Bread	6:1-15	Cf. Moses
Walking on the Water	6:16-24	Cf. Moses
<i>Discourse</i>	6:25-33	Manna
First Clarification	6:34-48	Bread from heaven
Second Clarification	6:49-58	To eat
Dénouement	6:59-71	Choices

THE MULTIPLICATION

John 6:1 After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (also called the Sea of Tiberias). **2** A large crowd was following him because they were observing the miraculous signs he was performing on the sick. **3** So Jesus went on up the mountainside and sat down there with his disciples. **4** (Now the Jewish feast of the Passover was near.) **5** Then Jesus, when he looked up and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread so that these people may eat?" **6** (Now Jesus said this to test him, for he knew what he was going to do.) **7** Philip replied, "Two hundred silver coins worth of bread would not be enough for them, for each one to get a little." **8** One of Jesus' disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, **9** "Here is a boy who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what good are these for so many people?"

John 6:10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." (Now there was a lot of grass in that place.) So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. **11** Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed the bread to those who were seated. He then did the same with the fish, as much as they wanted. **12** When they were all satisfied, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces that are left over, so that nothing is wasted." **13** So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves left over by the people who had eaten.

John 6:14 Now when the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus performed, they began to say to one another, "This is certainly *the Prophet who is to come into the world.*" **15** Then Jesus, because he knew they were going to come and seize him by force to make him king, withdrew again up the mountainside alone.

COMMENTARY

- Johannine reception of the multiplication of the loaves
- Already in Mark, the symbolic nature of the story is clear
- NB Elijah is in the background
- NB Moses is in the foreground
- The number 12 will prove significant

WALKING ON THE WATER

John 6:16 Now when **evening** came, his disciples went down to the lake, **17** got into a boat, and started to cross the lake to Capernaum. (It had already become **dark**, and **Jesus had not yet come** to them.) **18** By now a strong wind was blowing and the **sea** was getting rough. **19** Then, when they had rowed about three or

four miles, they caught sight of Jesus **walking** on the lake, approaching the boat, and they were **frightened**. **20** But he said to them, "**It is I. Do not be afraid.**" **21** Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat came to the land where they had been heading.

COMMENTARY

- An epiphany story as in Mark 6:47-52
- Already in Mark, the story speaks to the church in crisis
- John: walking rather than calming
- OT background: Psalm 107:23-30
- Water symbolises chaos and death
- Water is also associated with Moses: birth and Red Sea
- "I am" is linked to Exodus 3:14

QUEST

John 6:22 The next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the lake realised that only one small boat had been there, and that Jesus had not boarded it with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. **23** But some boats from Tiberias came to shore near the place where they had eaten **the bread after the Lord had given thanks.** **24** So when the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and came to Capernaum **looking for Jesus.**

John 6:25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"³⁸ **26** Jesus replied, "I tell you the solemn

truth, you are looking for me **not** because you saw **miraculous signs**, but because you **ate all the loaves of bread** you wanted. **27** Do not work for the food that disappears, but for the food that remains to eternal life—the food which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has put his seal of approval on him."

John 6:28 So then they said to him, "What must we do to accomplish the deeds God requires?" **29** Jesus replied, "**This is the deed God requires—to believe in the one whom he sent.**" **30** So they said to him, "Then what miraculous sign will you perform, so that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"

COMMENTARY

- This story brings on the other figures who witnessed the multiplication
- The crowd is persistent and on a quest
- Christian language: the **bread** (singular) after the **Lord** (not just "Jesus") had **given thanks**
- The crowd seem to observe the "empirical residue" of the epiphany, without grasping the interior meaning
- The text gathers the audience for the discourse and lets us know that the motives are mixed.

HOMILY: INTRODUCTION

John 6:31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, '**He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**'"

John 6:32 Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the solemn truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Father is giving you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." **34** So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread all the time!"

- This is a homily, in Midrashic (ruminating, paraphrasing, updating) style
- It makes use of a main quotation in two parts, and these are dealt with in sequence, part I and Part II
- The beginning and the end resemble each other.
- There is subsidiary biblical citation
- First the background citations (next slide)

HOMILY: BACKGROUND

Main quotation

Exod 16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “**I am going to rain bread from heaven** for you, and the people will go out and gather the amount for each day, so that I may test them. Will they walk in my law or not?”

Exod 16:15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” because they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “**It is the bread that the Lord has given you for food.**”

Subsidiary quotation

Isa 54:13 All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your children.

HOMILY: START AND END

John 6:31 Our **ancestors** ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, '**He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**'"

John 6:32 Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the solemn truth, it is not Moses who has given you the **bread from heaven**, but my Father is giving you the true **bread from heaven.** **33** For the **bread** of God is the one who **comes down from heaven** and gives **life** to the world."

John 6:58 This is the **bread that came down from heaven**; it is not like the **bread** your **ancestors** ate, but then later died. The one who eats this **bread** will **live** forever."

DISCOURSE: BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life.** The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty. **36** But I told you that you have seen **me** and still do not believe. **37** Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never send away. **38 For I have come down from heaven** not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. **39** Now this is the will of the one who sent me—that I should not lose one person of every one he has given me, but raise them all up at the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father—for everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him to have eternal life, and **I will raise him up at the last day.**”

John 6:41 Then the Jews who were hostile to Jesus began **complaining** about him because he said, “**I am the bread that came down from heaven,**” **42** and they said, “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘**I have come down from heaven**’?” **43** Jesus replied, “Do not **complain** about me to one another. **44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws** him, and **I will raise him up at the last day.** **45** It is written in the prophets, ‘**And they will all be taught by God.**’ Everyone who hears and learns from the Father comes to me. **46** (Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God—he has seen the Father.) **47** I tell you the solemn truth, the one who believes has eternal life. **48 I am the bread of life.**

COMMENTARY

- A reflection on “bread from heaven” (Exodus)
- Notice the frames: I am the bread of life
- Notice all the “I” sentences
- Notice “I came down from heaven”
- Not losing = gathering up of the scraps
- NB complaining
- NB the human origin of Jesus is misleading
- NB Echo of the prologue “No one has ever seen God”

DISCOURSE: EATING

49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

50 This is the bread that has come down from heaven, so that a person may eat from it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

John 6:52 Then the Jews who were hostile to Jesus began to argue with one another, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" **53** Jesus said to them, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink

his blood, you have no life in yourselves. **54** The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. **55** For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56** The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood resides in me, and I in him. **57** Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so the one who consumes me will live because of me. **58** This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread your ancestors ate, but then later died. The one who eats this bread will live forever."

COMMENTARY

- V. 49 takes up the main topic: desert / descent from heaven
- V. 51 changes to “living” bread
- V. 51c decodes the discourse. Flesh (not body) because of the incarnation; “for” = in favour of, for the sake of; “I will give” = existential, on the cross
- “This man” is replaced by “the Son of Man”
- “Flesh and blood” = the whole person in the Bible
- * Vv. 55-56 - mutual indwelling is the key

OUTCOMES

John 6:59 Jesus said these things while he was **teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.**

60 Then many of his disciples, when they heard these things, said, "This is a difficult saying!

Who can understand it?" **61**

When Jesus was aware that his disciples were **complaining** about this, he said to them, "Does this cause you to be offended? **62 Then what if you**

see the Son of Man ascending where he was before? **63** The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The

words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. **64 But there are some of you who do not believe.**" (For Jesus had already known from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was **who would betray him.**) **65** So Jesus added, "Because of this I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has allowed him to come."

COMMENTARY

- Capernaum: hint of an original synagogue homily
- Some disciples seem to side with the complainers
- As with the Jews, Jesus' response makes it harder
- Ascending and descending: the Prologue; Jacob
- Hint of the passion (in a Passover setting)

OUTCOMES

John 6:66 After this **many of his disciples quit following him** and did not accompany him any longer. **67** So Jesus said to the twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?" **68 Simon Peter** answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. **69** We have come to believe and

to know that you are the **Holy One of God!" 70** Jesus replied, "Didn't I choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is the **devil?" 71 (Now he said this about Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for Judas, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.)**

COMMENTARY

- Schisms in the historical community are registered
- John's version of Caesarea Philippi
- Simon Peter's best moment in the Gospel
- Holy One: a name for God, frequent in Psalms and Prophets
- Holy One of God: elsewhere only in Mark 1:24 (= Luke 4:34)
- Know and believe: the catechetical language of the community

AND SO...

Series

John

Mark

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6:30-34

Walking on the sea

6:16-24

6:45-54

*(Skip to what follows in Mark
after the second multiplication)*



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6:25-34

8:11-13

Remarks on bread

6:35-59

8:14-21

Faith of Peter

6:60-69

8:27-30

Passion theme, betrayal

6:70-71

8:31-33

AND SO...

The Sign of the Bread	6:1-15	The prophet
Walking on the Water	6:16-24	"It is I"
<i>Discourse</i>	6:25-33	Believe in the one God sent
First Clarification	6:34-48	I am the bread of life
Second Clarification	6:49-58	I came down from heaven
Dénouement	6:59-71	The Holy One of God

John 6:2 A large crowd was **following him** because they were observing the miraculous signs he was performing on the sick. **3** So Jesus went on up the mountainside and sat down there with his disciples.

John 6:14 Now when the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus performed, they began to say to one another, "This is certainly **the Prophet who is to come into the world.**" **15** Then Jesus, because he knew they were going to come and seize him by force to make him king, withdrew again up the mountainside alone.

John 6:20 But he said to them, "**It is I.** Do not be afraid."

John 6:24 So when the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and came to Capernaum **looking for Jesus.**

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John 6:40 For this is the will of my Father—**for everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him to have eternal life,** and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:42 and they said, "**Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?** How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the **Father who sent me** draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:51 **I am the living bread** that came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread he will live forever. **The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**"

John 6:57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so the one who consumes me will live **because of me.**

John 6:62 Then what if you see the **Son of Man ascending** where he was before? **63** The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 6:67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?" **68** Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. **69** We have come to believe and to know that you are the **Holy One of God!**"

COMMENTARY

- Central focus throughout is Jesus himself
- Chapter 6 is chiefly Christological: each story “lands” on the identity of Jesus
- Chapter 6 has a Eucharistic “layer” in language and symbolism
- In conjunction with John 13, it responds to particular needs in the Johannine community
- John 13: Eucharist but no practical effect
- John 6: Eucharist but an immature faith in Christ

COMMENTARY

- Further reading:
- "Opening John 6 for Preachers"
- "John 6 and 13: Why is there no Lord's Supper at the Last Supper in the fourth Gospel?"

PRAYER

In every age, O God, you give your people freedom to walk in faith or turn away.

Grant us grace to remain faithful to your Holy One, whose words are spirit and life, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.