

## **“The First Thing in Life”**

John 6:22-29

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 20 other major languages. And our Bible teaching programs in several languages are available all the time and any time at the website, *twr360.org*. That’s *twr360.org*. Thousands are tuning in for spiritual nourishment and blessing. You can join them and be blessed too.

You are listening to this broadcast in English, but we also broadcast in more than 21 other languages to some of the most unreached areas of the world. Places like Afghanistan, China, Turkey, Syria, Albania, and more. Why do we do it? Because we have God’s promise that His Word will not return to Him empty; it will accomplish what He sends it to do. And you know something, we have ample proof that His promise is true.

Here’s just one testimony of a listener from Albania who listens to Gospel broadcasts on Radio 7 in her country. For her protection, we’ll call her Nadia

Nadia grew up thinking that no one really loved her or cared for her. She was sad and withdrawn. She had no purpose for living. But one of her relatives introduced her to the Gospel and told her about the love of Jesus. By faith, she reached out and accepted the gift of eternal life. As a result, her life became meaningful, and she found great joy.

But her family didn’t support her choice because she’d been raised in a Muslim home. They prevented her from going to church or having any contact with other Christ-followers. Life was very difficult for her, but then she found Radio 7. Privately, she began listening to the radio programs on her phone and she began to grow in her walk with the Lord.

Through the radio and social media, with the help of the Radio 7 staff, she learned to memorize Scripture, to pray, and to understand that being a Christ-follower involves difficulty. The teaching she heard on the radio helped to keep her from stumbling and being discouraged during those early years when she endured much opposition from her family. Nadia wrote these words, “*No matter how far away you are, or how impossible it is for you to attend a church, read the Bible, or whatever, for God, nothing is impossible, He finds a way, opens a door or window where you can enter to grow in life with Him.*”

Today, Nadia's life is a powerful witness for Jesus Christ. And she's in training to share the Good News with others. Praise God!

Now, if you've been tuning in regularly to *Hope for Today*, you know that we're studying from John's Gospel. Our Bible teacher for this series is the late Dr. J. Otis Yoder, founder, and president. Here he is with today's teaching, "The First Thing in Life" from John 6:22 to 29.

Everyone wants to do what is first in life. We struggle hard sometimes to find out what that is. It is not always easy to decide which should be first. They tell me the evidence of adulthood is to have the ability to do what is important. Children do the thing for the moment.

I think back on my own boyhood. My father died when I was thirteen years old. After his death I had to make decisions beyond my ability. I tried but could not do because I lacked experience. God was very gracious to me but I often felt that I lacked something that my friends had. I lacked a great deal: my father's guidance through my young manhood days. I know what it is to try to sort out the first things in life and do them.

I want to talk to you about THE FIRST THING IN LIFE. We ought not waste our time with less than the important things in life. We ought to learn how to make decisions so that the most important things can be done in their proper order. As we learn from John 6:22-29, we will find the first thing in life.

- 22 *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;*
- 23 *(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)*
- 24 *When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.*
- 25 *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*
- 26 *Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

27 *Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

28 *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

In this text the Master defines the first thing in life. To attain the first thing in life we must comply with these DEMANDS which Jesus taught in this text.

The First DEMAND is,

### **We Must Seek Jesus**

The people saw when they got to the seaside that the boat was gone, that Jesus and His disciples had gone away. When they understood that He was not there and His disciples were not there they got into their boats and started out for Capernaum to find Jesus. They were seeking Jesus. The distance was not too great; the risk was not too great.

I want you to notice there was a restlessness among the people when Jesus was not there; a restlessness that took them down to the sea and into boats and across the sea to Capernaum to seek Jesus. Yes, to attain the first thing in life we must comply with this demand: we must seek Jesus. Let nothing turn you aside, my friend, from your search to find Jesus.

The Apostle Paul once said, *“He is not far from every one of us.”* But we must comply with this demand, we must seek Jesus like these people did when they saw He was not there.

There is a second demand we must meet:

### **We Must Hear Jesus.**

Notice the conversation that went on between them and Jesus. When they found Him, they asked Him this question, “Rabbi, when camest thou here?” The question is “when”? But Jesus did not answer their question in the way they expected. I want you to hear what He said to them, “Truly, truly I say unto you, you seek me not because you saw the miracles, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.”

Do you see what Jesus did when He answered them? His words touched the very heart from which motives arise. They were not so much interested in what He was doing or what He was teaching. They were interested in getting their stomachs full of loaves and fish. For that reason, Jesus warned them, “Labor not for the food that perishes, but for that food which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you.

You see, Jesus directed them toward the first thing in life. What is the first thing in life? Everlasting life and the food which brings it. Jesus directed their minds and their thoughts toward the spiritual side of life. They were tied up with the physical, but He directed their minds higher. He said, “the son of man will give you that food, for God the Father has sealed him.”

We must comply with this demand if we are to attain to the first thing in life. We must hear Jesus. Do you know what He will do? He will uncover our real motives, just like He did for those who came to Him. He did not answer their “when” question, but He answered their “why” question. Why are you seeking for them? You ought to seek for Him, because He has everlasting life to give.

We must comply with a third demand:

### **We Must Believe Jesus**

Here comes a question again from the people. They say unto him, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” What shall we do? That is a good and necessary question. Every one of us ought to ask this question, “What shall I do that I might work the works of God?”

Notice very carefully how Jesus answered their question. They expected Him to give them some kind of work to do, a job perhaps or some tasks; maybe a hard one. Instead, He said, “This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he (God) has sent.” To them, and most likely to you that does not sound like much work. Jesus implies that believing is work. Here is what you can do.

Jesus corrected their view. Instead of doing some hard work, He said, “Believe on him whom he hath sent.” Of course, He was referring to Himself. That is the work of God. To attain the first thing in life we must comply with this demand: we must believe Jesus. Our approach will be opened wide when we believe in Jesus. Jesus answered their question very well. That answer will apply to you and me. The first thing in life is to believe on the One whom God has sent. Who is He? Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, how do we attain to the first thing in life? We comply with these demands: we must seek Jesus; we must hear Jesus; we must believe Jesus. My friend, this is a very effective order. It is in this order that we must comply with these demands. When you come that way you will also attain to the first thing in life. “This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he hath sent.” Do you believe?

My friend, do you know who Jesus is and why He came to earth? You may have a lot of knowledge, maybe you’re even a teacher. But I must tell you, if you don’t know who Jesus is, all your knowledge is in vain. That’s right, all your knowledge will not make you acceptable in God’s sight. Only the blood of Jesus applied to your heart by faith can do that.

And when you, by faith, accept His offer of salvation you will find the first thing, the most important thing in life. Now, were you blessed by this teaching? If so, you can request an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, “The First Thing in Life.”

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). That e-mail address is [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, “The First Thing in Life.” I’d be happy to send one to you.

Once again, the quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember; you can request a free copy of this teaching, “The First Thing in Life.” It’s available in print or on an audio CD.

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Dr. Yoder continues our study from John’s Gospel with a message titled “The True Bread.” You won’t want to miss it. And until then, I urge you to keep looking for that blessed HOPE.