



After Jesus had fed the five thousand men, his disciples saw him walking on the sea. The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples in the boat, but only his disciples had left. Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks. When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are present here and now as I turn to you in prayer. I trust and have confidence in your desire to give me every grace I need to receive today. Thank you for your love, thank you for your immense generosity toward me. I give you my life and my love in return.

Petition: Lord, increase my faith.

1. Food of Eternal Life: Some television evangelists preach a "Gospel of Prosperity," promising financial and health benefits or general well-being for those who follow Christ in *their* church. "Good things will come your way!" they say. While these earthly things are good, Christ shows us that his greatest gifts are not the "loaves that fill," but the grace and eternal life that can be ours through faith. Faith is both our offering to God and

his gift to us. It opens our heart to receive the gift that never perishes: eternal life.

2. No Complacency in Faith: Christ didn't stay with the crowds, but rather he crossed over to Capernaum. The crowds, still full with the bread of the miracle of the loaves, had to figure out where Christ went, get in their boats, and find him. When Christ seems to have moved on us, we need to get into our boat and row—to look for him, to seek him in prayer, to be renewed in his sacraments. He wants us to follow him pro-actively, not passively sitting on the shore with our boat in dry-dock. We need to shove off into the waters of prayer and row.

3. What Must We Do? "This is the work of God...." Our belief (faith) in the one the Father sent is the result of both God's work in our lives and our work to use and make that gift of faith grow. Above all, faith is God's gift to us. But it is a gift that grows only when we exercise it, use it, and ask for more. Just as a runner must run more to be a better runner, to believe more we need to *believe more*. Only then is our heart open to receive the gift of greater faith.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, I don't want to settle for seeking only the "loaves that fill," but the joy and salvation that comes from believing in you. "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Show me what I must do to follow you. Make your path clear to me and give me the strength to follow it.

Resolution: When faced with any difficulty, obstacle, or frustration today, I will exercise my faith in God and seek to do his will.