Throughout the Bible, man is told to “seek the Lord” =>

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<td>“Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.”</td>
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<td>I Chron 22:19</td>
<td>“Set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God.”</td>
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<td>Psa 34:10</td>
<td>“They who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.”</td>
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<td>Zeph 2:3</td>
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<td>Acts 17:27</td>
<td>“...that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”</td>
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No one ever receives eternal life from God w/o seeking Him.

Before he seeks the Lord, he is spiritually indifferent to Him.

Once he begins to seek God, he is no longer a sluggard,

sleeping away the spiritual issues in his life.

He is no longer a spiritual rebel, whose blasphemy mocks

God’s wrath, & dares/defies it to fall on him.

Nor is he still spiritually deaf to the appeals of God’s Word.

Now we finally have reason for hope in his case, that something
good may come of his seeking the Lord.

He’s begun to study his Bible, & really listen as it is taught.

Its words have begun to have an impact his heart.
But even though the seeker is finally on the right path, he is 
still disobedient to the gospel’s basic command to—>

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and 
you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

The gospel doesn’t tell us to pray for, nor to search the 
Scriptures, for salvation, weighing each verse as to 
our understanding/acceptance of its truth, before we 
believe it.

It just tells us to believe/trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the obedience God requires.

The gospel isn’t far away, hard to find, or difficult to understand.

We do seek for it, but it’s not some illusive truth, requiring 
an arduous religious quest in order to find/figure it 
out.

A child can understand its basic truths.

Paul wrote (Rom 10:8-10)=> “The word is near you, in 
your mouth and in your heart—that is, the word of 
faith which we are preaching, / that if you confess 
with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your 
heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be 
saved; / for with the heart a person believes, 
resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he 
confesses, resulting in salvation.”

It’s in our mouth and our heart because we know it, having 
read/recited it in the past.

Now it’s time to act on it w/ our will.
A disobedient seeker might undertake some heroic/unnecessary, search for the truth that is already near him—right there in his mouth & in his heart/mind. And his further seeking can simply become a stalling tactic, a subtle way to avoid honestly dealing w/ what he has found, the truth he already knows. He’s seeking for something he’s already found, but wants to trade-in for something more to his liking. To be obedient, he needs to stop seeking for the gospel. He has found it, and should embrace it, placing his faith wholeheartedly in Jesus X.

The way of salvation is to accept the truth that I am a sinner, & Jesus is the only Savior, so I must place my trust in Him; Period!

It is believing-in/accepting Him as the Substitute, whose death atoned for my sin, & the Propitiation upon whom God’s wrath over my sin has been poured out. And finally, it is surrendering to Him as my rightful Lord. No more seeking!

Now I’ve found Him, & just need to embrace Him by faith.

Today we will consider some seekers, and what Jesus told them about finding eternal life.

Our text describes/illustrates three types of seeking and finding=>

* Seeking & finding Jesus
* Seeking & finding food for the soul
* Seeking & finding eternal life.
* Seeking and Finding Jesus

[John 6:22] => “The next day [the day after Jesus fed the 5000]
the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw
that there was no other small boat there, except 1, &
that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the
boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone
[w/o Him].”

The night before, Jesus had dismissed the multitude, then
withdrawn up into an adjacent mountain to pray by
Himself.

Some of the crowd had stayed all night on the eastern bank of
Lake Galilee, where Jesus had fed them earlier that day.
Many had prob. started out early the next morning on the
10 mile trek to the north/west, through marshland
north of the lake, back to Capernaum.
But others, prob. zealots, still wanted to make Jesus a king
& still lingered on the grassy meadow where He’d
fed them.
Apparently they woke up, knowing that Jesus had sent His
disciples back across the lake the night before, &
assuming He was still up on the mountain.
They hadn’t seen Him come down from there, they knew
He hadn’t walked past them around the north end of
the lake, and they couldn’t find Him anywhere.
So they were mystified.
They knew He must have somehow gotten back to Capernaum, because that was now His adopted home, but they couldn’t figure out how He’d gotten there. The disciples had left the night before in the only boat available, & Jesus clearly hadn’t gone with them. The crowd that remained were determined to seek for X & find Him.

Just then a quick means of going back across the lake showed up.

[Verse 23] => “There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks” (this last phrase reminds us that Jesus’ feeding of the multitude was a miracle).

The boats came from Tiberias, on the lake’s western shore. We aren’t told why this little fleet of boats came across the lake to the eastern shore, or how the boat-owners found out about the people still there, needing a ride back to Capernaum. Perhaps they’d heard about it from those who had walked back earlier that morning, & were hoping to make a little money that day by collecting taxi fares.

[Verses 24-25] => “So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. / When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You get here?’”
These people were seekers (which is a good thing), and the object of their seeking was Jesus (which is also good), but their motives for seeking Him were not good.

As Jesus will tell them in the next verse, they were seeking Him as a source of food-supply.

He had fed them dinner the day before, and now they wanted breakfast.

And they prob. still hadn’t given up on their plan of making Him king, so He could go on continually supplying them and many more people, with all the material things they needed/wanted.

They asked Jesus, when He had gotten there, because they still couldn’t figure out how He’d gotten by them.

Jesus could have answered, “I walked out on the water, stopped the wind that was about to capsize My disciples’ boat, & instantly whisked them, boat and all, onto the shore here at about 4:00 this morning.”

That would have proven once again that Jesus was a miracle-worker, & it would have set off a whole new round of talk about what a great king He’d make.

It would have fed the crowd’s superficial/materialistic mindset, which did not seek first God’s Kingdom & His righteousness, but rather, the things of this world that He might add unto them.
So Jesus just ignored their question, and instead, focused on their motive for seeking Him.

* Seeking and Finding Food for the Soul

[Verse 26]⇒ “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.’”

These people had seen “signs” of Jesus’ deity/Messiahship. He had healed their sick, fed thousands of them w/ 5 pieces of bread & 2 fish, & He’d taught them about God’s Kingdom, as no other rabbi ever had—w/ authority.

All these things were designed by God to be signs, pointing to Jesus as the Son of God, and Messiah of the world;

The One who alone could save their souls from sin, & give them eternal life.

But the people in the crowd hadn’t cared about any of that.

The only thing they saw in it, was the hope for more food and more healing the next day, & on into the future.

Jesus exposed their superficial/materialistic hearts, which had completely missed/ignored the real meaning of those signs. Their reaction proves that miracles don’t cause people to believe, unless their hearts are open to the truth in the first place.

In fact, if anything, miracles work against true faith.

Jesus began His comments here with the words “Truly, truly” (Amen, amen), meaning this is really important, so listen to My words very carefully.
The important point He made was not a theological truth—
not even the theological truth that He is God incarnate.
It was the practical fact that they were motivated by very
unworthy desires, & had therefore completely missed
the essential/eternal truth about who He is.
They were so worldly-minded, that they were oblivious to the
solemn significance of the signs they had seen=>
Signs that meant He, as God incarnate, was able to relieve
the spiritual hunger of their souls.
But signs they had misread, because all they wanted from
Him were full bellies.

[Verse 27] (Jesus)=>  “‘Do not work for the food which perishes,
but for the food which endures to eternal life, which
the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the
Father, God, has set His seal.’”

X tells them they had been seeking the wrong kind of food,
but that they could find/receive food for their souls, in
Him, & that He would give it to them as a gift.
He had fed them physical food that would temporarily satisfy the
needs of their outward decaying man.
It would stave off starvation/death for a little while;
But soon it would be digested, & they’d always need
more/more/more.
Jesus offered food that would feed the basic/essential needs of
their eternal souls—food that would endure to eternal life.
It would remain w/i man’s heart, enduring there forever as an unchanging/indestructible principle/source of life.

That food was (and still is today) Jesus Himself.

Later in this chapter He will refer to Himself as the “Bread of Life,” in that He is able to give us eternal life, and forever sustain that life w/i us, interceding for us w/ the Father. He is the life-giving bread for which our souls crave.

There is no need for men to work for this eternal life-giving Bread, because Jesus gives it freely to whoever asks.

Spiritually speaking, X calls us to rest, not to work. He had freely given barley bread to people on the eastern shore of Galilee, and now He offers Himself as the bread that saves/sustains their (& our) souls—again w/o cost.

So the implication for that crowd, & for us as well, is that the priority of our lives should not be working for daily bread by which to survive one more day on earth.

That is indeed a legitimate need, & we are commanded to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow if necessary.

But seeking/sustaining life in this world should never become the sum-total purpose of our lives here.

Our need for the spiritual life of our souls is far more urgent, because they are eternal.

This is to be our greatest priority, and the pursuit into which we should pour our greatest energies.
Seeking/finding a relationship w/ Jesus is food for the soul.
He has full authority to give people eternal life—the life of righteousness through a renewing by the H.S.
God the Father Himself has set His seal on Jesus, certifying that He is His Son, who alone can bestow this eternal bread to support eternal life w/i the believer’s heart.
At the time of Jesus’ baptism, the Father had announced from heaven=> “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Mt 3:17).

Why would anyone refuse the food for the soul which Jesus offers so freely? Let me suggest 3 reasons=>
* Lack of spiritual hunger.
  Jesus said=> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt 5:6).
  Until a person is really hungry, he’ll have no appetite, so he’ll have no reason to seek food.
  Only the H.S. can give people a spiritual appetite, and He does so by convicting them of sin, & righteousness, & judgment (Jn 16:8).
* Satanic distractions.
  The devil will fight to keep his captives under his control, doing everything he can to prevent their escape, and as he succeeds, people refuse X’s food for the soul. Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of X (II Cor 4:4).
He has also surrounded sinners w/ a world system that keeps them busy/distracted from the truth & content in their blindness.

When their souls yearn for the food that endures to eternal life, he feeds them the spiritual cotton candy of this world, & they, in their blindness, don’t know the difference.

The crowd in our text sought only full stomachs & ignored Jesus’ offer of food that could sustain their souls.

* Proud spiritual ignorance.

Some people have heard the gospel but can’t accept it, because they remain willfully ignorant of it.

They may hear it Sunday after Sunday, but cannot catch the thought of it, because it’s not what they expect/want.

They’re used to earning their own way in this life, & truly believe there’s no such thing as a free lunch.

So they have absolutely no understanding of God’s grace.

When Jesus offers them the bread of life, free of charge, their pride won’t let them take it, unless they can somehow repay the Lord w/ some good work=> hours of agonizing penance/repentance, obedience to moral & religious laws, hours of tedious religious activity.

They are spiritually ignorant, because their pride won’t allow them to come out from under that ignorance.
Until they do, they will never understand salvation by God’s grace alone, & they will never receive X’s saving grace.

* Seeking and Finding Eternal Life

At this point some might have been ready to seek the eternal life about which Jesus had spoken, but they completely misunderstood how it was to be obtained.

[Verse 28]⇒ “Therefore they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?’”

All human religion has one thing in common⇒ It teaches the wrong way of finding life⇒ that if man does the right religious deeds, there will be some sort of valuable payoff in it for him in the end.

In the case of the people in the crowd following X to Capernaum, they assumed that He was talking about some sort of religious work that would earn them eternal life. They referred to it as “the works of God”—the good works/religious works they thought God required. Being Jews, they prob. thought X meant obeying the Mosaic Law.

They asked the same question asked by the rich young ruler, who said to Jesus⇒ “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” (Mt 19:16).

He, like the Jews in our own text, was pretty sure that, whatever that required work might be, he could do it.
Man always asks this kind of question, & it always produces a works-righteousness system of religion=>
Light enough candles, visit the right shrines, kiss the hands/feet of the right statues, deprive yourself & make yourself feel miserable in the right ways, and te right number of times, & you will win a big reward.
The self-righteous, natural man assumes there’s some little thing he can/must do in order to earn his salvation.
The Philippian jailor asked Paul/Silas=> “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).
Even Paul, when confronted by X as a Jewish rabbi at his conversion, asked=> “What shall I do, Lord?” (Act 22:8).
But true Xnity is the 1 religion that sweeps away all man’s moral efforts & says there’s nothing you can do to earn your salvation.
But Jesus, as He says here in our text, willingly gives us Himself (the eternal Bread of Life) as a free gift for the taking.
And all that man must do, is believe in Him.

[Verse 29]=> “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He [God] has sent.’”

Jesus takes hold of the crowd’s own word “work,” and uses it to define what God requires of man.
He says in essence, “So you want to know what work you must
do in order to receive eternal life? Here is it=>
Believe in Me, the One whom God has sent/sealed to earn
your salvation by My atoning death.
This is the 1/only work that pleases God.
But w/o faith, it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11:6).
This is a true work, in that it involves man’s will.
It is exercising the faith in X that God has given us as a gift
& it results in our receiving the gift of eternal life.
It is the work of God, and yet it is also a work of man.
God condemns the soul that refuses to do this work—
refuses to believe—because that soul is morally
responsible before Him, to believe.
That is the 1 work God requires it to do.
It’s true that faith is a gift from God, but this does not
cancel out the other truth, that it’s also an act of man.
Either a man must believe, or he will perish forever.
However, faith is not work in the sense of earning salvation by
one’s own moral efforts, or anything else we might do.
In fact, the NT writers repeatedly insist us that we are not
saved on the basis of our own good works.
E.g. Paul writes=> “By grace you have been saved
through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is
the gift of God; /not as a result of works, so
that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8-9).
Salvation is by grace alone, through ongoing faith alone
Not faith in ourselves, not even faith in our own faith.
But faith in the Lord Jesus X, who was sent by God
the Father, to atone for our sins, thru His death.

**Faith is the one work God requires of man, because w/i it, lies the full potential of salvation in all its glory.**

Within an acorn lies the potential for not only 1 magnificent oak
tree, but for a whole forest of oak trees.

In the same way, the whole panoply of spiritual virtues that
come from regeneration lies in the simple act of faith.

* E.g. repentance is found in faith; because a sinner who believes in Jesus is brought to the realization of X’s absolute purity/holiness, and of his own unholliness (by contrast).
He believes what Heb 4:(15) says, that Jesus was=>

“*tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*”

He yearns for a personal relationship with X, but
knows/believes that X died for his sin because it is so grievous to Him.
And so his will melts/buckles and his heart bows humbly before X, in earnest/sincere repentance, all because of his faith in Jesus.
He comes to Jesus seeking deliverance from his sin, and with a hatred for it, which he’d never felt before.
All because he has believed.
* Love for God is also found in his faith, because you cannot trust/believe-in anyone, toward whom your spirit is not drawn and has no leaning.
And as a person trusts Jesus, X faithfully rewards that trust. The result is that his love for X grows, and he becomes more/more reliant on His Savior’s love for him.
* If you were to carefully analyze all the graces of the Spirit—love/joy/peace/patience/kindness/goodness & all the rest—you’d continue to find some element of faith in each one. You would have to conclude that faith is not only the centerpost, but also the very essence, of the whole Xn life.

In Hebrews 11 we find a list of the heroes of the faith.
It begins w/ Abel, who offered, by faith, a better sacrifice than his brother Cane, and obtained the testimony of God that he was righteous.

Then it mentions Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah and a number of other great men/women of great faith.

It ends with mention of believers who were=> “stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated / (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. / And all these, having gained approval through their faith” (Heb 11:37-39).
These people’s faith is what made them such radical standouts from the rest of the world, as people of godly character.

Faith is the good work that pleases God & produces every other good work that is pleasing to God.

**Someone: Is believing the only thing I have to do to be saved?**

Yes, that’s all, & it can be such a small act, that it prays, “*Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief*” (Mk 9:24).

Yet such faith contains potential for all the inconceivable mysteries of goodness that God desires/requires of us, and develops w/i us by His Spirit.

It’s the acorn that holds w/i it the treasure of eternal life in all its fullness, as we partake of, & feed our souls on, the Bread of Life, our beloved Savior, Jesus X.
"Seeking and Finding Eternal Life"
December 1, 2013

Text: John 6:22-29

1. No one ever receives eternal life from God without seeking Him.
   1 Chron 16:11; 22:19; Psa 34:10; 105:3; Isa 55:6; Amos 5:6; Zeph 2:3; Acts 17:27

2. But even though the seeker is on the right path, he is still disobedient to the gospel’s command to believe in the Lord Jesus.
   Acts 16:31; Rom 10:8-10

Today we will consider some seekers; our text describes three types of seeking and finding...

* Seeking and Finding Jesus

[John 6:22]

3. The night before, Jesus had dismissed the multitude; some of the crowd had stayed all night.

[Verse 23]

[Verses 24-25]

4. These people were seekers (which is a good), and the object of their seeking was Jesus (which is also good), but their motives for seeking Him were not good.

* Seeking and Finding Food for the Soul

[Verse 26]

5. These people had seen "signs" of Jesus’ deity and Messiahship.

[Verse 27]

6. Christ tells them they had been seeking the wrong kind of food, but that they could find and receive food for their souls in Him and that He would give it to them as a gift.

7. Seeking and finding a relationship with Jesus is food for the soul.
   Mt 3:17

*8. Lack of spiritual hunger.
   Jn 6:22, 16:8

Why would anyone refuse the food for the soul which Jesus offers so freely?
9. Satanic distractions.


* Seeking and Finding Eternal Life

[Verse 28]

11. The crowd following Christ to Capernaum assumed that He was talking about some sort of religious work that would earn them eternal life.

Mt 19:16; Acts 16:30; 22:8

[Verse 29]

12. Jesus says in essence, “So you want to know what work you must do in order to receive eternal life? Believe in Me.”

Heb 11:6

13. Faith is not work in the sense of earning salvation by one’s own moral efforts.

Eph 2:8-9; Rom 3:28; Acts 4:12; Heb 4:15

14. If you were to carefully analyze all the graces of the Spirit, you would find some element of faith in each one.

Heb 11:37-39; Mk 9:24

15. Faith contains potential for all the inconceivable mysteries of goodness that God desires and requires of us.