

## Bread of Life Discourse – Part 2

### John 6:41-71

The Bread of Life discourse will bring about a great change in people's beliefs about Jesus. His popularity will drop off considerably in Galilee. After the Bread of Life Discourse, we read, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." John 6:66

In this sermon, Jesus puts a very defined line in the sand. The crowds are asking for more mass feedings, gathering for healings by mere touch of His garments, and ready to make Him an earthly king. Instead, they are about to be taught by Jesus about His true purpose. Then they must make a decision concerning Him!

**Part 1:** Jesus had given the message that He was the Bread of Life and had come down from heaven. He had life in Himself and would impart it to those who believe in Him. The incarnation was highlighted.

**Part 2:** In verse 59, we find a shift in location from the open air to the confined area of the synagogue. Jesus continues to speak of being the True Bread that could give life to the world, declaring His sacrificial and atoning death! Now, the religious leaders are actively debating with Jesus.

#### I. Murmuring Crowd v. 41-51

##### → Crowds' Question

"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. <sup>42</sup>And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" John 6:41-42

"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread of life which came down from heaven." – The word "murmured" is a strong Greek word meaning a constant, continuing buzz of grumbling. This commotion was caused by Jesus claiming deity—He had come down from heaven! Five times, Jesus will say He was from heaven! (v. 38, 41, 42, 51, 58) If these listeners could deny the messenger, it would keep them from being responsible for the message!

"How is it?"—Remember, Mary had moved with Jesus to Capernaum. The people of the area knew Jesus' family. The Greek word about Joseph is weak, but the gist of the statement is that they thought they knew of his family lineage. Someone had to be willing to investigate the truth of His life because the virgin birth was proof of His coming "down from heaven."

##### → Jesus' Answer: According to Greek, Jesus calls the buzz of the complaining crowd to order and continues to give them truth!

"Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. <sup>46</sup> Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John 6:43-47

“No man can come to me except **the Father which hath sent me draw him:**” – This statement is the negative presentation of verse 37, “All that the **Father giveth me** shall come to me;” As I was studying this passage, one of my commentaries spoke of God “drawing” man as “a lover wooing.” Gentle and sweetly calling man to Him. The Father loves the world. He does not force anyone to come to Him. This wooing is a wonderful gift, the gift of God! God plays a major role in salvation. He “draws” and “giveth.” It is His strong power that can make the unwilling willing!

“they shall be all taught of God” – How does God draw? How is someone taught of God? Maybe I should ask it this way: What is the textbook about God? The Bible, the Word of God! Jesus quotes Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:34, and Micah 4:2, but the writer of Hebrews will take these thoughts and highlight the meaning as Jesus does here in Hebrews 8:6-12. Don’t miss verse 45; one must hear and learn! Again, this emphasizes application, taking in, and accepting! Warren Wiersbe said, “The sinner hears, learns, and comes as the Father draws him. A mystery? Yes! A blessed reality? Yes!” p. 250 2 Cor. 4:6; Romans 10:17 God teaches “**all**” that will learn and come.

“he hath seen the Father.” – Here, Jesus raises the bar on His statement concerning coming down from heaven. Now He tells the crowd that He not only came down from heaven but also has seen the Father! He was giving them the words and plans of God because He was from heaven! John 1:18

“He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” – Jesus plainly repeats these truths! Let’s look at the life Jesus gives! 1) “Eternal life” – This is God’s type of life. It has more to do with quality than duration. It’s not created life that dies, but a part of God’s life. v. 54, 68 2) “Heavenly life” – This tells of the originator of this life, from the God of heaven! v. 32 3) “Satisfying life” – This tells that one will never spiritually hunger or thirst again. v. 35 4) Resurrection life – This life will not be terminated by death! v. 39, 40, 58 5) Life found in Christ – v. 48, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57 This tells us that our very spiritual life is found and generated by Christ. I John 5:12

**“I am that bread of life.<sup>49</sup> Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.<sup>50</sup> This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:48-51**

“I am the bread of life.”/“Your fathers did eat manna.....and are dead.”/“this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” – “I am the bread of life.” becomes the foundational statement for the rest of Jesus’ teaching that day. The words “eat” and “feed” dominate the passage. Nine of the following ten verses will hold one of these two words! Jesus is offering better bread than Moses! Manna was dead bread, but Jesus is Living Bread because He was deity, the Son of God, that came down from heaven! In Greek, the phrase, “if any man eat of this bread,” found in verses 50, 51, and 53 are singular – onetime – only once! When we receive Christ; put our faith in Him; trust Him as Savior; however you want to say it, we do it **one time!** Jesus firmly gives two truths, “I give my flesh” and it is for the “world.”

“he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” – Here we are seeing a plain revelation of Jesus’ sacrificial death! He is giving His flesh “for the life of the

world.” The metaphor “flesh” will be used seven times throughout the rest of the Bread of Life Discourse. When explaining salvation, Christ had used the terms “believe” or “come” to Him. Now He continues by saying that if one accepts Him into their being like eating “of this bread,” they will have everlasting life. Jesus’ coming to earth as Savior “of the world” is a key doctrine in John. In his writing, this was a wonderful theme. John 1:29, 4:42; 6:51; 8:12; 1 John 2:2; 4:14 Shepard, in his book on the life of Christ said this about these verses, “The central fact of the atoning death for the spiritual life of mankind is here set forth; but they did not understand it” p. 274

Let’s take a moment and look at the imagery Jesus will use when giving the Last Supper. Matthew 26:26-28 Again, the disciples will not understand it all that night, but Jesus was certainly not feeding Himself to them. But in just a few hours, He will sacrifice Himself for the world! The understanding will come for the disciples. 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7

## II. Striving Crowd v. 52-59

→ **Crowds’ Argument** Jesus often will use shocking words and phrases. “cut off your right hand” “pluck out your eye,” “millstone were hanged about his neck.” And now here is another one – “eat flesh” and “drink blood.”

**“The Jews therefore strove (Gk - fought; quarreled; argued sharply; battled with words ) among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? John 6:52** I want first to say that when we see the word “Jews” set aside in the Gospels, it is more specific to Religious Leaders, not just the people of the Jewish nation. Secondly, every once in a while, I laugh out loud when reading my Bible commentaries or study books. That was the case when DA Carson had this to say about John 6:52, “Any dullard could see that Jesus was not speaking literally. No one would suppose Jesus was seriously advocating cannibalism and offering himself as the first meal.” p. 295 I really have to agree with Carson here; the listeners of Jesus that day weren’t thinking about eating flesh but debating the meaning of what Christ was teaching. And the argument got heated! But this was not an unusual reaction when hearing Jesus! And still is not! John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19

Jesus was not speaking physically, and I believe the Religious Leaders knew that. Just as Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Nicodemus absolutely knew the answer to his pointed question to Jesus – no, you can’t be reborn through your mother! He was actually just making a point that he did not understand Jesus’ use of being “born again.” Here, Jesus will explain the eating of “his flesh” just as he described being “born again,” but both are spiritual thoughts and both groups needed to think spiritually.

→ **Jesus’ Answer**

**“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. <sup>58</sup> This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. <sup>59</sup> These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.” John 6:53-59**

Let's talk about "eating flesh" and "drinking blood." Jesus is using these big attention-getters for the Jews. In Lev. 7, the Jews are forbidden to drink blood. But don't forget that the Jews often dealt with a great amount of blood in their temple sacrifices. In the Bible, blood was always a picture of sacrifice and a violent death. That is exactly what Jesus gave that day in the synagogue.

"ye have no life in you" vs. "hath eternal life" – In verse 53, the difference between "no life" and "hath eternal life" is how one reacts to the phrase, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood." This thought is very much like verse 40 (read). Then Jesus restates it again but adds the component of eternal life, the raising of the body on the last day!

"dwelleth in me, and I in him." – Any common Jew knew that the food was a metaphor used to describe the Scriptures. Jeremiah 15:16 says that one should enjoy and seek to feed on the Scripture. Again, this was not new or entirely foreign for these listeners. Jesus will beautifully explain His indwelling work in His upper room discourse. John 14:20; 15:4-5; 17:21-23 John the Apostle will further write the same thoughts in 1 John 3:24; 4:15-16. When we come to Christ and believe on His death for us on calvary, He dwells in us! What a wonderful thought!

"living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." – Jesus is making these points by speaking of eating. **The living fatOur life is based on the "Living Father."** Warren Weirsbe said this, "Just as you take food and drink within your body and it becomes a part of you, so you must receive Me within your innermost being so that I give you life." p. 251 JVMcGee said, "Salvation is by accepting and receiving Him in a most intimate way." p. 407

Synagogue of Capernaum – Synagogues were places of teaching and prayer. Often traveling Rabbis would be invited in to teach. This teaching could be examined or debated, and that is what we are reading here in the Bread of Life Discourse.

### III. Departing Crowd – v. 60-71

#### ➔ Crowds' Concern

**"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying (Lit. - harsh, difficult); who can hear (Lit. – understand; apply) it?" John 6:60** Please notice that this verse is not talking about the crowd from the Feeding of the 5000; it's not talking about the "Jews," Religious Leaders; the group spoken about here are Jesus' followers. But not in the true sense of the word! They followed Jesus, heard Him speak, and observed the amazing miracles but were not truly committed to Him. They had superficial faith with an undecided commitment. John 2:23-24 speaks of this kind of "believer." Jesus had drawn the line: He would not be their king to overthrow Rome, He was not giving away free meal tickets, and He would not be their flashy healer. But instead, He was the Savior of the world, ready to give eternal life and raise them up "at the last day" If they just simply came to Him, believe, and accept Him as the Living Bread come down from heaven! All of this was not what they expected, not what they wanted, and certainly not what they believed!

→ **Jesus' Answer** One more appeal. One more clear statement to these “disciples.”

“When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured (Lit. - grumbled) at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? <sup>62</sup> What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:61-63

“Doth this offend you? – Jesus is asking, “Are these statements a problem and an offense? Is this going to make you stumble and leave? Is this too much for you?” And then Jesus lays it on even thicker!

“What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?” – Here is another hard saying. All these statements are faith testers, one after another! Living bread; down from heaven; seen the Father; I will give for the life of the world; eating flesh; drinking blood; and many more very shocking, straightforward statements, and now, “What if you see me ascend back to my Father?”

“It is the spirit that quickeneth;” – It is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, that can make the soul from dead in sins to alive! Jesus said the same while speaking with Nicodemus (John 3:5-6) and the woman at the well (John 4:23-24).

“the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” – Our salvation begins and ends with God! Again, Jesus is giving these disciples the key to understanding His words; His words are spiritual, and they are life-giving. What kind? Everlasting life!

→ **Two Reactions**

-GO-

“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. <sup>65</sup> And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. <sup>66</sup> From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” John 6:64-66 Jesus knew from the beginning who would believe and who would betray. And He still does. The believers are those the Father gives Him – He repeats it again for the 4<sup>th</sup> time! vs. 37. 44, 45 And then came the decision – “many” of His disciples – those who had been following along, walked no more with Jesus – They looked back and took their hand off the plow. Luke 9:62; John 8:31

Really, His message was not hard to understand. He came from God, they were to come, believe on Him, accept Him as their Messiah, and leave everything else behind. The reward would be everlasting life. It wasn't too hard to understand, but hard to accept after understanding it! We find “many” could not continue with Christ and His message any longer. DA Carson said it this way, “What they wanted, He would not give; what He offered, they would not receive.” p. 164 They went back to their old lives; old religion; and old hopelessness. I wonder, if so many years later, when John the Apostle wrote these words, if he was thinking of this time, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” 1 John 2:19

**-STAY-**

Please notice that Jesus said nothing to all those who had been following Him and now turned away. He didn't call them back, try to persuade, debate, or bargain with them. He just let them go. But He did speak to those who stayed.

**“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? <sup>68</sup> Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” John 6:67-69**

“Will ye also go away?” - In Greek, Jesus' question is actually phrased expecting a no answer. “You don't want to go away, too, do you?” “You don't want to leave too, do you?” “You, too, desire to leave me?” “Do you want to leave also, do you?” Though Jesus knew their hearts, He made them face Him with an answer. Another step in their faith-growing experience.

“Lord, to whom shall we go?” – Peter answered for all the disciples, “there is no one else but you who has the words of eternal life!” Friends, Jesus is the only One: the Way, the Truth, and the Life! No man can come to the Father but by Jesus!

“thou hast the words of eternal life” – Peter was listening! In all the repetition of this discourse, Peter understood that Jesus brings the knowledge of eternal life, which is found in belief in Him! Let's listen to the words of a Holy Spirit-filled John the Baptist. John 3:34-36

“we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” – WOW, what a wonderful decisive answer! In reality, the disciples didn't understand the upcoming cross and sacrificial death of Jesus, but they did believe He was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that He had the words of eternal life. How about us? Do we believe in Christ and His death for us, and are we sure and committed to Him?

Peter had spoken for all in ignorance. Jesus had to correct him and revealed that one of them was of the “devil.” In the Bread of Life Discourse, Jesus had hinted at the atoning death, and now He says that there was a betrayer among the twelve.

**“Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? <sup>71</sup> He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.” John 6:70-71**

“Judas Iscariot the son of Simon” – Judas stayed though he was not a believer, a true follower, or a disciple. Why did he stay? Personal gain, status, approval and peer pressure, contacts? His heart was one of the departing crowds, but Judas stayed! He should have sought Jesus for understanding and asked for believing faith. He should have fallen to his knees like Peter had and cried out, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Or like the father with the possessed child cried, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” But instead, he just quietly stayed. And eventually, Judas will sink to the lowest of lows by betraying the Living Bread. We must accept the truth that unbelievers are often among believers. It was true even with Jesus' twelve disciples.

2 Cor. 11:13-15

## Believers Application:

1. “The discourse of Jesus was not understood by His hearers. It was intended to serve as a means to sift out the superficial believers and test the faith of those who were sincere, clarifying their understanding as to the true character of the Messianic Kingdom.” The Christ of the Gospels by JW Shepard p. 276 How about us? Will we learn to understand this discourse and follow faithfully or walk away? [Let’s review the many doctrines taught in Jesus's message.](#) He made these things known to the crowds who had followed him from the green grassy meadow where the 5000 men had been fed, to the Religious Leaders of the synagogue, to His many uncommitted followers, to the twelve chosen disciples, and to Judas.

- 1) His Deity – He told His listeners that He came down from the heaven and that He had even seen God!
- 2) Eternal life – Not duration but the life generated and founded in God. It is satisfying and never terminated.
- 3) Jesus performed Father’s plan – God approved of Jesus’ work and ministry.
- 4) Belief in Jesus for eternal life – Jesus used words and phrases like come, believe,
- 5) God gives or draws those to believe in Christ – God does the mighty work of salvation.
- 6) None that comes will be lost – All believers are secure in Christ.
- 7) Christ will raise the believer’s body.
- 8) Hearing and learning of God brings one to Christ.
- 9) Jesus gave His life for the world – it wasn’t just for the Jew, but the world!
- 10) Christ dwells in the believer and the believer in Him.

This is the Gospel, the Good News, the meaning of Born Again, Living Water, and Bread of Life. Are you a believer and committed to giving these truths to others!

## 2. Why did the people walk away from Jesus that day?

- 1) They actually wanted food, a political leader, and miracles. v. 26 They wanted God to serve them, not to serve God.
- 2) They refused to turn away from their religious beliefs. Pride and fear kept them trapped in the darkness of their old belief system. v. 28-35, 41, 52-53, 60
- 3) They refused to submit to belief in Jesus as the Son of God for eternal life. The metaphor of Jesus’ flesh and blood was not completely understood, and they would not stay in faith with Him. This was the tipping point to leave. All the miracles, wisdom, and teachings of Jesus were not enough for most. Only a small percentage stayed compared to the multitudes just a day before! Please realize Jesus was not left

with eleven followers and a betrayer after this day. (Acts 1:15, 21, 26) There were many more, but the massive crowds started to lessen.

3. Why do people walk away from Jesus today? The reason people walked away from Jesus that day is the same reason they walk away today. The outcomes are still the same. Some reject and go on in their careless attitude toward God, while others become very vicious in their hatred toward God and His people. As believers, we must understand this phenomenon.

- 1) It's still the same. In the 21st century, people still desire a God who serves them with happiness, health, and wealth! A call to deny themselves, take up their cross, follow, and serve Jesus is not at all appealing!
- 2) The pull of their religious traditions is very strong for many. Whether one follows Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, or even any mainstream denomination, when faith is not solely in Jesus as their Savior from sin, they are following a religion, not Jesus! Pride and fear keep them trapped in the darkness of their old belief system. Acts 4:12
- 3) People refuse to submit and believe in Jesus. Like Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount, the way is narrow, and few find it. But remember, it is the work of our all-powerful God to draw and give to Christ. He has a strong arm to save! Keep praying and giving the truth! 1 Cor. 1: 23-31