

Gospel of John - episode 13

Chapter 6 part 2

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We continue sharing on the miracle of the loaves. I want to pick up at verse 11. In our last sharing, we left the people sitting waiting for Jesus to do something. Then "Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all that were sitting ready. He then did the same thing with the fish, giving out as much as they wanted. When they had eaten enough, he said to his disciples, Pick up the pieces left over so that nothing gets wasted. So, they picked them up and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people seeing this sign that he had given said, This really is the prophet that has come into the world. But Jesus could see that they were going to try and force him to make him king, and he escaped off into the hills by himself"; a lot of drama here. One of the things about John's Gospel is that he does not repeat what the Synoptics have already shared or spoken or revealed. So, the Synoptic Gospels have given us the institution of the Eucharist, so John doesn't do it.

The closest you get to it is just what I have read. John makes an obvious allusion to the Eucharist when he uses the actual Words that priests have forever used in the Eucharist. The very same Words are used which is actually very important. You are told that the multiplication continued until everybody was fed. But I want to ask you a question. I asked it in chapter 2: at what point did the water turn into wine? I asked you in chapter 4, at what point did the child become healed? Also in chapter 4, at what point was the Samaritan woman transformed? So, here, at what point was the bread multiplied? Did it multiply infinitely in Jesus's hands? No. He simply spoke the Words over the bread, as he spoke the Words to the woman of Samaria and spoke to the man who was the father of the child, as he spoke to the servants to fill the jars with water. He spoke **to** the bread. This is what you have to look at - the Spirit-filled, Creative, living and Abiding Word of God. That is what we are actually looking at.

Now, at what point did the bread actually multiply? They were scraps because the child only gave him his lunch. So, they would only have been five little buns to feed 5,000 people and get 12 hampers of scraps left over! You are dealing with something massive here. We know already from the reaction of the Apostles that they were not really meeting Jesus on the above level. They were meeting him on the below level. They didn't understand what they were doing, just as the servants in Chapter 2 didn't understand what they were doing in taking the so-called water to as a steward. Just as the man who walked home trying to believe in Jesus didn't realise what he was doing. The Apostles here don't fully realise what they are doing. Unfortunately, to this very day, many priests don't realise what they are doing! They don't seem to grasp the enormity of the miracle that is in their hands. If they did, they would all be saints. The Apostles don't realise it. The multiplication happens **as the Apostles obey the Word of God**, and as they reach out to feed the people. They also don't realise that this is a prophetic foreshadowing of their own ministry.

They don't realise it at this particular time. The multiplication continued until everybody had enough, just as the Eucharist will continue until the end of time, until the whole of humanity has had enough. That is the enormity of the sign that is actually given to us here. When everybody was fed, Jesus gave what I think everyone considers an absolutely extraordinary command. He told them to pick up the pieces off the ground! Now, to pick up the pieces off the ground in a huge crowd is massive. You don't ask the question 'where did they get the hampers from?' That's not meant to be the question. The question is supposed to be, 'what is the significance of the number 12?' The significance of the number 12 is that it represents the people of God. The people of God were founded by Jacob on 12 tribes, and the new people of God are being founded on 12 apostles. So, the message is that there is enough for the entire people of God. But just a little note about the hampers which is more significant in the Synoptic Gospels than here. The Synoptic Gospels, use two different Words when they are dealing with the miracles of the loaves, depending on whether it's for the Jewish people or the Gentiles. When they are talking about the miracle of the loaves for the Jewish people, they use the Word 'kofinos' for a basket. This means a basket that a lady would carry on her arm as she goes to the market to get her fruit and vegetables, so, it's a small basket.

But if you are dealing with the Gentiles, they use the Word 'spireis', and 'spireis' means a very large hamper, So large in fact, that Paul was let out of Damascus in a hamper! Now, he wasn't a very tall man, and he was obviously crunching as well, but it is a huge laundry basket. So, the emphasis on the Word hamper is not so much the material thing itself, but that this is **the overflowing gift of bread**. In chapter 2 we had the overflowing gift of wine. Here is the overflowing gift of bread, so, this gift is going to flow on from generation to generation until everyone is fed. The Apostles are going to have to learn a big thing here, and that is that in their ministry in the future, they have got to feed the people with **3 breads**. "Give us this day, our daily bread". But what is the bread? First of all, you need bread for your body, because if the body is starving, the mind will not open up to the manna of God's Word, so, you have to feed the body. We have got to literally feed the hungry. Secondly, we have to feed the intellect. We have to feed the mind.

You feed the mind with the bread of God's Word, the manna of the Holy scriptures. The third bread that Jesus is introducing here is the bread of the Eucharist which feeds your soul and your spirit. Now, you do not have a good meal unless you have the three breads, because body, soul, and spirit must be fed for us to be fully alive spiritually, and able to live on the level of above that Jesus is asking for us. So, the Church all down the centuries has been very careful to reach out to feed the poor and to take care of the sick and so on, so that when she gives the Word of God, that it is an authentic Word that she is giving.

But as we have heard in Matthew 18:1-3, the Apostles are going to have to become like this little boy, simple enough to be able to give God the gift that He is looking for. Now, what is the offering that God is looking for? It is not obvious in the text, but once I say it to you, it's completely obvious. Many people have said that to me: 'once you have said it, it's obvious'. The little boy only gave his lunch, and that was okay for this particular occasion. But what are the Apostles to give? The Apostles are to give themselves. That is why we have been told all down the generations, you must place yourself on the Paten and in the Chalice. When the disciples learn to give themselves to the Lord in real commitment, then He will

consecrate them as his Apostles - as his continuators - as the leaders of the Church. He will bless them, and He will send them around all the Cosmos. Yes, He has blessed, consecrated, and broken disciples. Then the divine love will be let loose into the universe, when this abundant food is given. That is the mystery of the whole missionary work in the Church - that people have to give themselves to the Lord and allow the Lord to bless them and consecrate them and break them and actually share them with others.

Now, I said to you when we did Chapter 4, that the Samaritan woman was the key to Samaria, and nobody would have guessed it. Nobody would have guessed either that the 12 Apostles were the key to the Cosmos, the key to this unbelieving world coming to faith and hope and love. The Apostles have a lot to learn yet as Jesus has only one more year to live so, at the moment, the crowd that is actually there reads the message at the wrong level, but they do come to the right conclusion - that Jesus is the Prophet. That is the Prophet like Moses. He has given the Manna sign that Messiah has come into the world. But the problem is that they are both right and wrong at the same time. They are right that He is the prophet coming to the world. They are wrong insofar as their national pride suddenly comes to the fore. In their thinking this prophet like Moses has got to be a political leader and He must be a king. He must put an army together to fight Rome to liberate them from the Romans, just as Moses liberated them from the Egyptians.

This is all at the level of below. They don't understand at all, so, they don't understand what Jesus is actually saying to them. What John tells us here is something very sad. I will read it for you. I read it before, but I will read it again. "Jesus could see that they were going to come and force him to become king. And he escaped and went off to the hills by himself". It's really sad. Jesus had to flee, literally, from the very people that He came to save! He would not accept such an interpretation of his mission. If you go back to the Synoptic Gospels, you will find in Matthew 4: 8-9, that Satan had offered him all the Kingdoms of the world, and he said, 'Absolutely No!' He was not going for anything on the below level. His Kingdom was an everlasting Kingdom. It was Daniel's vision of the Son of Man with everlasting Kingdom. That is what Jesus wanted, and that is what he accepted, and he would not settle for anything lower than that. Jesus chose the realm of above where everything is eternal - it lasts forever.

The futility of earthly Kingdoms is seen very clearly if you read the books of Samuel, the books of Kings and Chronicles. What you find there is that one king or Emperor - whatever he calls himself - will come along, he will attack, he will destroy, he will kill, he will loot other nations to make himself great. Then after some years, somebody else does it to him; it is just a cycle of destruction; it's going nowhere. That is because they are all at the wrong level, at the lower level, and they are all looking after themselves. By contrast, Jesus wants us to come up to the above level where Jesus, our King, actually dies for us to make **us great**. It's the exact opposite. Who ever thought of a King dying to make his people great? And not only that, but he pays for the destruction that the Cosmos has caused to us. So, it is very sad that the people of Israel had longed for their Messiah for so long, and when he came, he had to flee from them.

So now I want to go into the second sign that is given to you in John 6:16-21, and this is Jesus walking on water. I will read it first, and then will talk about it. "That evening, the disciples went down to the shore of the lake, and they got into a boat to make for Capernaum, which was on the other side of the Lake. It was

getting dark by now, and Jesus had still not joined them. The wind was strong, and the sea was getting rough. They had rode three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the lake, coming towards the boat. This frightened them, but he said, IT IS I; do not be afraid. ' And they were for taking him into the boat, but in no time had reached the shore where they were aiming at". There is an awful lot here, much more than you think. I have to start way back so that you will understand. John presumes that you have the three Synoptic Gospels in your head so that he doesn't have to repeat what is there.

In order to understand this, I need to take you back. For the chosen people, for the people of Israel, everything in their experience was a revelation of God - their flora, their fauna, their history, their geography, their weather, absolutely everything. Everything spoke to them about God. They had two lakes or two seas, whichever you want to call them. One was called the Lake of Galilee in the north, and the other was called the Dead Sea in the south. The Lake of Galilee spoke to them about life and the Dead Sea about death. It is very interesting that the Gospels never mention Jesus going towards the Dead Sea. The difference between the two lakes was actually very simple, and that is the Lake of Galilee had an inlet and an outlet so that the waters could remain fresh and could sustain an abundance of life. But the Dead Sea had an inlet but no outlet, and therefore, it was unable to sustain life, so the water became stagnant and nothing could live there. Mineral salts began to develop, and so it became known as the Salt Sea. All living things died. Just as the Lake of Galilee was able to support huge numbers of people living in little villages all around and the land was very fertile around it, the land around the Dead Sea was dead; nothing could live. So, you have a living sea and a dead sea. All of Jesus's actions took place around the living Lake.

The people understood that the Lake was a symbol of life itself. It had two shores, an earthly shore and a heavenly shore. The boat crossing the Lake was a symbol of the Church going from the level of below to the level of above. It was taking its journey through life. In all the boat scenes of the Gospel, we are actually having prophetic scenes of the Church in which the Apostles are manning the boat. Hence, we even speak about the Church as the bark of Peter. So, our journey is that Jesus - our new Moses - is leading us on a new exodus from the earthly shore to the heavenly shore. And we are going in His boat. As we experience life on the Lake of Galilee we have to go through storms and all kinds of difficulties because we go across this sea of salvation with its abundant waters. What you find is that the Apostles run into all kinds of problems. Sometimes the boat is going down because the dangers are so terrible, and these professional fishermen are shown to us as if they can't catch fish! What they are telling us is that these are all symbols of the difficulties of the mission ahead of them.

They were not going to be able to accomplish anything without Jesus. Jesus will say in John 15:5, "without me, you can do nothing". But with Jesus helping them, it's completely different. What we find is that sometimes Jesus is absent from the boat, sometimes he is asleep in the boat, sometimes he is on the shore. In spite of all the difficulties they have - all the storms - all the times when they thought the boat was going down, they do, in fact, in John 21, bring the boat to shore, and **full of fish**, which was a miraculous catch because Jesus showed them how to do it. So, all of this is indicating the struggles of the Church and the storms that the Church has to go through. When John was giving this at the end of the first century, the Church had gone through terrible storms. First of all, it had the persecution of the

Sanhedrin that drove them out of Israel into the Roman Empire, and then they were persecuted by the Roman Empire, and many a time they felt that the boat was going down. They were so constrained in the Roman Empire that they felt that they absolutely couldn't catch fish, that it was not possible, but Jesus would show them how to do it all the time.

Seeing this background will help you to not see this on a completely superficial level. At the end of the last miracle, we were told that Jesus ran away from the people. He literally fled, and he went up to the hills by himself. Now, that is the beginning of this particular miracle that Jesus is on the hills by himself, and the Apostles are down at the Lake, trying to deal with the situation there. Jesus has not given them any instruction. He didn't tell them what he was going to do, and he didn't tell them what to do. So, they did the obvious. Peter lived in Capernaum, so they decided they would get into the boat and go back to Capernaum - that is literally doing the obvious. Are they expecting a miracle? No. Are they expecting some extraordinary sign on the lake? No. All they are wondering is, what happened to Jesus? Where is he? Why didn't he show up? And the next thing we find is that they are now several miles out onto the lake, and they are caught in darkness. This is very important.

The disciples had witnessed a great miracle in the miracle of the loaves, but the significance of it was lost on them because they are still at the level of below. At this particular point in their lives, they are thinking about it in the same way as the crowds. In other words, the people were hungry and Jesus fed them. It was wonderful, but they are not seeing anything deeper. As they go out into the sea, the darkness around begins to take hold, and it seems to signify their blindness and their incomprehension of what Jesus is doing and saying. But Jesus is up the mountain praying, and this is a prophetic forecast of the Church, because John has written this, as I said to you several times, at the end of the first century, when Jesus is already in heaven, ever living to make intercession for us, as we read in Hebrews 7:25, while the boat, the Church, is down in the Cosmos, trying to deal with all the storms and the difficulties. The darkness of the unbelief, the paganism, the falsehood, the sinfulness and everything else - the degradation of down below can actually feel as if it is totally taking over, so it can cause blindness.

That is why it is so important for all of us, but anybody in ministry, that they must go up the mountain every single day in prayer to have their eyes opened and to have the Lord reveal himself to them so that when they go down into the Cosmos to do their work, that they have not lost the vision, they have not lost the revelation of who Jesus is. What John wants to say to us here is - and it is very important - he says, the Church always goes into crisis when the leadership forgets the significance of the Eucharist. If we forget the miracle of the Eucharist, we have nothing. We will get lost; we will get caught up in the storms, and we will be going down. So, if we do, in fact, land ourselves in a crisis where the importance of the Eucharist seems to get lost and we get caught up in all kinds of worldly things, there is only one solution, and that is that Jesus must reveal himself again. And that is exactly what Jesus does on this night. The Apostles are desperate. They are caught up in all of this darkness. What Jesus does is he comes walking on the turbulent waters. The winds that are causing problems for the Apostles means nothing to Jesus. He is walking on the water as if everything was okay. Everything is calm. It is only when they see him in this divine aspect that they can possibly find a solution to their problems. We will continue this in our next reflection.

Thank you for listening.

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Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. I left you in the last episode looking at Jesus walking on the water, coming towards his disciples. I want to pick that up just now and complete the reflection, and then go on into the great discourse on the Eucharist. This is John 6:19, "They had rode three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming towards the boat. This frightened them, but he said, 'IT IS I; Do not be afraid'. They were for taking him into the boat, but in no time it reached the shore that they were making for". So, the answer to the problems of the Apostles at that particular moment, and for all time down the centuries, is that Jesus would manifest himself as to who he is.

Jesus has done that - particularly through his manifestation to all the saints and the mystics - telling the rest of us **it really is Him**. Because Jesus didn't appear to everybody; He only appeared to the twelve. He didn't have to appear to everybody. They would bear a testimony to him, just as the saints and the mystics have borne testimony to us all down the centuries, and we accept their Word for it. Jesus said, 'Don't be afraid. It is I'. Now, what he said were the same Word as what God said to Moses: Ego, Emi. So, he was revealing his divinity to them. In all the darkness of their struggles what they needed was this particular sign. They didn't know **they needed** this sign, but they actually did. The sign was that Jesus was the light in the darkness. Now we got that in Chapter 1:5. You may know a lot in your head, but in a particular crisis in your life you may not actually apply it, and you have got to be told the obvious. Jesus reserved for himself the divine name, and he revealed that he was the **GREAT I AM**.

Well, that is what God said to Moses in Exodus 3:14, **I am who I am**. There is a particular text in Isaiah that John had to be thinking about because it gives insight into this particular moment, and I want to read it for you. This is Isaiah 43:11-12, "I, I am the Lord. There is no other saviour but me. It is I who have spoken, who have saved, who have made the proclamation. You are my witnesses. **I, I am your God. I am He from eternity**. No one can deliver from my hand. When I act nobody can reverse it". The Apostles needed to meet God face to face, just as Moses needed to meet God face to face - just as all of us need to meet God face to face. We have that enormous privilege when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist. This will be seen when we go into the dialogue that follows this. For this brief moment before the reality of the Cosmos takes over again - for this brief moment - **they can see**, and it is going to fortify them for all that is coming - just as our moments of true communion with God also fortify us to survive all the challenges of life.

They also knew the scriptures because they were proclaimed every Sabbath, just as the scriptures are proclaimed daily in the Church. Psalm 89:9 says, "Lord, God, you rule over the surging sea. When its waves mount up, you are the one who stills them". Psalm 107:29 says, "The Lord stilled the storm to a whisper. The waves of the sea were hushed". In the Exodus, Moses had opened the Red Sea by God's power. And it is this power of God over the sea that they see in Jesus. In one sense, there is no drama, and in the other, it is the ultimate drama. Because to see, to grasp, to understand - that gives you the strength and the courage to really serve the Lord. Then John says something very interesting. "They were

for taking him into the boat, but in no time had reached the shore”. There is a major statement given here. First of all, they were willing at long last to **‘take Jesus on board’** in every sense of that expression. From this moment they realised who they had with them. Yes, they wanted him fully and completely.

Now they will have more struggles but they are ready to take him on board. Then the next thing they discover is that as soon as they take him on board, they reach their destination rather quickly. Now, it is only John that tells us that it reached the shore that they were making for, but it seems to have been ahead of time. John is saying that if you really, really take the Lord on board, everything that God wants to accomplish in your life will be accomplished without all the difficulty and the dragging of heels as well. So going up the mountain of prayer it is absolutely essential for us, so that we can come back down and we can declare who Jesus really is. If they are willing to let him take them up that high mountain to the realm of above, then they will discover that everything is possible with God. This walking on the water is impossible to man, but everything is possible with God. That is what our Blessed Mother was told in Luke 1:37, when something completely impossible was presented to her. The angel said, “Nothing is impossible with God”. It would help us enormously in our lives if we just face that much more often than we do.

So, let us come to the great Discourse on the Bread of Life. This is one of the great discourses in John's Gospel, and there's an awful lot in it. “Next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side saw that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not got into the boat with the disciples, but that the disciples had set off by themselves”. Notice they are watching Jesus carefully. Other boats, however, had put in from Tiberius, near the place where the bread had been eaten. When the people saw that neither Jesus nor the disciples were there, they got into these boats, and they went to Capernaum. Why? Because they know Peter lives there. They went looking for Jesus, and when they found him on the other side, they said, ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’ In other words, the people have noticed that Jesus is now in Capernaum, but he didn't go there by boat, and he could not have gone there by land. So, the query is now in their heads as to who Jesus really is. You will notice that God reveals himself differently to different people. It depends on where they are at and where they are going spiritually.

We have been told at the end of Chapter 2 that Jesus needed no information about anyone. He knew exactly what was in them, and he knows what is in these crowds. He knows that they will vacillate for and against him. They are for him if the Scribes and Pharisees are not around, but if the leadership is there, they will back off, so, they can be persuaded to shout for his death in the end. Let's begin to read at least a little of this text. “Jesus said to them, I tell you most solemnly” - now, this is him when he is about to make a very important Revelation – “you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs and because you have had all the bread you want to eat”. Oh, dear. That is what I call his X-ray vision. He can read people, and he knows that they are not looking for him for the right reasons; they are looking for him for the wrong reasons. They just want more of this free bread. “Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life. That is the food that the Son of Man is offering for you, and on him, the Father, God himself has set his seal”.

The discourse that we are entering into now has got to be seen against the background of these two miracles that we have discussed. Otherwise, it is going to be a conversation out of context. In the multiplication of the loaves Jesus showed that he was the prophet like Moses, but he showed he was greater than Moses because he is the very manifestation of the God of Israel, **THE GREAT I AM**. He has shown that to his disciples. The Galileans are seeking him for the wrong reasons. John is saying to us who are the readers, 'make sure that you seek the Lord at the level of above and that you seek him for all the right reasons so that you can have eternal life'. Jesus asks the people to please come up to his level so that he can give them this eternal food. At the below level, he can only give them bread, he cannot give them the bread from heaven. He wants to give them the everlasting food, but they have got to come to his level, and they have got to see that God himself has set his seal on the Son of Man.

That seal was the fullness of the spirit, which John the Baptist saw when the Spirit rested on the head of Jesus. Now, John does not deal with the baptism of Jesus, - the Synoptics do. To believe in Jesus means to enter into a life-giving relationship with him - we have had this before - so that he becomes the source of divine life for us [John 3] that he feeds us with his Living Word and he feeds us with the Eucharist – that is the present chapter - and that he becomes our source of life, **in fact**, not just in theory. The people do not understand what he is talking about, and they say to him, 'What must we do if we are to work the works of God?' "Jesus said, this is working for God. You must believe in the one who sent". So, they bring up the subject of work. Now, if you know anything about the Mosaic covenant, it was all about works, and the works that you do that would save you. So, the work of the Father in the time of the Redemption was that he sent his beloved Son into the Cosmos to save it. That is John 3:16. The work of the Son is to cooperate with the Father in the salvation of souls.

That is what we meet with in every one of the chapters that we are dealing with. So, the question is, what is our work? Our work is that we must believe. Now, John never uses the Word '**faith**'. Faith is a word that can be there in a book. He uses the Word 'believe', which is an active receiving of the Lord. The Jewish system depended on works, and John changes that to believing. So, if you want a formula, **it is repent, believe, receive, and live**. That is what you are going to hear. In order to believe, they have got to penetrate the mystery of the Person of Jesus. They have got to listen to and internalise his teaching, and they have to put it into practice. So, it is only when we open our ears to hear the teaching and open our lives to his life that we can understand and we can do, and that he can provide for us both in time and in eternity.

So, in verse 30, the crowds are very far from this, so they say to him, "What sign will you give us that we would make us believe in you? What work will you do?" You see to yourself where do these people live? Having seen the immense sign of the miracle of the Lord, they are asking him for a sign. Isn't this exactly the same thinking that you have had from the Judean leadership? You can see that the problem that we meet within the Judean leadership was actually widespread. It was the whole country. "What work will you do? They said, Our fathers had manna in the desert. And the scripture says, he gave them bread from heaven". Having experienced this miracle, they are now demanding that Jesus would give them an even greater sign! That is the problem of believing in signs - no sign is enough. Do you remember the story of Gideon in the Book of Judges? He asked the Lord to put the dew on the fleece of the sheep, and then he

would know what was the right thing to do. Then when he got the sign he said, Oh, well, maybe if you remove the sign I will know then what to do. He just didn't trust in God.

These people are very far from the openness that is required. The only excuse I can give them is that they have not seen him last night walk on water, and they have not heard him say, **EGO EIMI** to the Apostles, so we can forgive them on that level. So, they said, 'Our fathers ate manna in the desert'. It seems that they are saying to Jesus that if this really is the Manna miracle, it needs to go on for 40 years! You need to keep repeating it. They want something in their hands now, not something way in the distant future. They don't know, of course, that it is not the distant future - that Jesus will die in one year - that he will be the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb, in just twelve months! They don't realise that. So, in order to respond to them, Jesus answers them point by point. Notice that he takes their objections very seriously. What Jesus says, first of all, is that it was the Father, not Moses, who gave them the Manna in the desert. Moses prayed, but it was God who gave them the Manna, and that is very clear in Exodus 16:4-15. Psalm 78: 24-25, "He, the Lord, rained down manna for the people to eat. He, the Lord, gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels - the Panis Angelicus. The Lord sent them the food that they could eat". The Psalms were very clear that the gift was given to them by God. It was just that Moses interceded for it. The Book of Wisdom says in chapter 16:20-21, "Lord, you gave them the food of angels from heaven, untiringly sending them bread already prepared, containing every delight, satisfying every taste. And the substance you gave demonstrated your sweetness for your people". In other words, this gift demonstrated your extraordinary love for your people - so, they knew what the scripture said. What they are demanding of Jesus they probably themselves don't really know. It is clear from these texts that the manna in the desert, while it was physical food, that the best among them, the ones who could really pray and really discern, understood that it represented spiritual food. It represented the bread of angels.

The people who could really discern actually came to the correct conclusion. And this is why Jesus said, that it came from the Father, and that this gift of the Manna showed God's great love for his people. This is exactly what Jesus is preparing to give them in the Eucharist. What you need to know is that while John does not give us the institution of the Eucharist as the Synoptics do, he gives us the teaching that was required. So, you have the event of the institution of the Eucharist given to you in the Synoptics, but you have the meaning of it given in John. That is why John's Gospel - which was the last of them - was really needed in order to explain the things that the people knew had happened.

In verse 33, Jesus says, 'the same Father who sent the Manna has now given a much greater gift to them in sending his own Son. His own Son is going to become the Bread of Angels for us. So, if you flash back now to the beginning - it is very important in John to go back in order to understand where you are and then to go forward, so, when you go back to Chapter 3, Nicodemus had no idea where this new life was going to come from. In Chapter 4, the Samaritan woman had no idea where the living water was going to come from. The Galilean crowds now have no idea where this bread of life is going to come from. Yet they do ask an important question in verse 34. They said, "Sir, give us that bread always". Now, Sir is 'Lord, Kyrie', so even though they misunderstand what Jesus is saying - like the Samaritan woman - they do actually **ask** for the gift. The mistake that Nicodemus made was that he didn't ask for the gift. If he had asked for it, he would have received it even without understanding it. So, they ask for this bread **always**.

They don't know that they are asking for the Eucharist, but John - in writing this text at the end of the first century - is saying that **the Church does know** what they are asking for. The very reason why Jesus came was to be their Eucharistic food.

Because they have asked, Jesus now can reveal himself in verse 35. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry, and he who comes to me will never thirst". Now, **I am the bread of life**. There are a number of statements in John's Gospel that begins with **THE GREAT I AM**. There are two ways you can hear this. Jesus simply saying, pointing to himself, I am the bread of life. But there is a much deeper level - and that is, the great I am is the bread of life! God feeds us with himself. Jesus is God's Divine Manna. Jesus is not only the Word Incarnate, but he is also the Bread of life; Jesus is the Eucharist. The I am is the bread of life. God himself is our food. He would only give us God's highest and best. The hungry soul can only be satisfied when it feeds on God himself. The hungry soul must go back to its origin in God. It must go back to the source of life. Otherwise, we will never, ever be satisfied. You can see that with people living in the Cosmos - in the unbelieving world - are never satisfied with anything because they are not feeding the deepest thing in themselves. We have an insatiable hunger for God. We must go back to our origin. That is why Jesus feeds us with himself in the Eucharist, and that is what satisfies us. Let me give you a couple of readings from the Books of Wisdom. Proverbs 9:2,4-6 says, "to the fool, the one without wisdom, wisdom says, come and eat my bread, drink the wine I have prepared, leave your folly, and you will live, walk in the ways of perception. So, you must actually **feed** on the manna of God's Word. It is absolutely essential. Wisdom 16:26. "So that your beloved children, Lord, may learn that the various crops are not what nourishes man, but it is **your Word** that preserves them who trust in you. The Book of Sirach, Chapter 15:3 says, "She will give him the bread of understanding to eat and the water of wisdom to drink". So the manna we must feed on in order to understand the Eucharist is the Holy Scriptures. Without the Holy Scriptures we just won't understand. In the Holy scriptures, we have the Words of God coming to us in the words of men.

When we come to the Eucharist, it is Jesus himself; it is God himself we are feeding on. In verses 36 and 37, we have Jesus's X-ray vision again penetrating the reality that is actually in front of him. He says, "But as I have told you, you can see me, and you still don't believe. But all that the Father gives to me will come to me, and those who come, I will accept". Jesus is saying to them that while they are having this very important discussion with him, that doesn't mean they have opened their hearts to him. Unfortunately, that that is not the case; they are going to remain vacillating to the very end. So, they don't accept the fact that the person in front of them is the Father's only Begotten Son. Yet we have been told that from the very beginning, Chapter 1:12, and we will be told it also in the second half of the Gospel. But we have also been told that anyone that comes to Jesus is, in fact, the Father's given a gift to him. This is very important. If you and I have faith, if you and I have a true relationship with God, it is because the Father has given us as a gift to the Son, and the Son has cleaned us up and redeemed us and sent the Holy Spirit to sanctify us;

then we are given back to God, the Father, as a gift. That is what you meet with in John 17:5. "Father, you gave them to me. I redeemed them. I give them back to you". Here you have this extraordinary thing that is going on in the Blessed Trinity. Have you ever thought of yourself as a gift from God, the Father, to God, the Son? I think it's a fantastic thing. Think about it. Thank you for watching. God bless you.