

Believe!
Week 7: John 6:1-15
March 23, 2014

Welcome/Introduction

Before we jump into what we're talking about this morning I want to riff off of what Jason talked about earlier about hosting Chatham Serves, not just participating in it

How many of you know someone who's a gifted host or hostess and has the gift of hospitality?

It's a great gift, isn't it? What do they do? Tell me!

They're thoughtful, attentive, they look out for new people in really intentional but natural ways

I want to challenge us to be great hosts in 2 weeks, to do some of those things!

In fact, one of the things we've been talking about with the welcome team and the Chatham Serves team is
wouldn't it be great to give our guests a "wow!" experience

Wouldn't it be awesome if new people joined us in a couple of weeks and came away knowing YOUR name, grateful for YOUR hospitality, having connected with people who took a genuine interest in them?

We're going to do what we can to make coming into Woods for new folks on Sunday, April 6th a good experience organizationally—we're going to have greeters and a welcome team and all that

But the real work will be done by each of us.

Because once they get through the front door, the question is will anyone talk with them? Will they be welcomed by people who are a part of this community?

That means really simple things like at breakfast, introduce yourself to people sitting around you and invite them to eat with you.

When you're on a work project, don't go the whole day without introducing yourself to people you don't know!

I want to invite us to be good HOSTS on the day of, but the other cool thing about hosting the party is that you've got total freedom to INVITE people to the party!

I want to challenge each of us to be thinking about a neighbor or friend to come and join us on Sunday April 6th to come and serve with us.

Who might YOU invite to come be a part of this work with us in a couple of weeks?

And as we send out the mailer inviting folks to join us. I also want to ask you to help us get the word out about the church.

There's a rule of thumb called the rule of 3: that most people need three points of contact before they'll give something a shot

If you don't yet have a cling magnet on the back of your car and you're willing to, we'd love it if you'd grab one of these on the way out and maybe give someone another point of contact in your neighborhood or on the road

Being gracious hosts for Chatham Serves as a church means a couple of things for us:

1. Making personal invitations
2. Help us to get the word out about the church if you're willing to grab a magnet for your car
3. Being hospitable and intentional about caring for folks to give them a 'wow' experience with us on April 6th

If you're just joining us, just like in a progressive dinner where you might go from one stop to another eating a different course of a meal here at Chatham Community Church we are doing a progressive-dinner-type journey through the New Testament book of John

If you're new to the Bible, there are four biographies we have of Jesus' life and John is one of those, he was one of Jesus' original twelve followers and wrote one of the most detailed accounts of Jesus' life

We're going through the book of John in 6-8 week chunks at a time meaning we should be done at some point in the next 3 to 14 years!

And this section of John that we're currently touring through has this key big word that comes up over and over again and that is BELIEVE

And what we're finding as we read these stories of Jesus is that the people he came in contact with had the same obstacles we have when it comes to believing:
too cynical to believe, too much pain to believe, too apathetic to really believe

And what we're finding is that Jesus delights to meet people in the midst of whatever their belief-hang-up, whatever their obstacle is

And the good news for us this morning, is that Jesus isn't afraid of our obstacles, our doubts, our questions

We BRING THE QUESTIONS WITH US

Because what we find is that Jesus is the MASTER and taking and leveraging honest questions and using those as an opportunity to pour out more grace and more truth that then develops into real faith

My wife Kelly was a 5th grade teacher before we had kids and she decided to stay home with kids and work more hours for less pay

But this past week she was invited to be a substitute teacher at a local school—they called it a guest teacher

So she went in a couple of days this week to be a guest/substitute teacher and what she said about being back in the classroom after a number of years out of it was that it was fun being back in the classroom again

But no matter how you dress it up, being the substitute or guest teacher is just running someone else's program.

The substitute can try to run the same program and walk through the same materials, but in some ways if you REALLY LOVE TEACHING it just gets you thinking about what you would do if this was really your class to teach

Throughout the book of John, both John and Jesus continually make the case with the Jewish religious leaders that they've mistaken the substitute teacher for the real teacher.

And the trick with this sub is that he's a great guy, he came before Jesus, and he contributed enormously to our understanding of who God is.

And his name is Moses. Moses is named twelve times throughout the book of John, almost always as a foil or as a sign or pointer to Jesus

And throughout the book, Jesus says the problem isn't Moses himself, Moses himself was a great prophet and taught them imperfectly but faithfully

The problem, Jesus asserts, is how they're relating to Moses, they're MIS-RELATING to Moses in how they're interpreting and applying the teachings of Moses to their own lives

They've mis-understood and mis-applied and mis-interpreted the point of the Moses story and that's the primary story that they're living out of!

And the result is that Jesus, who is God in the flesh, God incarnate, comes down and looks them straight in the eye

But they're so blinded by how stuck they are in their mis-relating to Moses that they completely miss who Jesus is.

Now if you're new to the Bible and don't know Moses or his story, we're going to hit that in a few bullet-points in just a second

But the reason why this matters for us today is that you and I do this all the time.

We take good things like relationships or our reputations or our work or the stuff that we're worrying about all the time and we mis-relate to them

We end up putting our un-healthy relationship with those things at the center of our lives

and the consequence of this is that God himself could come down and be speaking directly to you

But you're so fixed and focused on your golf game, your worries, your self-righteousness, your religion, your work, your kids, your physical health

That you miss God.

Over the next two weeks, we're going to look at one of the longest continual stories of Jesus in the whole Bible

I have a family member who used to participate in those nerdy Civil War re-enactments, maybe some of you have done those before

It sounded like an excuse to get dressed up in uncomfortable clothes, camp out, and drink heavily but I never made it to one so I wouldn't really know

But what we're going to see Jesus do over the next two weeks is re-enact important pieces of the Moses story

What Jesus is going to do here is intentionally re-living important pieces of the Moses story, he's intentionally taking up the Moses and story and re-enacting it

But with he himself at the center of it.

Jesus is taking the work of the substitute teacher and re-living it, doing it better, trying to get the people who are all around him to grapple with what he claims to be the truth of it all:

That as great as Moses was, the greater Moses, the true fulfillment of all that Moses lived and wrote about is here.

These people lived with the Moses story as the primary reference point and primary story that gave them meaning and a sense of purpose and identity

And Jesus is going to try to meet them in the midst of that story and re-tell it with HIMSELF as the primary actor and invite them to live out of this new story

And over these next couple of weeks, in our lives, Jesus wants to do the same thing

You've got stories and I've got stories that we are prone to looking to to give our lives meaning and purpose:

- there's the successful over-achiever story
- there's the down home, small-town, Southern reliable, independent, hard working, good reputation, all-American story
- there's the good mother and wife story
- there's the get what I can get when I can get it story
- there's the change the world and save the planet story

There's all kinds of stories that you and I are tempted to live out of and use as our primary way of understanding purpose and significance

And just like Moses wasn't a bad guy and the Moses story itself was a good story with plenty of good stuff to contribute

- some of our stories aren't necessarily bad stories, they're just not complete,

We're just settling for the substitute and in the process if we become overly-fixed on those stories for our identity and meaning and purpose, it becomes possible to completely miss God.

Jesus is going to enter into and fulfill and challenge the people's understanding and application of the Moses story over the next two weeks

And in the process, he's going to challenge you and me to examine the stories that we've knit our lives into

- and see that no matter how good the story is or what you're currently engaged with

It's just the substitute for the real thing, the real story that you and I were made for:

- God's redemptive, transforming, making-all-things-new story, taking place all throughout history, all over the cosmos, and in our lives today.

If you've got a Bible, turn with me to John 6; if not screen behind me, if no Bible grab a free one from the Resource Table on your way out this morning

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs

he had performed by healing the sick. ³ *Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.* ⁴ *The Jewish Passover Festival was near.*

Well if you haven't read the Bible story about Moses, chances are you've at least seen the movie

Depending on your age and generation, there's a couple of options: the Charlton Heston version and the Walt Disney Version

A quick re-cap of the Moses story from the Bible:

A couple thousand years before Jesus, the Hebrew people are enslaved in Egypt

God meets Moses on a mountain and calls him to deliver the Hebrews from slavery

Moses goes to Pharaoh and says famously "Let my people go!" Pharaoh says "no way dude" and as a result God sends ten plagues

Last one: angel of death visit the firstborn male in every house but for the Hebrews they would sacrifice a lamb and put the blood on the door posts the angel of death would PASS OVER that house and not kill the first born there

They do it and they're spared while every other house in Egypt is struck with death in their house, including Pharaoh's house

Pharaoh finally releases them, Moses and a couple hundred thousand people all leave Egypt in a hurry

But before they get too far, Pharaoh changes his mind and sends his soldiers out after them

Meanwhile, God leads the people to the Red Sea, and they've got no where to go with the Red Sea in front of them and the army coming after them, the people freak out

But God tells Moses to lift his staff and the waters will part

He does so, and the people go across on dry land and the people are saved as the waters come crashing back down on Pharaoh's troops

The people then go back to the same mountain where God met Moses and Moses goes up the mountain while the people wait at base camp where God gives Moses the big 10 commandments

Afterwards, the Israelites spend 40 years wandering in the desert marked by two important things that will come up in the next two weeks:

manna which was a bread-like substance given by God every single day for 40 years to feed the people
and grumbling by the people at every turn leading to their ultimate rebellion against God which leaves them wandering in the desert for 40 years while a whole generation dies out

Summary for our purposes: slavery of the people, Moses up the mountain (twice!), the Passover, a miraculous water crossing, miraculous provision of bread, and people grumbling and rebelling that leads to death

We're going to see all of these take place over the next two weeks

Two of these elements are picked up here as John introduces this story:
Jesus went up the **mountainside** and sat down with his disciples
The Jewish Passover festival was near

The story continues:

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

When you don't know the area, you rely on people who live there to give you some help and directions

In this case, Jesus asks Philip about the local grocery store options
and he does so in part because if this is happening where we think it's happening Philip was from that area so he would know the area well

But the Scriptures tell us that Jesus is just doing this to test him, that Jesus already knew what he was going to do.

And if we sit on this for too long, it can kind of get to us—we don't LIKE to be tested, do we?

Talk to a parent and they say that their 2 year old or 8 year old or 16 year old child is TESTING them, does it mean that they're in a joyful time of peace and love?

Talk to a student and they're undergoing significant time of TESTING during exams, are they typically excited about it?

Testing tends to mean that we've got someone or something coming at us, sometimes coming against us

And yet the Scriptures celebrate the role of testing in our lives, here's one of my favorite really hard passages from the Bible:

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

I read that sometimes and I'm like "WHAT?!" And maybe you do, too.

Fill in the blank for me: "I consider it pure _____ whenever I face trails of many kinds..."!

And "Because I know that the testing of my faith produces perseverance?"

I'll tell you what I KNOW about the testing of my faith produces, it produces PAIN and I'd rather AVOID pain, thank you very much!

⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James moves seamlessly from trials to testing, almost as if they were interchangeable

And he says that this is the path to maturity and completion, not lacking anything.

Our lives are one giant experience of lack:
we lack love, we go looking for love;
we lack stuff, we acquire money to get stuff;
we lack knowledge, some of us spend our whole lives acquiring more and more knowledge and schooling

But James here is saying that if we want to be mature and complete and NOT LACKING ANYTHING, the only way to get to that end point, is to walk the road of testing.

It's the road that almost none of us would choose voluntarily but it's the best and only road to getting to full maturity

Testing pushes us to God in a way that nothing else does

Every time the Scriptures talk about trials or tests, the benefits that are promised almost always have something to do with developing the character trait of perseverance

Now I don't know about you, but I like the idea of having the character trait of perseverance

Many of the people throughout history that I respect and admire as men and women of integrity who have made a difference in history have this persevering spirit that is undaunted by challenges or obstacles

So I LIKE the idea of having perseverance

But I want to get it the quick and easy way! Is there a short-cut to developing perseverance? I want a short-cut to the character trait of perseverance!

But there's no short-cut to the character trait of perseverance,
NOR is there any guarantee that all our trials or difficulties will result in developing positive character traits.

How many of you know someone who experienced a trial or difficulty of some sort and on the other side they weren't persevering and wise and mature, they were just more bitter and angry and cynical?

See, trials themselves don't necessarily develop good character—we know this, right?

Trials only develop character when WE respond to them the way that God is always inviting us to respond to him when we experience trials of many kinds

We develop character and perseverance and maturity and not lacking anything when we experience trials and we cling to Jesus in the midst of those trials.

We turn TOWARD God and not away—that's how all our trials, no matter why they've come, can be turned into perseverance, maturity, completion, and lacking nothing.

Turn TOWARD God with an eager and hopeful heart, trusting that he's bigger than our experiences and circumstances and knowing that he can bring redemption to all our pain

Some of you are in the midst of trials right now and trials are shaping things, one way or the other
and the kind of person you are on the OTHER side of the trial
will be decided by the decisions you make to turn toward God or away from God in the MIDST of the trial

Let's read on to see how this test plays out:

⁷ Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages^[a] to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

⁸ *Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"*

¹⁰ *Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.*

A number of years ago my wife and I were leading a Bible study of mostly empty-nesters their 50's who had all raised kids

And they were reading this passage and in the never-ending attempt to justify ourselves and how we've spent our lives

One woman declared "Thank goodness of that boy's mother who packed him some lunch!"

Mom's, you're wonderful and we're thankful for all of you, but the point of this story is NOT thank goodness for that boy's mama!

The point is that Philip's objection is exactly right: *"how far will they go among so many?"*

And the answer is: not far enough. Your resources are not enough for the life that YOU want to live much less the life that GOD wants you to live

You and I are regularly feeling like we're in over our heads with relationships, situations, jobs, time, finances, health concerns—lots of things coming at us all the time, right?

What happens when we're stressed is that we look for comfort and help:

some of us eat too much when we're stressed, some of us drink too much, some of us act out sexually or just check-out totally

But what if there's a better option than any of those?

See, because we're regularly in over our heads AND because we often WANT to achieve more than we could just by ourselves

our culture is fascinated with technology

We're fascinated in part because it has this multiplying effect

me by myself, I can be a little bit productive, me with my Macbook Pro, I can get a whole bunch of stuff done!

We love the idea of something that multiplies our energies and makes something happen that we couldn't do otherwise.

Well here in this story, as these disciples find themselves in a situation where they're in over their heads and the demand far outstrips the supply

They discover this critical, wonderful reality: Jesus IS THE multiplier.

He is the one who takes five little barley loaves of bread and makes them more than enough to feed 5,000 men plus women and children.

Jesus is the multiplier, he is the master at taking whatever happens to be at hand and making it more than enough to tackle the situation at hand.

My friends, for those of you who right now feel in over your heads or overwhelmed by some sort of need in your life:

Relational problems, job problems, parenting problems, financial, emotional, spiritual, physical problems

Hear this good news: Jesus has the power to take whatever resources you've got and make it more than enough

Now some of you have **big problems** like at work or other situations in your lives, OTHERS OF YOU have **big plans**

You've got big plans and big dreams, maybe big gifts and abilities

And you're excited about those plans, dreams, gifts and abilities
you've got dreams about how it's all going to work, you've got everything mapped out or at least a really good idea of how you think life is about to unfold

And the question is are you willing to recognize that your big plans to take the world by storm or keep your family safe or establish yourself or your business

MIGHT be really great ideas and great plans

But ultimately even the best of plans needs to be handed over to Jesus or else they become our god, our idol and they enslave us rather than bless us as they were designed to do

I was meeting with a mentor of mine this past week and he was talking about a couple of men he was meeting with

They're in their 50's extremely extremely successful, and completely spiritually empty and bankrupt

And they're coming to him looking to get in touch with the deep places in their souls that they'd never cultivated, never tended to, because they were too busy with other things and had done them well

And his evaluation of the situation was if they didn't make significant connection with the Lord in this season of their lives

They were going to have gained the whole world and forfeited their souls.

George MacDonald, an old dead Scottish writer says this: "In everything that a person attempts to do without God, he must fail miserably—or succeed more miserably."

Our first work when we're staring down BIG PROBLEMS relational difficulties, job difficulties, financial difficulties, physical illnesses, spiritual struggles, or 5,000 hungry people

Our FIRST WORK with our BIG PLANS and gifts and abilities and dreams and hopes for the future

Is that we go to Jesus with our measly resources and our oh-so-great plans, with our measly 5 loaves and 2 fish and we say to Jesus,

"These won't go very far in MY hands, but in your hands, you can make it more than enough."

Because what matters more in this story—the size of the resources or whose hands they're in?

Jesus is THE MULTIPLIER

he is always taking whatever is at hand and whoever is close by
and if we're willing to hand it over to him and trust him with it and then do or not do whatever he tells us, he says that he is able and willing to walk with us through

We do the vertical work FIRST of going to Jesus with our needs and challenges AND AFTER THAT we do the horizontal work

We go to work VERTICALLY FIRST, to JESUS first, offering him what we've got
AND THEN we go to work horizontally, working with wisdom and creativity and in step with the Spirit of God in the tasks we need to do to take care of the situation

Now, Jesus not only takes the *food* resources available to take care of the people, he's glad to use *everything available* in this scene to take care of the people

There's a great little detail that I love here: *There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down*

Jesus invites these literally poor, hungry people to sit down in the green grass and be fed by what he will provide for them.

Every so often I put up this map of our county and I share with you the vision of this church: to plant two churches or campuses by 2020:
Pittsboro in 2016 and Siler City in 2020.

If we did that, we'd have 80% of Chatham County within 20 minutes driving distance of a gospel-centered, missional, contemporary church

You know what that is?

All that is is planting two big meadows of grass for people to sit down and be fed by Jesus as he provides the food of salvation, redemption, and healing in these places.

And along with those big meadows for people to sit down and be fed by Jesus, we love small groups around here.

And right now we've got 13 small groups around Chatham county

But we're dreaming of the day when we'll have dozens and dozens and dozens more small groups all across Chatham County.

And every single one of those is just a patch of green grass for people to sit and be fed by Jesus

Our whole 2020 vision is about creating patches of green grass, three big meadows and dozens of smaller patches of green grass all across Chatham County

So that rich people and poor people and everyone in between people
hungry people and well-fed people and everyone in between
every race and ethnicity and culture, all peoples here in Chatham County

Might have an opportunity to sit in a patch of green grass and simply receive the generous bounty that Jesus delights to pour out all over his kids:

his love, his provision, his grace and mercy, his healing, his strength, his correction and challenge and rebuke

If you aren't yet connected to a small group, we invite you to enter into the potentially life-changing experience of sitting down in that green patch of grass once a week and allowing Jesus to meet you with his grace

My first couple of months here I met with someone who works in social services and she described Chatham County as a faith-less community

We're dreaming of God changing the name of Chatham County from faithless to a faith-rich, faith-filled community

That's a job that's too big for us!

Jesus looks at us and says "Chatham Community Church, where can we get spiritual food for all these people? How can we serve one of the largest counties in the state?"

And we say, "Well we've got about 300 people here, but what difference can we make and how far can we go among the 68,000 people here in Chatham?"

And Jesus says to us, "In my hands, you are enough."

Chatham Community Church, here's the question posed to us this morning:

Are we willing to be the loaves and fishes in Jesus' hands, to be BROKEN and then distributed among the 68,000 spread out all across Chatham County?

Are we willing to offer him all the resources and gifts that we have and lay it all at his feet and say,

"all this is yours—it's not enough in and of itself to change the whole county, but in your hands you can make it enough to do whatever you want us to do."

In a couple of weeks are we willing to not just participate in a Chatham serves but HOST a Chatham Serves: invite people and welcome them here with great joy?

And are we able to imagine a day six years from now when we host a Chatham Serves with not just a couple hundred people serving in the community

But literally a thousand people coming and serving, many of whom are not connected to us or any church in the county?

Are we willing to partner with the Holy Spirit to help create three large meadows of green grass

and dozens and dozens of small group patches of green grass
for people to come and connect with the God of the universe who made them and loves them so much he died for them?

That's our hope, that's our dream

Steve and Amy are here in part because they're excited about helping to make this happen

and we're excited because we believe Steve has the skill set to take this dream and help make it become a reality

And we invite each of you to give of your time and gifts and energies and finances to come and make this a reality

To help create patches of green grass where all kinds of people can come and meet with and be fed by Jesus

Let's finish the story:

¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten [how many disciples? And how many baskets? Lovely parting gift for each of the disciples to remind them of Jesus' provision!].

¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

One of the things that Americans love for better or for worse is sit-coms.

And part of what's so therapeutic and enjoyable about sit-coms is that everything gets tied up in 26 minutes, right?

And some of us hate sit-coms for that very reason and some of us LOVE sit-coms for that very reason

But whether you love sit-coms or hate them, the reality is that life is never quite so neat is it?

And there are loose-ends and dangling questions that hang over our lives and different seasons or episodes in our lives
that do not make sense and might not ever make sense

Here's what I think is going to happen when it's all said and done: I think Jesus is going to look over your life with you

And together you'll celebrate all the good stuff that happened

And then there's going to be this pile of loose ends—stuff that just was hard, didn't make sense, that seems like it's all just wasted hours or days or weeks or months or years

And I think Jesus will say over that pile of loose ends exactly what he says here: "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

Every single moment of every single day that is in the Lord's hands will be turned into beauty and goodness and laughter and will be a part of our eternal joy forever

Because Jesus not only multiplier but redeemer

He is the gatherer up of all threads of our stories to make all things beautiful and good

The people see all of this and they declare, “surely this is THE PROPHET who was to come into the world!”

We read that and say “who’s that?” Here again the story picks up the resonance with Moses.

Back in Deuteronomy 18, Moses writes these words: ¹⁵ ***The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.***

There’s a promised prophet that Moses talks about who will be just like him, and this passage during Jesus’ day had been the subject of much talk and speculation and hope

And so the people say, “here’s that one that Moses talked about that was going to be just like him!”

Because remember that one of the main parts of the Moses story was that while Moses led them through the desert, God provided manna, which was like bread from heaven.

And Jesus just provided bread from heaven, too! Here’s the prophet who’s just like Moses who has come!

Moses had led the people out of Egyptian captivity, JESUS was going to lead them out of ROMAN captivity as they’re a conquered people!

And Jesus, knowing that they wanted to make him king, withdrew to the mountain again by himself, back up the mountain

See, there’s a couple of places in the gospel stories where Jesus could have chosen the short-cut to glory.

Jesus has come to be made king, but it’s not this kind of king and it’s not going to come by military coup and rebellion

Jesus has come be the king, and there’s two ways to get there:

1. He could either rally this crowd and all the angry oppressed Jews all around him who are ready for a fight and ready to try to overthrow the Romans

That would be difficult, but way easier and way less painful than the second option which is...

2. Become king by dying to buy back His kingdom—ALL of his kingdom, not just Israel, but the whole world

Jesus chooses the longer, harder way.

Jesus, rejects the short-cut to kingship of Israel in order to become the king of the entire world by way of the suffering of the cross

Earlier we talked about how testing and trials produce good fruits in us if we will turn toward God, turn TOWARD Jesus and not away from him

I like the idea of having perseverance, wisdom, being mature and complete and not lacking anything, I just don't like the path to getting there.

The good news is that Jesus himself has walked the path of trials and suffering and temptations, he was tempted to take short cuts but he didn't

And on the other side of his steadfast faithfulness he has taught us the power of the gospel: that to walk the path of trials and tests and to remain faithful bears life-giving fruit for ever

If Jesus sells out and allows himself to be carried into a rebellion against Rome in Jerusalem, even if it succeeds which is highly unlikely, he's just another footnote in history

But as he flees this temptation and chooses the way of the cross again and again and again

That cross, which looks like death and loss and shame and humiliation and defeat is turned into eternal and infinite glory

And he looks at you and me and he says

"I want you to take up your own cross and follow me down this path to eternal glory.

Take up your cross and put your life in my hands, your plans in my hands, your small resources, your troubles and challenges—put it all in my hands as you walk the way of the cross

and watch me as I multiply your resources, direct and re-direct your paths, and lead you into eternal and perfect and everlasting joy and peace, starting right here and right now."