



JOHN 6:25-59 (PART 1)

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"

(verses 26-30)

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I learned the value of signs the hard way. We were on a once-in-lifetime trip with our kids in France, setting out from Chartres to a spectacular Chateau

(purportedly designed by Leonard da Vinci) called Chambord. I plugged the details into the GPS of our rental car, but didn't pay attention to the fact that two entries came up. I simply hit "enter" for the first one, and away we went. That was my first mistake. But worse, I didn't pay attention to the signs en route! After travelling for an hour, I spotted a sign saying we were heading in the direction of "Normandy Beaches." "Funny," I thought, "I didn't think Chambord was anywhere near there." But I simply pressed on.

The GPS robo-voice told us we were about to arrive. Moments later, there we were, at a small intersection, with an even smaller place marker that clearly said "Chambord" – completely the wrong spot! Who knew there were two places in France with the same name? The sign I'd seen earlier should have alerted me I was going in the wrong direction. But I hadn't paid attention!

Signs show the way. They aren't an attraction in themselves. No, they're meant to point to something else.

Jesus tells the crowd who'd gathered at Capernaum, looking for more miracles, that they'd filled their stomachs with divinely multiplied bread and fish, but they'd completely missed the sign. Where had it been pointing? Well, clearly at Jesus himself.

But they wanted something else. *"What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you?"* (verse 30). Not satisfied with endless supply of bread from Jesus' hands, they wanted bread from heaven, just like Moses gave.

Ironically, this is exactly what the sign was pointing to, if they'd only paused to see. They'd already received bread from heaven. Better than Moses gave. The bread is Jesus himself.

Listen to what he says: *"The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ... I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry"* (verses 33, 35).

Even when Jesus points it out, they miss the sign. They grumble among themselves about his claim. They think they know full well his place of origin – they know his father and mother. *"How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"* (verse 42). They resist seeing what he himself is putting before them. They miss seeing the point of it all.

What lesson do I take away for myself today? It's this: When dealing with Jesus, I best put aside my own preconceptions and watch instead for what he is communicating. I need to have eyes open to his signs – through his Word, by his Spirit, through wise counsel he puts in my path – eyes open for what he himself is teaching me.

Otherwise, I'll find myself in some little back alley roadway, wondering how I got so far off track.

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Lord Jesus, I yield my eyes to see and my ears to hear, each attentive to your direction. By your Spirit, heighten my awareness. You are Bread that nourishes.

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Reflect:

Commit yourself afresh to watching for the Lord's direction this day. Carry on the conversation, listening for his response, eyes peeled for his signs.