

Bread of Life (p.3)

Recap & Introduction: (51 & 52)

*When biblical controversial subjects pop up: 3 different outcomes:

- debate
- avoid/quit
- accept*

Jesus says love... but they understand loaf. (1st)

Illustration: Canadians that don't sip Tim Hortons. (2nd)

vv. 53–59. In Christ.

Reference to his death; no one understands it. They don't want to understand it! (v. 51).

Lev. 17:11–12. Kosher diet.

(Explanation, “in Christ”?)

One command: eat the bread and drink the blood. What does that mean?

vv. 60–66. Out of Christ.

v. 63 clarifies that Jesus' words were not literal.

Reference to his resurrection, obvious conclusion, they won't believe. (Their god is their stomach).

They desert.

v. 64, from the beginning, Jesus is God.

(Illustration, social status.)

vv. 67–71. The devil.

vv. 68–69 respond to what it means to eat and drink from Jesus, accepting his word.

Peter chooses believing.

Jesus' question here is intriguing. However, it tells you boldly there is no space for wishy-washy discipleship.

vv. 70–71 *Judas = the devil. (Leads to application) deserters < traitor.*

Conclusion

Doctrine

App: Jesus is the Lord, not the servant.

Disciples' approach = to be subject to Jesus

Religious approach = to make Jesus subject to them.

Experience

Few practical questions...

Illustration, Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

Written Sermon:

The Bread of Life (p.3)

This is the last stretch of this chapter, and we could easily summarize it with this phrase: “*God says love, they understand loaf.*” They don’t want to know about spiritual matters; they want physical blessings. These people went downhill in heart. They approached Jesus calling him “prophet,” then Rabbi, then sir. Then they grumbled at him. Lastly, they deserted him, as you will see at the end of today’s sermon.

Our last sermon, *The Bread of Life (p.2)*, could be summarized with this phrase: “*Some are religious people; some are saved people.*” We have seen that the people under Moses ate the manna from God, yet they died in the desert. Only Caleb and Joshua made it to the Promised Land. Our conclusion was a profound one. Yes, it is possible to “eat manna” every day and yet not believe in God at all! That’s religion, people who approach the church and its rituals, but never approach God.

Our example was Canadians and Tim Hortons: “*If you are Canadian, you drink Tim Hortons!*” If you come to the Bible, you need to take a “sip” of Jesus. He is the Bread of Life!

Today’s sermon, the final part of this long chapter (by the way, John chapter 6 is the longest chapter in the Gospels), shows us the finale of this long conversation Jesus had with the multitude in Capernaum.

Before we jump into the text, it’s important that you know our natural human reaction toward controversial subjects says a lot about our deepest beliefs.

For example, take one biblical controversial subject, let's say homosexuality. You will see three different types of approaches to the matter:

Debate/grumblers (people who disagree with the Bible's stance on the subject).

Avoid/quit (people who remain silent because they are ashamed or people-pleasers).

Believe/acceptance (people who agree with and are vocal about the Bible's stance on the subject).

That's what is happening in the last stretch of today's sermon. Jesus presents two difficult subjects to the multitude:

1. the cross and resurrection
2. "eat and drink from Jesus for eternal life"

Both subjects are foreign ideas to the listeners in the crowd, and people had different reactions to Jesus' teaching. They grumbled, deserted, or believed. Let's see it:

John 6:51–59 (In Christ)

Jesus briefly talked about his cross in verse 51, when he said he would give his flesh (life) on behalf of the whole world.

Today, we know Jesus was talking about the cross. We know the full picture. But that wasn't what the people understood. They clearly got confused by that statement. As a matter of fact, they asked, *"How could he give his flesh for the world's sake?!"*

Jesus expands on the subject with an allegory that is hard to understand. We have to acknowledge that Jesus' language is difficult. He is very "literal" and emphatic: *"Unless you eat and drink from the Son of Man, you won't have life in you."*

We need some context here. In Leviticus 17:12–13, the Bible clearly forbids the consumption of blood from animals (how much more from humans!). To the Jewish mind, Jesus' words were contradictory to the Bible. Therefore, they grumbled at him.

However, let me explain what Jesus meant by *"eating my flesh and drinking my blood."* It can all be summarized in a simple sentence: *"In Christ."* That's the favorite theological expression of the apostle Paul. He uses it over 100 times in the New Testament. In simple terms:

In Adam, you are dead; in Christ, you are alive.

In Adam, you deserve hell; in Christ, you receive heaven.

In Adam, you are a sinner; in Christ, you are holy.

And so on and so forth. That's the beautiful theology behind Jesus' words, and it was an invitation to them. Yet, they didn't want it because they took his words literally.

John 6:60–66 (Out of Christ)

The multitude grumbled at Jesus, so he expanded on the subject of the cross. He now adds the resurrection to it (v. 62). But that doesn't change a thing, since the people had already made up their minds against his teaching. Remember what I told you: when controversial subjects pop up, our deepest values also pop up, whether we believe (accept) or reject (grumble, quit).

Moreover, Jesus took the opportunity to clarify what he meant by "*eating his flesh and drinking his blood.*" It is a spiritual matter, not a physical one. Our God is not a cannibal. Jesus clearly said, "*My words are spirit and life.*"

Nevertheless, people deserted him. They deserted the Messiah, but more than that, they deserted God himself. John, the writer of this story, cleverly throws some gems into the narrative. He writes a key piece of information: "*Jesus knew they would desert him, for he knew them from the beginning.*" Those two words, knowledge and beginning, depict Jesus' divinity. "Beginning" is a clear reference to Genesis, when God created the heavens and the earth. Knowledge from the beginning refers to one of God's attributes, he knows everything. John clearly bestows divinity upon Jesus as the multitudes desert him. What a huge mistake they made.

John 6:67–71 (The Devil)

Jesus' reaction to the multitudes' rejection is astonishing. He looks at his core team, the twelve disciples, and asks them, "*Do you want to desert me too? Do you want to follow the multitude's lead?*" Why would Jesus ask such a question? The answer is obvious. Jesus is clearly telling his disciples there is no space for wishy-washy commitment. Either they are all in, or they are not in at all. Full commitment, wholehearted devotion, total worship.

Now Peter's response to Jesus' question clarifies the meaning of "*eating the flesh and drinking the blood*" that Jesus spoke about earlier. Peter replied, "*To whom shall we go (person)? Only you have the words of eternal life (Bible), and we believe you are the Holy One God sent.*"

Peter's statement answers everything. To eat and drink from Jesus means accepting and believing in him and his doctrine.

Peter's response aligns with Jesus' earlier statements: "*People cannot be saved unless the Father draws them to Jesus.*" God draws people through his Word, and through the Bible people come to know Jesus, and he saves them.

Here, for the first time, we see a contrast between Peter and Judas (the Bible presents several more later on). As Peter runs toward Jesus, Judas runs away from Jesus, and his heart is exposed before everyone.

Jesus uses strong words when exposing Judas' heart. *"You are a devil!"* Pay close attention to the comparison and degrees happening here:

1. Accepting versus rejecting
2. Grumblers < deserters < traitors

In my country (Brazil), we have no tolerance for traitors. In the army, there is no tolerance for traitors. In narco gangs, there is no tolerance for traitors. In sports, there is no tolerance for traitors. In the Bible, there is no tolerance for traitors. That is the worst kind of sin. Hence, that is why Jesus reserved such a harsh word for Judas Iscariot.

Conclusion

Now that we have read John chapter 6 in its entirety, what is the main lesson of this chapter?

Certainly, this chapter is filled with theological truths. Most of them are deep concepts: divinity, Bread of Life, manna, salvation, condemnation.

The main message of this chapter is simple: **Jesus is the Lord, not the subject.**

From the beginning of the chapter, people approached Jesus as a commodity: *"Give us bread, deliver us from our oppressors, give us prosperity."* When Jesus course-corrected the relationship, *"I am the Lord; you are subject to me, not the other way around,"* they were offended.

Moreover, Jesus course-corrected their hearts. They were slaves to earthly passions, yet Jesus wanted to give them eternal salvation. When he spoke to them about spiritual life, they rejected it because their god was their stomach, not the Father.

After all, they were simply not hungry for Jesus.

I would like to illustrate the whole of chapter 6 with two famous biblical figures: Paul and Abraham.

1) Paul

Paul clearly depicts the contrast between true disciples and religious people found in this chapter.

Once, Paul was a religious man. He knew everything about the Bible, yet he never knew the God of the Bible. Thus, he persecuted and murdered Christians.

Later on, Paul encountered the God of the Bible. The risen Lord Jesus appeared to him personally on the road to Damascus, and from that moment on, Paul's heart was forever changed.

Even today, there are people like the old Paul who read Scripture yet do not know God. And there are those who read Scripture and know Jesus, the Holy One of God.

2) Abraham

In this chapter, Jesus presented words that were hard to understand, and those words tested the human heart: will you grumble, quit, or accept?

Abraham comes to mind. He received a promise from God, Isaac. Years later, God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah. That was unheard of, unexpected, and difficult. Abraham had every reason to grumble, question, argue, or quit. Yet, he obeyed and believed.

Here is the key. Abraham knew God. He had a relationship with him. He knew that even though the words were hard to understand, the heart behind the words was soft and loving.

My prayer for you and me is that all of us would come into such a close relationship with God. Amen.