

John – A Devotional Commentary from God’s Daily Word Ministries

Chapter 6

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Scripture references for lessons on John: The New King James Version.
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John 6:1-4 - Lesson #59

The feeding of the five thousand was the fourth miracle, or sign (John 2:11), recorded in the gospel of John which Jesus did to show He was the Son of God. It is also the only miracle, other than the resurrection, to be recorded in all four gospels. This may be an indication of the importance of the event, but it should also challenge us to consider the other gospels to obtain a complete picture of this mighty work of God.

John 6:1-4

"After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near."

The fact that "the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near" says that this event was several months - possibly as much as a year - after the events recorded in chapter five. Jesus had sent His twelve disciples out to minister into the area west of the Sea of Galilee; "So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:6).

When the disciples returned, they were eager to report on their active ministry; "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught" (Mark 6:30). But they also had to bring Jesus the bad news that John the Baptist had been beheaded by King Herod; "Then his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus" (Matthew 14:12).

It was immediately after receiving the ministry report and the news about John that Jesus said, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). The deserted place was on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, "a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida" (Luke 9:10). This is most likely the area known today as the Golan Heights.

Jesus needed a time of quiet, and He also knew His disciples were in great need of some time alone. But many who were on the road for the Passover feast had now heard of the Great Miracle Worker and quickly followed Him to the mountainside. These were not truth seekers who desired to repent, but thrill seekers looking for a show - looking to be entertained.

In our next lesson we will see how Jesus taught on the need for practical application of Spiritual truth, but let's not miss the important message in the priority of His actions - Jesus consistently sought and encouraged time alone. Whether we are in the middle of great Spiritual victories or needing to grieve and process difficult news, we must have time to simply sit at His feet. Interruptions will always follow, but let's be determined to withdraw for times of rest. Let's never surrender our quiet time of being alone with the Lord.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:5-7 - Lesson #60

In the middle of a glorious season of ministry, Jesus led His disciples into a time of rest and solitude; "And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples" (John 6:3). We all need times when we are quiet and can simply sit at His feet; but alas, such times seldom last long. Times of refreshing are absolutely necessary. But they are necessary because they prepare us for further ministry, and for further testing which is used to continue the process of being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

John 6:5-7

"Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.'"

When Jesus first saw the great multitude of people, "He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34). Jesus demonstrated great compassion for those who were gathered and even "healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14). Phillip had directly seen the miracles of Jesus, had just returned from a successful ministry trip, and was now in the middle of a great healing and teaching service. But when Jesus tested Phillip by asking how to deal with a seemingly impossible physical problem, he looked only at the available physical solutions and determined the situation to be hopeless.

A denarius was the acceptable pay for one day of work (Matthew 20:2). The term 200 denarii is therefore sometimes translated as "Eight months' wages" (NIV). Phillip was making the point that it would take a completely unreasonable amount of money to buy enough food for each person to have even "a little." Did Phillip fail the test?

In one sense, Phillip surely failed. Phillip had walked side by side with the Creator of the Universe but, when faced with a physical difficulty, had failed to look past his physical surroundings. But in another sense, this was not a pass or fail type of test. Jesus already knew what was in the heart of Phillip, and He didn't need the answer to the question of where to buy bread. Yet He asked as a way of revealing a weakness so it could be refined and made stronger; "knowing the testing of your faith produces patience...that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:3-4).

We never stop needing to rest, minister, or learn. Neither are we ever freed from times of testing. Jesus loves us so much that He continually strengthens us by stretching us past what is comfortable and revealing our need to make His Spiritual truths a practical reality. He can be trusted in ALL things - and that means our eternal destiny as well as our daily physical circumstances. Let's embrace His truth and apply it in every area of our life. Let's trust Him more - right now - and be made complete through our times of testing.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:8-11 - Lesson #61

When Philip was tested with where to buy bread for the great multitude which had gathered, he replied; "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient" (John 6:7). Philip "failed" the test in the same manner we often fail today. When we allow the money god to become more real than the One True Almighty God, we tend to see money as the necessary solution to all problems. And when a problem appears too big for our limited god to solve, we conclude there is no solution. But there are more ways we tend to fail the test.

John 6:8-11

"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?' Then Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted."

Andrew identified a young boy with a small amount of food, but his action lacked faith, "What are they among so many?" In Andrew we see our usual second failed step. When our bank account is determined inadequate, we take a quick inventory of all our resources and conclude what we can supply is insufficient. Even though Andrew was not being directly tested, he failed to see the true solution standing before his eyes.

In an act of wonderful grace, Jesus provided the answer. Though faith was lacking and eyes failed to see, Jesus stepped up and revealed Himself in a mighty way. Without rebuking the disciples for their lack of faith, and without concern about the lack of resources, Jesus invited the disciples to join Him in a miraculous act of ministry; "Make the people sit down."

God's invitation most always comes through small steps of obedience. The disciples must have wondered why they were asked to have the people sit, but they obeyed. They must have felt a little foolish as they received their first portion of bread and began to distribute to such a large group, but they obeyed. And as they obediently followed, the disciples found themselves right in the middle of the awesome will of God.

When Jesus gathered the loaves and fish He first gave thanks, "looking up to Heaven" (Luke 9:16), for what had been supplied. Again, we usually fail at this important step. We tend to evaluate the need and then tell God of how He must supply in order to meet the need. But this is a foolish attempt at Spiritual manipulation and not a love driven Spiritual faith. Continual faith in ministry thanks God for what He provides and then trusts Him to accomplish all He desires as we walk in obedience.

Let's renew our commitment to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Let's remember we follow the Creator of the Universe, and, with thanksgiving, keep our eyes on the One who supplies ALL our needs.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:12-15 - Lesson #62

The need was great! But even with such a large multitude of hungry people, "about five thousand men, besides women and children" (Matthew 14:21), Jesus demonstrated an even larger ability to provide. He took the small offering, gave thanks, and everyone received "as much as they wanted" (John 6:11).

John 6:12-15

"So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.' Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone."

This was a miracle of grandest proportions. Each person ate until "they were filled." The abundant supply stands in wonderful contrast to the hopeless disbelief of Philip and Andrew. Jesus is never short of resources. No matter what we have to offer, He can supply every need and accomplish all He desires.

Jesus then directed the disciples to gather all that remained. He had supplied in abundance, but Jesus also taught about not being wasteful with what God supplies. Abundance is always for a purpose. With twelve baskets of extra food, the apostles were blessed with meals for their next day of travel.

When the people saw the miracle Jesus performed, they thought He was the Prophet promised by Moses; "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst" (Deuteronomy 18:15). The people saw a miracle worker who, like Moses, could lead them out from under oppressive rule so they desired to forcefully make Jesus their king. They were planning to force Jesus to meet their needs and fulfill their desires, but Jesus perceived their heart; "He knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

If the people would have recognized Jesus as the true King they would have responded with submission and reverence. Jesus is to be honored and worshiped, not manipulated and controlled. But we make this same mistake every time we say: "I will do this, but no more. I will obey part way, with some things, but not all. I will make you king over some of my life, but the rest is mine." When Jesus saw the unbelieving heart of the people, He quietly walked away.

There is only one acceptable way to come to Christ. We must accept Him for who He is, not create Him into someone we desire Him to be. He not just a lord, He is THE LORD. He is not just a king, He is THE KING. Regardless of what we say with our mouth, our actions reflect what we believe in our heart. Let's examine our life and then live consistent with a true belief that He is Savior, Lord, and King.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:16-21 - Lesson #63

In a typical classroom we listen to an instructor, record notes, read textbooks, and work through assignments. At the prescribed time, determined by the instructor, we are given an exam which indicates where we are strong as well as where we need more disciplined study. God's classroom is similar, but the process of examination can be quite different.

The disciples had been instructed and experienced wonderful success in ministry, but Jesus knew they had missed some important truths. Could they apply what they were preaching into their own life? To make His point clear, Jesus gave the disciples an exam when over 5000 people were gathered; "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5). Would they trust and apply their instruction when life presented a real challenge? After Jesus miraculously fed the gathered crowd, He gave the next portion of the exam.

John 6:16-21

"Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going."

The gathered crowd wanted to "take Him by force to make Him king" (John 6:15) so Jesus "made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side" (Matthew 14:22). Jesus desired to protect His disciples from all the talk of making Him king since they were often tempted by thoughts of power and rule. But He also desired to continue the teaching process.

Though these were experienced fishermen, they could not predict the great storm which was soon upon them - but Jesus knew and He saw their struggle; "He saw them straining at rowing" (Mark 6:48). Why were the disciples sent into the storm? It wasn't the result of disobedience, like Jonah when he ran for Tarshish; "But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea" (Jonah 1:4). The disciples were being obedient and yet in a bad storm because their Teacher loved them enough to continue their instruction. In the middle of the storm, and in the midst of their struggles, Jesus showed Himself in a miraculous way and simply said, "It is I; do not be afraid." The Good Shepherd then lovingly guided His flock to "where they were going."

I truly wish we could learn all we need by just reading the book - but we can't! To know Christ means to know Him through our experience, to know how His truths are applied in daily situations. His Word says He can be trusted, but we can't really know this truth until we've been put to the test through our trials. God loves us so much that He uses all possible means to continue our education. Let's trust His method of instruction and learn to rejoice as we pass through our examination of storms.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:22-26 - Lesson #64

The great multitude came to see a miracle worker..and they certainly were not disappointed. With their very own eyes, the people saw Jesus take "five barley loaves and two small fish" (John 6:9) and miraculously feed over five thousand people. This sign was so clear that the people believed Jesus was "the Prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14) and they planned to "take Him by force and make Him King" (John 6:15). But Jesus sent His disciples to the other side of the sea and went by Himself to the mountain.

John 6:22-26

"On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone - however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks - when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, 'Rabbi, when did You come here?' Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.'"

The people were impressed with what they saw in Jesus. They had seen Him send the disciples away and go by Himself to the mountain. They had tried to keep watch as best they could through the storm of the night, but when morning came He was gone. Assuming He had gone to join His disciples, the king seekers got into boats and sailed to Capernaum. Once they found Him, the people asked, "when did You come here?" Their question also implied, "and how did You get here?"

Jesus didn't say anything about walking on the water or calming the storm but went straight to their heart and the issue of eternal life. Notice this is the same method Jesus used in talking with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. The truth which had to be addressed was that the people came to Jesus with a completely wrong motivation. They came, not because of the sign, but because the result of the sign satisfied a physical need. The purpose of the signs which Jesus performed was always to point to Who He was - the Son of God. The people didn't come seeking to worship, or even to better understand, they came to get and to take. Their idea of a king was a one-way giver of freedom from Roman oppression.

We will see this same message many more times, but let's begin this section with an honest evaluation of our own heart. If we are seeking, ask why. Are we being motivated by what we can get or by what we can give to the One who calls? Are we running to the thrill of miracles or drawing near to the One to whom all miracles point. And if we have already come to Jesus, what is motivating us to continue the fight? Is He truly on the throne or are we still trying to shape Him into a god of our liking. Let's always seek - and always continue - because He is the Son of God, the true King of Kings, and the Giver of life to those who believe.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:27-29 - Lesson #65

After witnessing Jesus miraculously feed over five thousand, many followed Him across the sea to Capernaum. But when they came to Jesus, He accused them of coming simply to fill their stomachs; "you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled" (John 6:26). The people had seen the miracle but had completely missed the meaning. The sign pointed to Jesus but all they could see was a free lunch. Jesus then continued to lead them in truth.

John 6:27-29

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.' Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'"

Those who approached Jesus that day had an initial focus of physical satisfaction. They had a need and Jesus had proved He could deliver. But Jesus saw their motivation and revealed the folly of their priorities by contrasting food which perishes with food which endures. This is the same message delivered by Isaiah 700 years earlier; "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good" (Isaiah 55:2). The food which endures is that which leads to everlasting life. But notice that Jesus applied the word "labor" to both types of food.

Everlasting life is a true gift from God, "not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). And yet Jesus spoke here of labor. Elsewhere He said; "Strive to enter through the narrow gate" (Luke 13:24), and also; "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Yes, salvation is a free gift, but our call is always to labor, strive, and seek Him with all your heart. The result is a gift from the One who has the seal of God - the One who is authenticated, authorized and appointed by God.

The message of a gift was lost on those who were gathered. Though they appeared to understand something about everlasting life, their questions were immediately directed toward self-effort; "What shall we do?" They were looking for a list - a formula - which would result in God's approval. They were wanting to be told of the "works" which were pleasing to God, but Jesus said there was only one "work." He identified the one and only work of God as belief - absolutely necessary, completely sufficient.

We must continually prioritize our labor. What is it we really value? Does our time and effort (and worry) tend to be spent on that which will perish? Jesus told the woman at the well that if she would only ask, then "He would have given you living water" (John 4:10). And to this group in Capernaum He said to labor for food which endures, the food which is Himself, the "bread of life" (6:35). All else will soon perish! So let's begin His work today. Let's labor for the precious gift of everlasting life by believing in the One sent by God.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:30-34 - Lesson #66

After feeding the 5000, Jesus exhorted those who followed Him to labor "for the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27). He then explained the work of God was to "believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:29). This was a bold statement, and the Jews who were gathered understood the meaning. Jesus was claiming to be the greater Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), God's anointed One (Psalm 2), the Christ. But for this claim to be believed, they would require proof.

John 6:30-34

"Therefore they said to Him, 'What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.'"

It seems odd that those who just the day before had witnessed Jesus multiply the bread and fish would now ask for a sign. The miracle had certainly convinced some; "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14). But those who followed Jesus across the sea saw Him only as someone who could help their physical needs. The miracle with the bread and fish was good, but surely the Christ would perform a miracle greater than Moses. Jesus had "only" multiplied earthly bread, Moses brought down bread from heaven - referring to the manna supplied to the nation of Israel during the wandering years in the desert.

Once again Jesus took the opportunity to teach about true life. NO message is more important. The best this world can offer is nothing without the true life of which Jesus spoke; "what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Jesus reminded them it wasn't Moses who supplied the bread in the desert. The bread was a gift from God, but even this gift of physical bread given to a nation year after year cannot compare to the gift of true bread sent from God to give life to the world.

Jesus specifically said the bread of God is "He who comes down from heaven." But again, His message was misunderstood. Perhaps with a slight hunger pain in their stomach, the gathered Jews said "give us this bread." Their response was nearly identical to that of the woman at the well; "give me this water" (John 4:15). Both allowed physical concerns to block Spiritual truth. Both sought only the lesser blessing.

Let's seek His best! "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign" (Matthew 12:39). These are strong words, but true faith never flows from a process of "see and believe," rather, it is based on the promise that as we believe we will see; "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). The world can never produce true life. When we believe, we will finally see the better way of truth which was fully revealed when the bread of life came down from Heaven.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:35-40 - Lesson #67

When Jesus spoke of "the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27), those who were gathered requested a sign similar to the manna given to the Israelites in the desert. But with His characteristic focus on the eternal, Jesus turned the conversation to the true bread and the Giver of true life.

John 6:35-40

"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.'"

Jesus previously stated the meaning of true bread; "the bread of God is He who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33). But when His listeners did not understand, Jesus spoke direct with the first of His "I am" statements. Jesus also declared, "I am the light" (8:12), "the door" (10:7), "the good shepherd" (10:11), "the resurrection and life" (11:25), "the way, the truth and the life" (14:6), and "the true vine" (15:1). Each of these declarations fit into the overall message that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life" (John 20:31).

He then further explained the bread of life by saying those who come and believe will NEVER hunger or thirst. Jesus said that through belief we will be Spiritually satisfied for all eternity. The end of this passage makes this even more clear by using the words "see," "believe," and "have everlasting life." The state of never hungering or thirsting IS eternal life - which begins the moment we believe. We may need to learn how to walk closer and trust more, but He is ALL we ever need.

The necessity of belief is further stressed by revealing the lack of belief in those who were listening. This is important because without attempting to identify belief, the need for belief loses its meaning. From this passage we can see that listening to Jesus, or following Him across the sea, or even believing His miracles does not constitute belief. True belief recognizes who He is and His ability to fill our Spiritual void.

Jesus then says that those who the Father gives will come, and those who come will remain. No one chooses God without God first choosing and making a way for us to come - Jesus was "sent" by the Father. And when we come, He welcomes us in and never lets us go; "I should lose nothing." His motivation is that He has come to do the will of the Father and "raise him up at the last day." He is offering to fill every hunger and thirst. Let's be fully satisfied in Him, knowing that as we come and believe, He will never let us go.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:41-47 - Lesson #68

When the people asked for a sign so they could believe, Jesus said He was the bread of life. The miracle of His life was much greater than that of Moses supplying manna in the desert because Jesus could fully satisfy; "He who comes to Me shall never hunger" (John 6:35). But not everyone could accept these words.

John 6:41-47

"The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus therefore answered and said to them, 'Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.'"

"The Jews" is a phrase usually reserved for those who opposed Jesus and could suggest the setting moved from the outside to the smaller confines of the synagogue (v.59). The Jews didn't quote the exact words of Jesus, but it's clear they understood His meaning. Jesus claimed to be from Heaven just as John said; "He who comes from above is above all" (John 3:31). But how could this be true since they knew His family?

With their focus on the natural, the supernatural was not possible. They were talking with the One sent to give life; but rather than hear His words, they were looking for reasons NOT to believe. Jesus mentioned this type of reaction in the parable of the great feast; "'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses" (Luke 14:17-18).

The Jews believed they could enter God's kingdom by their own effort, that they could be good enough - righteous enough - to merit God's favor. But Jesus said no one is good enough. Entrance to the kingdom must be by the grace of God, they must be drawn and made righteous. But HOW are they drawn?

Jesus quoted from Isaiah 54:13 to identify Himself as the King sent to restore the kingdom and to show they were in a time when all would be taught by God. Notice how Jesus then connects the drawing of God to hearing and learning. The act of drawing is carried out through hearing and learning from the Father. But only the Son has seen the Father, so all teaching which draws is done by God through the Son; "He has declared Him" (John 1:18). Jesus has the words of God which are used to draw us to Himself, the Words of God now recorded in the Bible. Jesus then concluded by again tying everlasting life directly to belief in Him. God is the initiator, supplier, and sustainer of true life; and He has entrusted ALL to His one and only Son. Let's hear and learn from God through His Word. Let's be drawn to the Son and believe.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:48-52 - Lesson #69

There can be no greater discussion than one which involves eternal life. When Jesus was discussing eternal life with the Jews, He approached the topic from multiple directions so they would not only know of the need to believe, but also the importance of belief and why they must believe in Him.

John 6:48-52

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.' The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?'"

Jesus already said He was the bread of life; "He who comes to Me shall never hunger" (v 35). But the Jews were looking for a prophet like Moses who would lead them out from under Gentile rule. With this view, they would always think of bread from heaven in terms of the manna given to the Israelites in the desert, the manna which the Psalmist referred to as "Angels' food" (Psalm 78:25). So Jesus continued the discussion by reminding the Jews that all the Israelites who ate the manna eventually died. But He was the bread from Heaven who would give true life - eternal life - to anyone who would eat.

By using the analogy of eating Jesus spoke of a very personal action. We can take food to someone day after day, but if they do not eat they will not be nourished. And we understand that when we eat, food is digested and distributed to cells in every portion of our body. Taking bread in our hands does not nourish; neither does reading or talking about bread, singing songs or bowing down to bread; we can study bread, smell bread, recite bread and hold bread "high and lifted up," but until we eat the bread and move it into every part of our innermost being, we remain hungry...and dead.

Notice how Jesus begins to shift the focus of the discussion: He IS the living bread, but He begins to talk about the bread He "shall give." This is future tense and begins to point toward the cross where He "shall give" His flesh for the "life of the world." John began his gospel with "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), and here Jesus spoke about this same flesh being given for the life of the world, for those who would eat. This is also a beautiful reference to the way Jesus was first announced: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb who would give His life to take away the sin of all who would personally receive Him, consume Him, believe in Him.

But there were those, as there are today, who say How can this be? They will quarrel, debate, deny, and run...and all the while remain hungry. There is no discussion more important, or meal more necessary, than the bread offered at the cross. Let's sit at His table today. Let's receive Him in by faith, and eat!

Have A Great Day!

John 6:53-59 - Lesson #70

Jesus had identified Himself as the bread of life and said; "If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (6:51). The Jews began to argue about what Jesus could mean by this bold statement. Other religions of the day talked about eating of the gods when they ate a portion of the sacrifice, but "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (v. 52). Rather than ease their concerns, Jesus pressed His analogy to its full conclusion.

John 6:53-59

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.' These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum."

Talking about drinking blood did nothing to calm the tension. The Jews were strictly forbidden from eating anything with blood; "I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people" (Leviticus 17:10). But when God warned about the blood, He also explained why: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood... it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). God had established a sacrificial system which pointed to Jesus as the final sacrifice and the source of true life.

Jesus didn't say He was the way to a better life, but that without Him there was NO life. We may be able to walk and breath, raise a family and go to work, but if we do not eat His flesh and drink His blood we have no life. Earlier Jesus said; "he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (v. 47). By relating eating and drinking to eternal life, Jesus was explaining "believes in Me." Belief is more than an intellectual understanding; it is a consumption, a filling, a sustaining, a belief that Jesus is ALL - the ONLY source of life.

Jesus further defined true life as abiding in Him. Jesus would speak similar words to His disciples on the night before He was crucified; "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). The reason we can do nothing apart from abiding in Christ is that we are dead! We may think we are living and accomplishing something great - but without Christ we are dead.

This synagogue discussion has been increasingly forceful and left no room for misunderstanding. They may not yet have understood about His sacrifice on the cross, but His claim of being sent by God as the Greater Moses who would restore true life to the nation was clear. Jesus claimed to be the only source of life - eternal life for all who believe. This life can never be achieved by looking or working for worldly manna, it can only be received as a gift through abiding in Christ. He is our life! Let's eat and drink, enter in, and live.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:60-66 - Lesson #71

Jesus continued to press the point that He was the only source of life; "whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). Many had followed Jesus and listened to His teaching. After He fed the 5000, many believed He was the promised King sent to deliver Israel from Roman oppression. They listened to His claim to be greater than Moses and were patient with His numerous references to being bread from Heaven; but this talk about needing to eat His flesh and drink His blood had gone too far!

John 6:60-66

"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?' When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, 'Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.' From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

The word disciple is used for those who made an initial commitment to follow Jesus and listen to His teaching, but it does not imply a saving faith. Jesus later defined a true disciple; "If you abide in My word, you are My disciple indeed" (John 8:31). A true disciple is one who continues to follow the words of Jesus - even when His words are hard. Jesus spoke of a deep love and desire for Him and His word much the same as the prophet Jeremiah; "Your words were found, and I ate them" (Jeremiah 15:16). The words which were hard to accept were those that told them to let go and trust something outside of their own effort.

Jesus proclaimed a message of eternal life given to those who truly believe. This was in direct opposition to the Jewish system which had turned the Law into a self-righteous method of working their way to God. Jesus said this method - done in the flesh - counts for nothing. We cannot work our way one step closer to eternal life. We can't do it on our own! It is the Spirit given by God who draws us near and gives life.

All we can ever accomplish in our flesh is an existence of flesh which will perish; but when we place our trust in Jesus, the Spirit gives birth to eternal life (John 3:6). And notice how Jesus immediately says His words are spirit and life. His word teaches us all truth leading to life. What an awesome gift!

But there will always be those who think His word is too hard and will "walk with Him no more." If God had not provided a way through faith in Jesus, we NEVER would have worked our way to His side. But God has granted that we should have the words of Christ which are used by the Spirit to draw us near and give us true life. Let's consume His word and determine to walk with Him ALL of our days.

Have A Great Day!

John 6:67-71 - Lesson #72

What a difference a day can make! After witnessing Jesus feed over 5000 people, many wanted to "take Him by force and make Him king" (John 6:15). But the next day when Jesus talked about being the bread from heaven and said, "He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58), many who had followed Him across the sea and listened to Him speak "went back and walked with Him no more" (John 6:66). An honest evaluation of Jesus will either lead to a complete embrace or a total rejection.

John 6:67-71

"Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."

Jesus had watched many who evaluated the cost of following Him decide to walk away. And now He turned to the select group of twelve and asked for a decision - a difficult decision of commitment: Knowing what you now know, do you still want to follow? Of course, Jesus knew the answer! But He often brings us to a place of decision for the wonderful benefit of strengthening our faith.

Peter, as he so often did, spoke up first - and as usual he spoke his mind, "To whom shall we go?" Peter had heard the words of eternal life and concluded Jesus was the One he would follow. Peter's words reflected what the Psalmist wrote: "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You" (Psalm 73:25). Peter did not yet understand the full gospel message, but he had heard the words of Jesus and believed they were the words of truth.

Peter would continue to wrestle with how the words of Jesus should impact his life, and as more of the gospel message was revealed he would continue to grow in his belief. In fact, even after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the tomb Peter was continuing to learn and grow; "For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9). Peter's journey of faith would last a lifetime, but it had its beginning in the simple belief of Jesus' word.

No one suspected Judas to be a betrayer. He was a member of the select group and acted like a true disciple - he walked and talked like a disciple - but it was clear he never believed the words of Jesus. It can be a dangerous mistake to assume that those who sit every week in church believe or even understand the gospel message. We must continually encourage and challenge one another to believe and apply all His revealed truth. Let's never settle for just the appearance of belief. Rather, let's believe the truth of His word and continue to study and grow in our belief until we know the eternal truth His word reveals.

Have A Great Day!