

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 25TH - 26TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE BREAD OF GOD (JOHN 6:22-33) THE CROWD CATCHES UP TO JESUS

Shortly after Jesus and the 12 reach the other side of the sea, they're met again by the crowd from the miraculous feeding, who were confused as to how Jesus got there because they didn't see Him leave in the boat.

- Remember, these were mostly half-hearted seekers concerned about their needs.

ANSWERING A QUESTION THEY DIDN'T ASK

After the crowd asked when Jesus arrived, He addressed their motives. The crowd was seeking food that would eventually go bad. **Jesus told them to seek "food that lasts for eternal life."**

- Like many today, they sought Jesus as a means of supporting their wants or to affirm their culture and politics.**

OKAY, TELL US HOW TO DO THAT

We will discover that the second question focused on salvation and how "to perform the works of God" was misguided and disingenuous.

- As good Jews **they might have wanted to learn how to earn God's favor, but Jesus was trying to present grace and to "believe in the One He has sent."**

BELIEVING IS SEEING

The crowd responds in a typical human fashion: "What sign...are you going to do so we may see and believe You?"

- Again, **the people wanted a temporary fix**, much like Exodus 16. **Jesus wanted them to have "true bread" that "gives [eternal] life," but they had to want to see the truth.**

"I AM THE BREAD..." (JOHN 6:34-51)

WE LOVE FAITH UNTIL IT GETS HARD

The crowd's response, "Sir, give us this bread always," would have been great if sincere.

- The problem with **"spiritual bread" is it must be consumed daily and in accordance with God's ways and will. Many like the thought of Jesus until it's difficult and He challenges our desires and lifestyles.**

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"

In v35, Jesus goes into the simple theology of salvation: that anyone who "comes to [Jesus]... and believes in [Him]" will never hunger or thirst again.

- Coming to and believing in Jesus does require commitment and obedience, but He will show us grace and sustain us!**

ELECTION OR FREE WILL?

V37 opens up the conversation of pre-destination (God chooses who gets saved) versus free will (we choose to be saved).

- Though beyond our full comprehension, **the Bible teaches both. Yes, God chooses us, but we are also responsible for answering that call.**

AND THEY ARE "NEVER CAST OUT"?

The other big source of debate is if we can lose our salvation. The continual asking of this question should bother us. **Whether we can, can't, or never had it is irrelevant if we are not living by the Word.**

- If we're building a relationship with Jesus, we don't have to worry about eternity.**

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

V38-40 introduces **the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints**. This simply means that we are not only saved, but we grow in our faith and are sustained until we are resurrected into eternal life.

- True perseverance will have evidence or "fruit" shown through biblical works.**

"THEREFORE THE JEWS STARTED GRUMBLING"

There's a parallel between the Jews (Pharisees) grumbling of Jesus' "bread" and their ancestors grumbling about the manna from Heaven in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11.

- The bottom line is they didn't like Jesus' approach or theology because it contradicted their expectations of God.**

"AND THEY WILL BE TAUGHT BY GOD"

Jesus quotes Isaiah 54:13 when responding to the grumbling. Not only is God in the flesh teaching them, but it is only by responding to His draw that they would be able to be saved.

- Salvation is never achieved apart from God's draw and is never consummated apart from our willingness to hear and learn.**

LOOKING BEYOND THE TEMPORARY

Jesus reminds the people that their ancestors who ate manna died because it only fulfilled a temporary need. Jesus clearly offers Himself as the eternal solution to humanity's needs.

- Then, the bomb is dropped as the crowd misses the analogy of Jesus' flesh as the bread to be consumed to have eternal life.

THIS ISN'T A COMMUNION REFERENCE

The Lord's Supper hadn't happened yet, so this reference of flesh and blood must be pointing to something else.

- Religious ritual doesn't produce eternal life. It is a daily consumption of Jesus, His teaching, principles, and nature that save and change us.**

FAITH AS A PROCESS AND LIFESTYLE

It seems to John that faith is more than a one-time prayer or title that causes us to think we've arrived.

- Jesus challenges us to live in Him, not just once to be saved or when we're in trouble, but all the time. Our faith should be a mindset and a lifestyle that impacts everything we do.**

FEEDING ON THE ETERNAL (JOHN 6:52-59)

POINTING TOWARD THE CROSS

Because most people in the crowd couldn't get past the physical into the spiritual, they asked, "How can this man give us flesh to eat?"

- Jesus was not only talking about a relationship with Him, but also the atoning (reparation for wrongs) work of the cross that was coming.

DOUBLING DOWN

Instead of smoothing over the tension with the non-believing Jews, Jesus takes it up a notch by adding the drinking of His blood, an act prohibited by law (Leviticus 17).

- Again, this is not about communion but an analogy about the saving blood that would be shed on the cross.

"SO THE ONE WHO FEEDS ON ME WILL LIVE"

V56-57 strongly imply that we are to remain in Jesus after our initial salvation experience. We not only "drink" of Him once, but continually so we can be regenerated.

- We're also always to be going through sanctification, meaning we grow to be more like Jesus and to be used by Him.**

COMMITMENT? (JOHN 6:60-71)

"THIS TEACHING IS HARD..."

After failing to understand because of selfish motives and learning that following Him would be sacrificial, many "disciples" walked away.

- Simply professing Christ doesn't mean we're following Him. To follow requires denying self, taking up a cross (sacrifice), and following His commands (Luke 9:23).**

FOLLOWING JESUS IS OFFENSIVE TO THE WORLD

Jesus simply asks some of His professing disciples if His teachings offend them. People love Jesus until He defines right and wrong and calls for repentance and obedience.

- True biblical teaching has become extremely offensive in our age because we have elevated ourselves to gods.**

THE SPIRIT VS. THE FLESH

Jesus said, "The Spirit is the One Who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all." This means that **if we desire to know God, He fills us with His Spirit and He helps us understand Jesus' teachings and live them out.**

- With just our "flesh," we are incapable of living fruitful and God-honoring lives.

"LORD, TO WHOM WILL WE GO?"

After many of the so-called followers walked away, Jesus turns to the 12 and asks if they will do the same. Peter's answer is perfect: **"...to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life...You are the Holy One of God."**

- Do we truly believe this? If so, why do we look in so many other places for fulfillment?**

"...ONE OF YOU IS A DEVIL."

If reading this for the first time, the realization that one of the disciples was going to betray Jesus is shocking and sparks many questions.

- Jesus is not to be blamed for the evil in Judas. **The rebellious heart is the culprit. Notice, Jesus chose them, but they also had the freedom to rebel against Him.**

CONSUMING CHRIST

- Jesus tells us we must consume His "flesh" and "blood" to be saved and changed. Of course, this wasn't literal cannibalism, but **building a relationship by consuming the nature, teachings, and principles of Jesus.**

- We do this through **prayer, the Word, and time of meditation on God.**

CONSUMPTION LEADS TO SUSTAINING

- The questions of salvation should be set aside for the greater question of, **"Are we consuming Jesus every day?"** because it is in that consumption that we have the ability to persevere and grow.

- Our consumption of Christ will also bear fruit that blesses us, others, and God!**

IT IS A WORTHWHILE SACRIFICE

- Following Jesus is amazing, but it is not always easy. **To truly follow, we must deny ourselves, live sacrificially, and obey His commands and principles.**

- Though difficult, **our sacrifice now will change us for the better and set us up for an eternity beyond comprehension.**

"TO WHOM WILL WE GO?"

- Where has our pursuit of power, money, sex, comfort, intoxication, irresponsibility, and apathy (in other words, ourselves) taken us? Are we better people with more clarity?
- The true follower reaches a point where they're confident there is no other path to fulfillment and eternal life other than Jesus.**