

# Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

*Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).*

The speaker challenged us with a pop quiz this week. I don't know about you, but my mind flew back to high school days. I had some of the nerves I felt when a teacher would say, "Take out a sheet of paper and answer these ten questions."

This message extra will be set up as a pop quiz with commentary. Please play along. Read John 6:1-15 and gather some of the facts to answer the pop quiz.

1. Which one of Jesus' 37 recorded miracles is told by all four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)? Make a wild guess.
  - a. Healing the man who laid by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years (only in John)
  - b. The feeding of the 5,000 (pick this one!)
  - c. Parting the Red Sea (that is Old Testament)
2. Why were the crowds gathering around Jesus? (John 6:1-4)
  - a. It was near the time of the Passover Festival.
  - b. They were hungry.
  - c. They saw many sick healed.
3. What was the purpose of Jesus' questioning or testing of Philip?
  - a. To see if he knew where the local grocery store was
  - b. To find out the level of his math skills
  - c. To see if he thought Jesus could provide
4. How did Jesus feed the 5,000?
  - a. He called the local Little Caesar's pizza delivery.
  - b. After giving thanks for what the boy had given, the whole crowd got more than enough to eat. (After giving thanks, the disciples just kept giving away bread and fish – imagine that!)
  - c. After seeing the generosity of the boy, everyone shared what they had for a mountainside picnic. (This is a common explanation of how the miracle occurred but not supported by John or the other three gospel writers.)

5. What did the “fed” conclude about Jesus from this sign He performed?
  - a. He is The Prophet who is to come into the world. (The people were beginning to get it. He isn't just a man but THE Prophet, not merely A prophet.)
  - b. He's a magician.
  - c. He should open a fish and chips fast food restaurant.

This wasn't too difficult, I hope. Here are the answers (1-b 2-c 3-c 4-b 5-a)

Now for the really good stuff. The meaning behind the sign. Read John 6:26-40. Jesus tells us why he performed the miracle (sign). Insights like this from the lips of Jesus motivate belief.

Jesus is the provider. We can know that Jesus provides for both physical *and* spiritual needs. He is very clear:

- I don't want you only to believe in me because of the signs. The signs (v 27) are temporary. In this case the bread and fish are still perishable items. The people will be hungry again. Even the gift of healing for the paralytic who laid beside the pool of Bethesda for 38 years will give way to other issues of aging and death.
- I paraphrase what I believe Jesus is saying: The signs point you to greater truth. I am the bread of heaven. As my Father provided manna for the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness, I, too, provide for physical needs. As the Father sought to create a people who wholeheartedly followed Him as God alone by providing the Law and the Promised Land, I am creating a people who are not bound by geography but live in a world-wide kingdom that will last forever.
- When God or the Father through me breaks the normal laws of nature and performs a sign or miracle, Jesus and the Father declare, “We've got this! There is so much more to life than you can see and understand. Signs and wonders do help you SEE the thin places (more on this in a moment) where heaven comes to earth, where the eternal intersects with the temporal, or the things of hallowed One invades the shallows of earth and your physical limitations.”

(Thin Places are a Celtic Christian description – “they are places and locations where the distance between heaven and earth sort of collapses, and we're able to catch glimpses of the divine, or the transcendent or, as I like to think of it, the Infinite.”)

<https://www.cometothecrossing.com/resources/blog/understanding-thin-places-where-heaven-and-earth-come-together>)

Up to this point in our sermon series, the signs of John tell us that Jesus cares about the wine at a wedding, a dying child of a non-Jewish ruler, the paralysis of a long-term invalid, and the hunger of the crowds. We can often think the distance between heaven and earth is very “thick” or distant from one another. Signs illustrate that the distance between

heaven and earth can be very “thin” providing us with “Aha!” moments. The old hymn describes one of these thin places - “Heaven came down and glory filled my soul. When at the cross the Savior made me whole.” Those moments when our senses catch a glimpse and experience the goodness of God and the awesome sovereignty and love of God.

Notice in verses 35-40 how the **things places** described: As he can meet physical needs, so, too, Jesus is bread and water for the soul that lasts forever. I have come from heaven so that you will believe. By believing in me you will have eternal life and those you will yet die physically, you will be raised on the last day.

Aren't you glad these deep and beautiful concepts weren't on the pop quiz!

Lastly, not only does Jesus provide for our needs, He provides new desires for us. This was the critical point of the message for me this week. If I make faith all about Jesus meeting my needs; if I make faith about Jesus giving me what I need, I can slip into turning Jesus into a genie in a magic lantern, Santa Claus, or my servant. The signs drive me to my knees as I realize His power, His provision, and His providence. He's in charge. He's in command. It is His way. His truth. His life that matters. By believing even if I can't answer all the pop quiz questions, He will raise me up on the last day.

He provides new desires for I am His servant. I live my life sacrificing all I have for the kingdom He has invited me to join. He is the bridge across the Thin Places. He and He alone. I can't cross the Thin Places without Him. And, yet He says that you and I can help others see and cross the Thin Places. See John 14:12-14.

I pray, “May the signs, Lord Jesus, overwhelm us with awe. Let them call us humbly to our knees surrendering to Your power and grace. Let the signs reorder our desires so each of us prays and declares, ‘I am not God, nor a god, not even close. Thank You! The signs deepen my faith. I surrender all I have and am to Your glory and purposes. I accept the challenge to join other surrendered believers to do Your works. When we join together to serve, love, proclaim truth and justice, You show up in the beautiful thin places where heaven meets earth. We then fulfill the words of the Lord's prayer: Your kingdom comes and Your will is done on earth as it is in heaven! Oh my, that feels good to say and to pray. We can help create thin places! Let it be so, Lord Jesus, let my life so show my faith!

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
Hold me with thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven  
Feed me till I want no more;  
Feed me till I want no more.

1. When has the Lord shown you Thin Places?
2. Who have told or will you tell about that experience?
3. For whom are you praying that the Lord will let them experience Thin Places and be drawn to faith?
4. Who are you inviting to our Easter experiences?

