

DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

John 6:16-35

by Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Your time on earth is limited. You will not live on this earth forever; and you will only live once. And your time on earth is short. 75 to 100 years if you're lucky, and that is not long. Time flies. And the older you get, the faster time flies. As well, the Bible teaches us that there is an afterlife – a heaven and a hell – and that what we do in this life determines our eternal destiny. This is why it is essential that you don't waste your life.
2. Today we're going find out how to make sure that we don't waste our lives.

II. TEXT

1. The Fifth Sign: Walking on Water
 - i. This is the fifth of Jesus' signs recorded by John. Remember, John refers to Christ's miracles as signs, because they point to His divinity. John picked out eight special signs to focus on in this gospel.
 1. Turning water into wine.
 2. Healing an official's son.
 3. Healing a disabled man at the pool of Bethesda.
 4. Feeding the five thousand.
 5. Walking on water.
 - ii. **John 6:16-21:** *16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. Darkness had already set in, but Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 A high wind arose, and the sea began to churn.*
 1. After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus had withdrawn to the mountain by Himself because the people wanted to force him to be their king. Mark 6:45 says that Jesus sent them ahead. So, the disciples took off in the boat and headed across the lake to Capernaum.
 2. Capernaum was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 4:13 tells us that this is where Jesus lived.
 3. **John MacArthur** (John 6:16-19) "The Sea of Galilee lies nearly 700 feet below sea level in the Jordan Rift, while the surrounding hills rise abruptly to about 2,000 feet above sea level. The sharp drop of nearly 3,000 feet from the tops of the hills to the surface of the lake creates ideal conditions for the sudden, violent storms for which the Sea of Galilee is notorious (cf. Matt. 8:23–27). The cooler air rushes down the slopes and strikes the surface of the lake with great force,

churning the water into whitecaps and creating dangerous conditions for small boats.”

4. The disciples got caught up in one of these storms. Matthew 14:24 says that the wind pushed them off course “a long distance from land.” Mark 6:47 says they were pushed to the middle of the sea. Matthew 14:24 says they were battered by the waves. Mark 6:48 says they were straining at the oars. Matthew 14:24 says they were heading into the wind, and they were moving very slowly. They left for Capernaum between 6-9 PM, and by this time is 3-6 am. During this long time they had only rowed about three or four miles.
 5. This was the perfect storm. The disciples were in a boat, in the dark, in a violent storm, without Jesus.
- iii. *19 After they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He was coming near the boat, and they were afraid.*
1. This is amazing. Jesus walked on the water, in the dark, during a storm.
 2. Jesus proved that He is divine by showing His power over nature.
 3. The synoptic gospels tell us that they were afraid because they thought he was a ghost, and they cried out in fear (Mt 14:26).
- iv. *20 But he said to them, “It is I. Don’t be afraid.”*
1. The Greek for, “It is I,” is literally “I am.” *Ego eimi*. Jesus is going to refer to Himself in the same way in John 8:58, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” This is very significant, these are the exact words that God used when He spoke to Moses through the burning bush. Moses said, “What is your name?” And God said, “Ego eimi.” Jesus was telling His disciples that He is God.
 2. This is the first of Christ’s “I am” statements. The Gospel of John is famous not only for the eight signs, but also for Jesus’ many “I am” statements: “I am. I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am from above. I am the gate for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the Son of God. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the true vine.”
 3. Matthew 14:28-31 tells us that this is when Peter jumped overboard to go to Peter, and he walked on the water as well.
- v. *21 Then they were willing to take him on board, and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.*
1. This little story contains more than one miracle.
 - a. The first is Christ walking on the water.
 - b. The second is Peter walking on the water.

- c. The third is that according to Matthew and Mark, as soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind immediately stopped (Mt 14:32; Mk 6:51).
 - d. And the fourth is that as soon as Christ boarded the boat, they were at once to their destination. They traveled faster than the speed of light. They defied space and time.
- 2. The synoptic gospels tell us that then the disciples worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly you are the Son of God!" (Mk 4:41; Mt 14:33).
 - a. That Jesus allowed them to worship Him and did not protest is another sign of His deity. Surely, if He was not God, and if was not a liar, He would have stopped them and told them that He was only a man.
 - b. Jesus allowed people to worship Him on multiple occasions:
 - i. The wise men at his birth (Mt 2:11).
 - ii. A Canaanite woman (Mt 15:25).
 - iii. A blind man whom Jesus healed (Jn 9:38).
 - iv. The women who came to the tomb after the resurrection (Mt 28:9).
 - v. Thomas (Jn 20:28).
 - vi. And the rest of the disciples after the resurrection (Mt 28:17; Lk 24:52).
 - c. Mark 6:52 says that even after seeing Jesus feed the 5,000, they didn't see the spiritual significance that God was in their midst. But that changed once they saw Him walk on the water.
- 3. There are a couple of important lessons here:
 - a. Life is much easier with Christ.
 - i. Before Christ boarded their boat, they were struggling against the wind and the waves. But when Christ got into the boat, life got much easier. Remember that according to Matthew and Mark, as soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind immediately stopped (Mt 14:32; Mk 6:51).
 - ii. You weren't made to do life without Christ. It's like trying to dig ditch with a spoon, or trying to write a paper with a basketball. It's like trying to drive a car with no engine, or trying to fly a helicopter without a tail rotor. You will face all kinds of unnecessary difficulties.
 - iii. Don't misunderstand. Life as a Christ-follower is not easy. But there are so many unnecessary problems

that you will face if you try to do life without Christ.

This is why Jesus said,

- iv. **Matthew 11:28-30** “28 “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
 - v. Jesus didn’t mean that you won’t have any more problems, but that life is so much easier and better with Christ than without Him.
- b. You can travel much faster with Christ.
- i. Before Christ got into the boat, the disciples were traveling to Capernaum very slowly. They were fighting against the wind and the waves. But after Christ got into the boat, they instantly made it to their destination.
 - ii. God created you with natural desires. You want to be happy. You want to make a difference. You want to know your purpose in life. You want healthy relationships. You want to be physically healthy. You want financial peace. You want inner peace. You are on a quest to find these things. But you can’t find these things without Christ. You can search your whole life and not find these things. But as soon as you let Christ into your boat, and let Him be the captain of your ship, then you will reach your destination much more quickly. You will be traveling at the speed of Jesus.
 - iii. Christ is the answer to life’s deepest questions. Christ is the answer to relational peace. Christ is the answer to family harmony. Christ is the answer to financial security. Christ is the answer to inner peace and happiness. If you will give your life to Christ, and let Him take the wheel, you will get to your destination a whole lot faster.
2. In verses 22-25, John describes the crowd’s confusion. When they made it to Capernaum, following the disciples, they saw Jesus there and said, “How did you get here?” They knew that only one boat had departed from the other side of the sea, and Jesus wasn’t on it. Let’s look at Christ’s reply.

3. **John 6:26-27** *26 Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.*
 - i. They people saw the sign of Christ feeding the five thousand, but they did not perceive it. They did not see it with their heart. They did not see its significance. All they saw was that Christ had miraculously filled their bellies, and they wanted more where that came from.
 - ii. **Leon Morris** "They were moved not by full hearts, but by full bellies."
 - iii. They did not follow Jesus because they saw that He was God, and they sensed their obligation to worship and obey Him.
4. *27 Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."*

III. THREE KEYS TO NOT WASTE YOUR LIFE

1. Don't work for the food that perishes.

- i. The people were following Jesus for physical food which doesn't last, instead of following Jesus for the spiritual food that He could give them. He told them, don't work for the food that perishes.
- ii. The first key to not waste your life is don't work for the food that perishes. Don't waste your life on things that don't matter for eternity; on things that will not last beyond this life.
- iii. What is the food that perishes? Money; material things; luxuries; physical pleasures like food, and drugs, and alcohol, and sex; sin; approval of man; the praise of man; fame; physical fitness; physical appearance; fashion; professional advancement; success at work; hobbies; entertainment; travel, etc.
- iv. These things aren't necessarily bad in themselves (some of them are). But we have to be careful about how much time and energy we give to these things.
- v. Why? Because these things don't satisfy, and these things don't last. You can gain all of these things and then die and spend eternity in hell. You can gain all of these things, but they don't increase your heavenly reward.
- vi. Jesus told a story about the rich man (Dives) and Lazarus. In this life, Dives had it all. He had wealth and luxury and pleasure and power and respect. But he did not have Christ. He was rich in this world, but not spiritually. Lazarus on the other hand was a poor, homeless man who lived on the street near Dives. But he was rich toward God. And when they died, Dives went to hell, the place of eternal torment, and Lazarus went to heaven – the place of rest and comfort.
- vii. **Mark 8:36-37** (ESV) "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?"

- viii. What does it profit a man to gain all the money in the world and go to hell? What does it profit a man to get all the physical pleasure in the world and go to hell? What does it profit a man to get all the fame in the world and go to hell? What does it profit a man to gain all the professional success in the world and go to hell? What does it profit a man to gain all the fun and entertainment this world can offer and go to hell?
- ix. There is nothing more valuable than your soul. Don't waste your life working for the food that perishes.

2. Work for the food that lasts for eternity.

- i. **John 6:27** "Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."
- ii. The second key to not wasting your life is to work for the food that lasts for eternal life.
- iii. There is a food that lasts for eternity. There is something you can do in this life to make sure that you go to heaven. There is something you can do in this life to increase the size of your heavenly reward. There are things you can do in this life that can benefit you for the rest of eternity.
- iv. Considering the brevity of this life, and the eternity of the next life, the wise thing to do is to focus on the food that lasts for eternity. Focus your life on things that will last.
- v. Draw a dot on your worship guide. Then draw a long line with an arrow that extends from the dot. The dot represents your life on earth. It is very short. Very small. Finite. Limited. The line represents the next life. It represents life after death. It represents eternity – either in heaven or in hell. Don't live for the dot. That's a waste of life. Live for the line. Work for the food that lasts.
- vi. **Randy Alcorn** "When you leave this world, will you be known as one who accumulated treasures on earth that you couldn't keep? Or will you be recognized as one who invested treasures in heaven that you couldn't lose?"
- vii. **John Ortberg** "The biggest lesson life has to teach: the absolute necessity of arranging our life around what matters in light of our mortality and eternity."
- viii. But how do we work for the food that lasts for eternal life? That's the question the crowd asked Jesus.

3. Believe in Jesus.

- i. **John 6:28-29** 28 "What can we do to perform the works of God?" they asked. 29 Jesus replied, "This is the work of God—that you believe in the one he has sent."
- ii. The third key to not waste your life is to believe in Jesus. This is how you work for the food that lasts for eternity. To believe in Jesus, the one God has sent into the world.

- iii. The only “work” that can get you into heaven is faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible says that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and that “no one will be justified in his sight by the works of the law (Rm 3:20).”
- iv. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Two things.
 - 1. Trust in Him as your Savior. You are a sinner, and the just penalty for sin is hell. But because God loves you, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins; to take your penalty upon Himself. Because Jesus has died for you and rose again, you can be forgiven and have eternal life. To believe in Jesus is to trust that Jesus did this for you, and that He is your only hope for eternal life.
 - 2. Trust in Him to be your Lord. Jesus didn’t just die for you to give you a ticket to heaven; He died for you so that you would live for Him (2 Cor 5:15). You must not only trust in Jesus to get you to heaven, but to lead you through this life. You must turn from your sins and hand over the steering wheel of your life to Him.
 - a. **Romans 10:9** “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
 - b. As **Charles Spurgeon** put it, “You and your sins must separate, or you and your God will never come together”
- v. Two reasons believing in Jesus is the key to not wasting your life:
 - 1. **Only Jesus can give you eternal life.**
 - a. **John 6:30-33** 30 “What sign, then, are you going to do so that we may see and believe you?” they asked. “What are you going to perform? 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” 32 Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives 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.”
 - b. Jesus gives life to the world. Eternal life. If you believe in Jesus, you will go to heaven rather than hell.
 - c. You will live for eternity. The question is where? In hell, the place of eternal torment, or in heaven with God?
 - d. All the money in the world can’t get you to heaven. All the fame in the world can’t get you to heaven. All the success in the world can’t get you to heaven. All the political power in the world can’t get you to heaven. All the science and

knowledge in the world can't get you to heaven. Only Jesus can give you eternal life.

2. Only Jesus satisfies.

- a. **John 6:34-35** 34 Then they said, "Sir, give us this bread always." 35 "I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again."
- b. Here is the second "I am" statement of Jesus. "I am the bread of life."
- c. Nothing in this world truly satisfies the human heart. The things of this world only tickle us; they only temporarily entertain us and distract us. But this world does not satisfy.
- d. Drugs don't satisfy. They leave you craving a bigger, stronger dose. Drink doesn't satisfy. It leaves you with a hangover, and the desire for more. Food doesn't satisfy. It leads to poor health, and an ever-growing appetite. Pornography doesn't satisfy. It causes you to crave darker, more perverted images. Things don't satisfy. As soon as you buy what you want, you will want something else. Only Jesus satisfies.
- e. Celebrities give us all the proof we need of this. There are celebrities that have the whole world – beauty, sex, money, drugs, alcohol, fame, the applause of men – but they are empty on the inside and end of drinking or drugging themselves to death to fill that hole – or they intentionally take their own lives.
- f. God created us with a God-shaped hole in our lives that only He can fill.
- g. **Augustine** "You created us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you."
- h. **Thomas Watson** "Nothing but Christ can replenish the heart with joy: the understanding, will, and affections, are such a triangle, that none can fill but the Trinity.
- i. Stop chasing the things of this world and put all your energy into chasing Jesus Christ. Jesus satisfies, and He gives eternal life.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. A sociological study was done on a hundred people over the age of ninety. They asked one simple question on the survey: "If you were to live your life all over again, what would you do differently?" The top three answers were that they would risk more, reflect more, and they would do more that would live on after they were gone."

2. These people realized that the only things that matter are the things that will last. The food of this life – money, pleasure, fame, material things – things don't last. But a healthy, devoted relationship with Jesus Christ will last for all eternity. That's worth devoting your life to.