

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 19)
John 6:51-71
“Give Me Faith”**

Introduction

**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.”
Matthew 5:6**

Salvation is a free gift. But in order to receive it, a person must first realize that they need it. And once a person realizes that they are lost and in need of saving, they must humbly come to Jesus in faith and receive the gift of salvation. It is quite a simple thing really, but so hard for many to accept. When Jesus told the crowd of people who followed Him across the Sea of Galilee that He was indeed the Bread of Life that had come down from heaven, rather than being overjoyed, they were offended. Just imagine that for a moment... How could someone possibly be offended that God so loved the world that He gave His Son as a sacrifice to pay for their sins? The plain truth is... people do it every day. Just as many are filled with joy that Jesus loved them enough to die for them, even more are offended at the notion that they need forgiveness in the first place.

If you take a look at the world around us today, you will find multitudes of people who are, in fact, hostile towards the gospel. They do not simply disbelieve it. They are offended by it. The Church of The LORD Jesus has been severely persecuted through the ages, not because of this world's indifference, but rather because of its hatred. People by and large want to be told that they are wonderful. They want to pursue whatever lustful pleasures their heart's desire, and they most certainly do not want to hear that many of those pleasures are sinful. In short, this world wants to satisfy the hunger of its flesh, and has no appetite for spiritual food. The human condition of fallen man is that while our flesh is very much alive, we are spiritually dead. But Jesus came to deliver us from this spiritual death.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. BUT GOD, Who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that He had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You were saved by grace!

Ephesians 2:1-5

Now, upon reading that passage, listen again to what Jesus told the “breakfast crowd”, who came expecting yet another free meal that morning in Capernaum:

“I AM the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. I AM the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

John 6:48-51

So you see, these people were focused upon the physical, because that was all that they could see. They did not understand that Jesus was speaking of the spiritual, because in their sinful condition, they were dead to all things spiritual. Rather than criticizing the words that Jesus spoke to them, they should have come to Him, believed, and received everlasting life. But it is impossible to believe in the One that God has sent, unless God Himself creates the desire within them. A person can only come to Christ when The Father draws him to Christ (**John 6:44**).

Although this large crowd came to Jesus that morning, they did not come to Him for the right reason. They came in search of food for their stomachs and missed out on the food for their souls. As we conclude this sixth chapter of John's gospel. Let us look at the stark contrast between those who see and believe and those who are unable to see Jesus for Who He truly is. It is a story of *The Hunger*, *The Human Condition*, and *The Humble*.

The Hunger (vs. 51)

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

As we know, Jesus is not speaking here about physical food. He is talking about spiritual food. The Jews that came to him that morning could not understand this reality at all. They were wanting something completely different from Jesus. They wanted Him to provide for their physical needs. They were convinced that because they were descended from Abraham and Moses, that their good standing before God was already a forgone conclusion. They had no earthly idea that they needed salvation, or that the only way salvation could be given was by believing in the One Whom God had sent to save them.

The simple truth is that in order to come to the table and receive the "spiritual food" for the soul that Christ offers, a person must first have a hunger for it. It is God that creates in us a hunger for what Christ offers us.

"No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day." **John 6:44**

So why does Jesus so often use food and drink as metaphors for receiving Him? Because just as we take in physical food to sustain life, we must take Jesus into ourselves in order to have everlasting life. To partake of the bread of life, we must believe the Word of God and accept Jesus as LORD. Think about it for a moment. What does a person have to do in order to keep from starving physically? You must first have a hunger that draws you to eat something. Then you must come to the table, as it were, in order to eat, and finally you must accept the food that is offered. If you are simply hungry and then leave the table without eating, you will still be hungry. Being in close proximity to the food isn't going to give you the nourishment that you need.

So many people get so very close to Jesus, but ultimately they don't find salvation. They go to church and try to obey some of the "rules" as they perceive them to be, but they don't ever take in Jesus for themselves. It is as if they are hungry and thirsty, and they come to the table, but then refuse to eat, and eventually go away just as hungry as before. This is the reason that Jesus uses food and drink as an example of saving faith. To be saved, The Spirit of God creates a hunger within our soul. He draws you to Christ, so that you can hear the Word of Christ. Then you have a decision to make. Will you believe The Word and take that Word into yourself and accept Christ as LORD, or will you reject Him? If you choose not to accept the life that He offers, then you will go away just as spiritually hungry as you came. In thirty years of ministry, I have seen this so many times.

I cannot help but think of a man who came to our church for a couple of years. He came faithfully every Sunday. He asked me questions regarding the Scriptures, which I tried as best I could to always answer. He was obviously being drawn by God to the truths of God's Word. But then one day, just as quickly as he appeared, he stopped coming. The reason? Because He refused to believe. He went away just as lost as he came. And that my friends is a tragedy. To become a true follower of Christ, you must first have a "Spirit induced hunger", then you must come to Christ, hear His Word, and RECEIVE Him into yourself. He is The Bread of Life that came down from heaven.

The Human Condition (vs. 52-66)

At that, the Jews argued among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, because My flesh is true food and My blood is true drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the Bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your ancestors ate — and they died. The one who eats this Bread will live forever." He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?" Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling

about this, asked them. “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray Him.) He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted to him by the Father.” From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him.

The people were offended by Jesus’ words that day. They missed the point entirely, that He was talking about spiritual things and not earthly things. They were actually offended on two different points. The first of which was that He claimed to have come down from heaven. The Jews knew exactly what He meant by that. He was claiming to be God. They found that offensive. How could this man be from heaven, when they knew both of His parents? Or so they thought. Truth was, they knew Joseph and Mary, but they didn’t know His Father at all. If they did, they would have believed in the Son. They would have refused to believe, even if they could have seen Jesus ascend back into heaven with their own eyes! Such is the heart essence of the human condition, dead in its trespasses and sins.

The fact that Jesus mentioned His flesh as the food for eternal life also offended them. They accused Him of promoting cannibalism. Of course, that was ridiculous, but those who are dead to spiritual truths often do crazy things with the Word of God. It is amazing to see what some people get out of *The Bible* that isn’t really there! We have all seen examples of ridiculous doctrines that spring up from people who cannot discern the spiritual truths of Scripture.

Here is the beauty of what Jesus was really saying. By the sacrificial offering of His own flesh, He would open the way for us to boldly come to The Father. Listen to what the book of *Hebrews* says about this.

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus — He has inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through His flesh) — and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.”
Hebrews 10:19-22

Do not miss the significance of this. This is *Old Testament* typology come to life in Jesus Christ. For you see, in the Tabernacle of Moses, there was a rear portion called the holy of holies. It was the place where the Ark of The Covenant was kept. The Glory of God would fill this portion of the tabernacle, and no one was allowed to go back into this room except the High Priest, once a year on the day of Atonement. And he was never allowed to enter that room without the blood of a sacrifice. The room was separated from the rest of the tabernacle by a thick curtain (called the veil of the tabernacle). This curtain was made up of three separate colors: blue, red, and purple.

When Jesus was crucified upon the cross there was a great earthquake and the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. All of this is symbolic of what Jesus says here in **John 6** about his flesh being offered as the way to everlasting life. For you see, that veil represents the very body of Christ. The blue represents that He came down from heaven. The red represents His humanity. He was, as the Bible says, “the last Adam” (**1 Corinthians 15:45**). The word “Adam” means “red”. And what color do you get when you combine red and blue? Answer: purple. Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was the “God/Man”, Who came to offer us salvation.

Just as the veil was torn that day when Jesus died for our sins, His body was rent upon the cross, and it is through Him that we can now come boldly before the throne of grace so that we may obtain mercy (**Hebrew 4:16**). So yes, Jesus’ flesh is real food, and His blood is real drink, for those who have the spiritual sight to see and understand it. So you see, Jesus’ words to them had addressed both of their offenses, and yet, they were too spiritually blinded to comprehend them. He even explained to them that He was speaking of spiritual things, and still they did not believe (**vs.63**)

Sadly, the crowd that came to Jesus that day could not, in their sinful human condition, recognize the truths that He was sharing. He repeated His message to them several times, but they could not understand it. Such is the spiritual blindness of the human condition. Only the Spirit of God can shine a light into such a dark place.

“No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him...”

Not only did Jesus lose the crowd that day, but also many of those who had been following Him walked away in unbelief that fateful morning. It is one of the saddest verses in all of Scripture and the number of the verse has always struck me as both telling and tragic at the same time: **666**.

JOHN 6:66 — From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer accompanied Him.

The spiritual blindness of the human condition is a tragedy that leads to death. All they wanted was a meal, and so they walked away from the bread of life.

“For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?”
Mark 8:36

The Humble (vs. 67-71)

So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.

Jesus then looked at His twelve closest followers and asked them if they too wanted to go away. Of course they did not. They had seen Him walking on the water the night before. While they may not have completely understood the Words that He was speaking at the time, they knew that whatever He said was truth! Peter’s response was a beautiful declaration of humble faith.

“Simon Peter answered, ‘LORD, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”
John 6:68

Ol’ Pete may not have known everything there was to know, but he knew from a lifetime of fishing, that regular people do not have the ability to calm storms and walk on water! And that was enough for him to accept everything that Jesus had to say. He knew that he needed Jesus, and he intended to follow, no matter what. I am reminded here of an old hymn we used to sing when I was growing up. It was based upon the last words spoken by a man in India, who was being executed for his faith in Christ.

*Though none go with me, I still will follow.
 Though none go with me, I still will follow.
 Though none go with me, I still will follow.
 No turning back no turning back.
 (I Have Decided To Follow Jesus by Sadhu Sundar Singh)*

This is the humility of the believer. You do not have to fully comprehend every word of Scripture in order to be saved. Trust me, that is a l-o-o-ong process. But you do have to believe in the One Who spoke the Word. His name is Jesus. When John heard the words spoken by Jesus that day, he didn’t really understand them perfectly either. But when he saw Jesus die on a cross and rise from the dead, they all made perfect sense to Him. In order to receive the bread of life, you have to come, believe, and receive. A fuller understanding often comes much later.

So what do you believe about Christ? Do you believe that He is God/Man, Who came down from heaven to offer us everlasting life through his death and resurrection? Do you have a hunger that draws you to the bread of life that He offers? Then come, believe, and receive. Do not be like all those other disciples who walked away that day. Judas even stayed with Jesus for three years and still did not accept Him in saving faith. How could he be so close to The Savior for all that time, and yet, miss the salvation that He offered? Do not come to the table and refuse to eat. Accept the gift of life that can only be found by faith in Christ. Come to Jesus.

Come to Jesus... and live.

And let all believers say... TRUTH!!!