

Better Than Manna

John 6:47-71

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the Bread of Life (6:47-58)

2. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ (6:59-66)

3. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ (6:67-71)

4. Applying the Word

a. Come and \_\_\_\_\_ = come and \_\_\_\_\_

b. Come and \_\_\_\_\_

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 6:47-71

1. Four times in John 6 Jesus begins a statement with “Truly, truly.” Identify each of those statements. How can we use those four statements to summarize the point Jesus is making in the chapter?
2. How is Jesus like and unlike the manna in the wilderness? (Exodus 16:1-9)
3. How does the misunderstanding about the metaphor of eating and drinking in John 6 parallel the misunderstandings in John 2:19-21; 3:3-4; 4:13-15? Why should that make us cautious about an overly literal approach to the language of eating and drinking His flesh and blood?
4. How are various forms of the word “life” used in vv. 57-58 and v. 63? What is Jesus teaching about the nature of God and salvation?
5. What does it seem like the crowd found to be “difficult” in Jesus’ teaching? What do people find “difficult” about the gospel message today that leads to a similar response as the crowd in John 6?
6. What elements make up Simon Peter’s response in vv. 68-69 that helps us understand what true belief looks like?
7. How can the overall teaching of this chapter help us when we share the gospel with people and don’t see a positive response?

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Big idea: Unlike manna, those who “eat” the bread of life will not die. To eat is to believe. Jesus has the words of eternal life.

### Intro

Some parts of the Bible are easier to understand and apply.

James – anger, conflict, perseverance in hardship

Nehemiah – leadership, planning, prayer

Some parts stretch our thinking and our view of God, but are maybe harder to see the immediate application.

Much of John is like that. The narrative and teaching are laser focused on convincing us that Jesus is God come in the flesh to save us from our sins. Chapter after chapter he builds that cumulative and overwhelming case.

It addresses our biggest need – reconciliation with God.

But don't lose sight of how the NT takes that truth and applies it to our lives in so many ways:

We forgive one another because we've been forgiven. (Eph. 4:32)

We forgive one another in the way we've been forgiven. (Eph. 4:32)

We are to walk in love because of How Jesus loved us by giving Himself up for us. (Eph. 5:2)

A husband loves his wife like Christ loved the church. (Eph. 5:25)

We are to be humble because Jesus humbled himself. (Phil. 2)

So, the more we understand what Jesus has done to forgive us, the better we are equipped to forgive. The more we understand His humility, the more fuel for our own humility.

Your relationships (at least, your side of them) are one of the most reliable indicators of your appreciation and comprehension of the gospel.

John 6 continues Jesus' interaction on what it means to have eternal life in Him. He's the bread of life and we are to “eat” of Him to have life. But some didn't believe, we saw that last week, so He talked about the necessary drawing work of the Father. He doubles down on the bread of life language in this passage and many leave him. We'll see why they leave and why others stay.

#### 1. ***Eating*** the Bread of Life (6:47-58)

a. Vv. 47 and 48 repeat phrases we have already seen several times in this chapter

i. It's an implicit invitation to believe in Him for eternal life.

b. Comparison and contrast with the manna in the wilderness.

i. Remember, his audience brought it up first in v. 31 after Jesus fed them.

ii. Now He shows how much better He is than the manna from Moses in the wilderness.

iii. What is the parallel between him and manna?

1. Came down from heaven (vv. 50a)

a. **Exod. 16:4a** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;

2. Gave life (physical vs. spiritual)

3. Divinely provided
4. Met their need
5. They grumbled about it

a. **Numbers 11:4-6** The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?<sup>5</sup> "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,<sup>6</sup> but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

iv. Key difference – this bread leads to eternal life, that they not die

1. Living bread vs bread (v. 51a)
2. Eats this bread will live forever (v. 51b)
3. To eat is to believe (not to take communion)
  - a. Belief = "eat of it"
4. In a strictly literal sense, they will still die. But He says 4 times in this passage that He will raise them up on the last day.
  - a. Eternal life is not the absence of death but the presence of life in Jesus, life that is lasting.

v. To make it clear, the bread that He will give for the life of the world is His flesh (v. 51)

1. **John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
2. **John 15:13** "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
3. Voluntary – Jesus himself is the one who gives his life
4. Vicarious - For the life of the world
5. Broad – for the world, not just the Jewish people

c. Confusion (vv. 52-58)

- i. How can this man give us His flesh?
  1. If you've been in the whole John series, this shouldn't surprise you that Jesus' audience didn't get the metaphor.
  2. **John 2:19-21** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."<sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body.
    - a. He isn't talking about the literal temple but his body
  3. **John 3:3-4** Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"
    - a. He isn't talking about literal birth but spiritual birth
  4. **John 4:13-15** Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again;<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never

thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."

- a. He isn't talking about literal water/physical thirst but spiritual thirst and eternal life
- 5. So, He isn't here talking about literally eating His body and blood, this isn't supporting the idea that the elements of communion are or become the literal body and blood of Christ.
- 6. So likewise he isn't talking about literally eating his flesh but belief in His sacrifice

d. He doesn't backpedal but leans in to the metaphor and the necessity of belief.

- i. Vv 54 and 40 are closely parallel
  - 1. **John 6:54** "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
  - 2. **John 6:40** everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
  - 3. The former is a metaphorical way of referring to the latter
- ii. To insist that this is talking about communion is to miss the metaphor and to attribute too much to the practice of communion.
  - 1. Carson - The language is so completely unqualified that if its primary reference is to the eucharist we must conclude that the one thing necessary to eternal life is participation at the Lord's table – which contradicts early parts of the discourse, like v 40 – only reasonable alternative is to understand these verses as a repetition of the earlier truth, but now in metaphorical form.
  - 2. It's not that this passage has no bearing on communion or the Lord's supper.
    - a. When we take the bread and the cup, we are remembering His sacrifice, it's a display of faith, it's a visual picture of our need to take in Christ by faith as we believe in Him.
- iii. The practice of communion is not a magic rite where as long as someone takes the bread and cup they are forgiven.
  - 1. *Ex opero operato* – as if a person submits to the rite and automatically is saved. That was an error that the Reformation was countering as people would rush daily to as many Masses where they didn't understand the Latin that it was read in.
  - 2. Michael Reeves in *The Unquenchable Flame* described the view in the Catholic Church prior to the reformation.
    - a. "So, while an 'explicit faith' was considered desirable, an 'implicit faith', in which a person came along to church and received the sacraments, was considered perfectly acceptable. If they stood under the taps they received the grace."
  - 3. In a similar way that the sinner's prayer is not an incantation that said automatically grants eternal life, contra the statement from Scott Adams, the creator of the Dilbert comics

Next, many of my Christian friends have asked me to find Jesus before I go. I'm not a believer, but I have to admit the risk-reward calculation for doing so looks attractive. So, here I go:

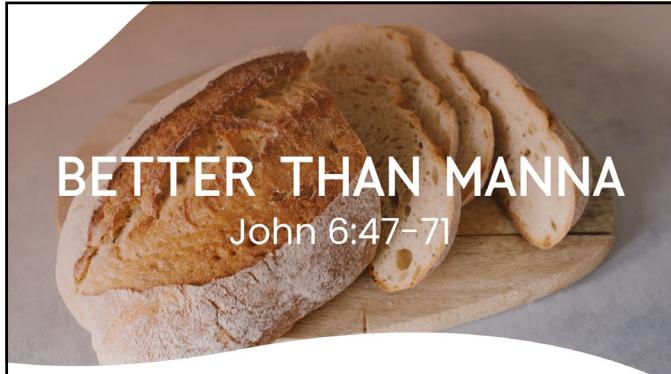
I accept Jesus Christ as my lord and savior, and I look forward to spending an eternity with him. The part about me not being a believer should be quickly resolved if I wake up in heaven. I won't need any more convincing than that. And I hope I am still qualified for entry.

- a.
- b. That would be to replace the mechanism of communion with the mechanism of an incantation.
- c. It's not my role to judge and evaluate his sincerity and what happened in his last day on earth. My hope is it was sincere and the words ended up reflecting a true heart of faith drawn by the Father.
- d. Instead, what Jesus is teaching is that it is faith in Him that saves.
  - i. That can be expressed through a prayer of receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord, just as the true practice of taking the Lord's Supper should be an ongoing display of true faith in Christ, but it isn't the words or the sacrament, but the faith in Christ that is important.

2. Those who **left** (6:59-66)

- a. Many who heard said, this is a difficult statement
  - i. At least 3 parts made it difficult (adapted from Carson)
  - ii. They wanted more food, political leadership, and miracles more than spiritual realities
  - iii. Offended at the claims Jesus advanced, claiming to be greater than moses
  - iv. The extended bread metaphor is itself offensive to them, assaulting clear taboos of eating flesh and drinking blood
- b. Jesus increased the offense rather than backing down (vv. 62ff)
  - i. He didn't back away from His claim to come down from heaven, where He will one day return.
    - 1. Prove that He was more than the son of Mary and Joseph
  - ii. But the means by which He will ascend is likely in mind also.
    - 1. If they are offended by eating flesh/drinking blood language, how much more will they be offended by a crucified Messiah?
    - 2. Carson - The moment of Jesus' greatest degradation and shame is the moment of his glorification, the path of his return to the glory he had with the father before the world began.
- c. No one can come unless if has been granted him from the Father (v. 65)
  - i. Repeating the themes of vv. 37, 44, and 45
- d. As a result, many left.
  - i. Disciples can be used of the 12 but here its differentiated. The next verse talks about the 12.
  - ii. There was a broader crowd of disciples, learners, followers.
  - iii. Notice what Jesus doesn't say:
    - 1. Come back! I'll soften the message! Don't leave!

2. Churches can act as if the worst possible thing that can happen is for someone to get offended and not come back.
3. Those who **stayed** (6:67-71)
  - a. What was different for those who stayed?
    - i. From the divine sovereignty side:
      1. They were given by the Father to the Son
        - a. **John 6:39** "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
      2. They were drawn by the Father
        - a. **John 6:44** "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."
      3. They were taught by the Father
        - a. **John 6:45** Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.
      4. It was granted to them by the Father
        - a. **John 6:65** no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."
    - ii. From the human response side:
      1. They believed that Jesus had the words of eternal life.
      2. They believed that Jesus was the Holy One of God.
        - a. That's why Augustine 1600 years ago summarized their response as a summary of this section:
          - b. Augustine, 'Believe and you have eaten.'
    - iii. It wasn't that they wanted more stuff from Him
      1. More food, more political leadership, more answers, more explanation
  - b. Even among those who stayed, not all believed (vv. 70-71)
    - i. Jesus wasn't fooled, even though the other disciples had no clue at this point.
    - ii. Context shows that "choose" isn't used of elect or chosen for salvation, but rather chosen to be in the 12
4. Applying the Word
  - a. Come and **eat** = come and **believe**
  - b. Come and **remain**
    - i. We saw last week that those who are saved will not and cannot lose their salvation. He will keep them. He will not lose any of them.
    - ii. What we see in this passage is the human evidence of that is persevering, remaining.
    - iii. **John 8:31-32** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."



## 1. *Eating* the Bread of Life (6:47-58)

**Exodus 16:4a** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;

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## 3. Those who stayed (6:67-71)

Augustine:

“Believe and you have eaten.”

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come and believe

b. Come and remain

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