

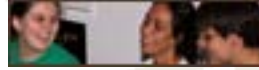
GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

06



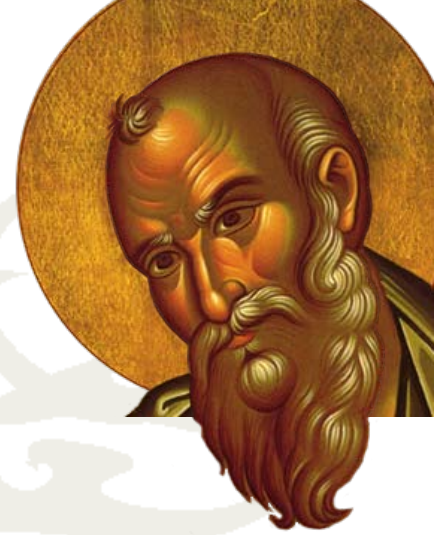
CHRYSOSTOM

Read St. John Chrysostom's homilies on John chapter 6.



PRACTICE QUIZ

Take a quiz to test your knowledge of John chapter 6.



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Chapter six begins with Christ's miraculous feeding of 5,000 people by the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were only able to gather 200 denarii (approximately six month's wages), five loaves of bread and two small fish to feed the crowd—surely, they thought, this would be insufficient for such a crowd (6:8). Nonetheless, after distributing the food they were able to gather twelve baskets of leftovers (6:13). Seeing this, the people believed Christ was the prophesied messianic Prophet—St. Ephrem the Syrian links this prophecy to Moses (see Deuteronomy 18:15-19)—and attempted to make Him king (6:14-15).

After this the disciples traveled in a boat to Capernaum, while Jesus went onto the mountain to be alone (6:15-17). Amazingly, as a storm arose while the disciples rowed three or four miles from shore, they saw Jesus walking to them across the water. After calming their fears He entered the boat, and it was immediately on the

opposite shore of the Sea (6:20-21). St. Cyril of Alexandria reminds us that Christ will also help us when we are troubled:

For the grace of our Savior does not come to us when our tribulations begin but when our fear is at its height and danger shows itself to be great—when we are found, so to say, in the midst of the waves of affliction. Then, Christ appears unexpectedly and removes our fear and frees us from all danger. By His ineffable power He changes horror into joy, and as it were, calms the storm.

The people from Tiberias (near where Jesus fed the 5,000 (6:23)) looked for Jesus to see if He would perform more miracles for them, but He responded that they should instead do the work of God and believe in Him (6:27-29). He continued—to the people's bafflement (6:41-42)—that He is the bread from heaven, sent by the Father to give life to the world (6:32-33, 35-40).

Jesus then repeated His point from chapter five that everyone who listens to the Father comes to Him (6:45), and emphasized that anyone who eats the bread He gives—namely, His flesh—shall live forever (6:50-51). As strange as this sounded to the people (6:52)—and sounds to most people today—Christ was indeed referring to the Eucharist (6:53-58). As St. Romanos the Melodist proclaims:

We all know, we who possess complete faith in Christ / That as we approach, eager for the mystic bread / And in addition take the cup of salvation, / If we are of pure heart and without

dissimulation / We are all participants of the flesh and blood / Of Christ with faith in Him, and we hope / From this a life like that of the angels; / For, in very truth, the body of the One Who suffered, / The very holy body of Jesus Christ is / The heavenly bread of immortality.

Unfortunately, many of Jesus' followers were disturbed by this teaching and stopped following Him (6:61, 66). In contrast to such faithlessness, St. Peter proclaimed that Jesus' teachings are "the words of eternal life," and that He is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (6:68-69). Even with this, however, Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot would betray Him (6:70-71).



LIFE TIP

St. Cyril of Alexandria tells us to follow Christ's example and avoid pursuing glory: "(Christ) teaches us that it is unseemly for those who pursue divine grace and thirst for everlasting glory to seek after worldly greatness. We must then forego the love of glory, the sister and neighbor of arrogance, residing not far from its borders. Let us have nothing to do with illustrious honor in this present life which is hurtful. Let us rather seek after a holy humility giving preference to one another."

