

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

John 6:22-35

Year B - Proper 13, Text: John 6:22-35
Year B - Proper 13, Text: John 6:24-35

Earlier, in John 6:16, we read of the disciples sailing from the east coast of the Sea of Galilee to the region of Capernaum on the west coast. The crowds (many of whom had likely been among the 5,000) notice that when the disciples get into their boat to sail back to the west coast, Jesus is not with them (6:22).

Verses 6:23-24: Groups of people from Tiberias sail across the sea to the region where the feeding miracle took place (6:23). When they arrive in the east bank region, they observe that Jesus and His disciples are no longer there — so they get back into their boats and sail west to Capernaum, looking for Jesus.

Verse 6:25: When the travelers meet Jesus on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, they ask Him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” (The conversation that follows resembles that in ch. 4, which describes Jesus’ conversation with a woman at the well of Sychar in Samaria.) In the following play on words, Jesus tells them that He came from heaven!

Verses 6:26-27: Jesus tells the people that the reason they are looking for Him is because they ate their fill of the loaves that He shared on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He urges them not to focus on food that enters the stomach, but on the food “that endures for eternal life.” Jesus can and does give people that food! In sharing these insights with His hearers, Jesus refers to Himself as “the Son of Man” — an apocalyptic term that surfaces in Daniel 7:13, signifying the appearance of the Messiah — to whom God will give dominion over the nations for ever and forever. In the Gospels, Jesus consistently uses the title “Son of Man” as a reference to himself. In his advent and divine incarnation, we have the promise that God has set His seal on Jesus, the true Son of Man, the true Lord of the nations, the true Lord of time and eternity.

Verses 6:28-29: When the people ask what they must do to perform the works of God, Jesus tells them that the issue is not what they do; it is what they believe.

And they are to believe in the One whom God has sent. As always, the hopes and dreams of the people are on the material level; they see the miraculous nature of the “sign” of Jesus’ actions, but do not understand its true meaning. Jesus tries to raise their sights above their materialistic outlook, but is met with their persistent inability to understand.

Verses 6:30-31: The people now introduce the Passover theme of the manna that God provided for His people during the time of the wilderness wanderings. In Jesus’ day, the rabbinic expectation was that when the Messiah eventually appeared, the manna would fall from the heavens once again. Jesus is that manna.

Verses 6:32-35: Jesus tells His hearers that the True Bread is not the bread that their forefathers ate during the wilderness wanderings. It is Jesus’ Father who gives His people the True Bread from heaven, and that True Bread is Jesus and His Word. Only that True Bread can and does give life to the world.

When the people ask Jesus to give them this bread always, Jesus tells them that He is that bread. Whoever comes to Jesus, the true Bread of Life, will never be hungry and will never be thirsty. The implications of Jesus words are profound to the extreme, and are sorely needed in our challenged and confused world.

