

John 6:45-51 "This Bread is My Flesh"

JOH 6:45-51 "It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

As we continue to move through this most profound part of God's word, as Jesus explains the Father's plan and execution of that plan, our Lord resumes the language of comparison between two things which are different; in this case, the person of Jesus and bread.

And the reason Jesus does this is to drive home the point of how He is the One who satisfies eternally, just as bread satisfies temporarily. And what we see here is that Jesus goes back and forth between these comparisons to show how He is the One true bread sent from the Father.

Again, this is not to be taken in a literalistic way as if to say that Jesus was a special dough ball cooked up in that big oven in the sky and sent down to this earth for man to eat. But rather, like spiritual bread which can only satisfy through faith.

Last week we ended with verse 44 which states that all who come to the Father are drawn by Him for the express purpose of being raised up at the last day. This is a reference to the bodily resurrection of all believers who will receive their glorified physical bodies to be with the Lord forever.

But as we move to our text this morning we see how the Lord is still the one responsible for accomplishing this salvation as He moves people, by His Spirit, to see their need as He teaches them who He is and their responsibility to come to Him.

JOH 6:45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me."

The first thing Jesus points out here is a reference back to His written word; "it is written in the prophets." Our Lord spent His entire earthly ministry teaching the word of God to the people, with the express purpose of revealing Himself.

From Genesis chapter one to Revelation chapter twenty two, it is all about Jesus and His plan to redeem a people for the Father. Now obviously, many other things are written between the covers of the bible, but the main theme is always Jesus Christ.

And the reason for this is because of His desire to have fellowship with men whom He created to be with Him forever. And so, it shouldn't surprise us when every part of God's word ultimately points to this relationship and how God will accomplish it.

This is why Jesus speaks the way He does, after His resurrection, when talking to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, who were kept by God from recognizing Him. And when Jesus comes up beside them He asks them, "what are you talking about?"

And they answered Him in LUK 24:19-27 [We're talking] about Jesus of Nazareth, He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

The entire word of God is about the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came on a mission to bring us back to the Father from whom we were separated because of sin. Jesus paid for our sin by His death, and rose from the dead for our salvation. And we will live happily ever after if we've placed our faith in Him.

And so, when Jesus tells these Jews in our text that it is written, He is pointing them back to the God they claim to know who has revealed His will to Israel as it pertains to their salvation.

Unfortunately, though they have ears, they don't hear. And yet, they are commanded to listen.

**JOH 6:45** It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me."

The reference is essentially to two prophets; Isaiah and Jeremiah.

**ISA 54:13** All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

**Jeremiah 31:34** <sup>34</sup> "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

This by the way, helps to define what our Lord means by drawing men unto Himself in verse 44 of our text. In other words, part of the process of this drawing must include teaching people who He is and what He requires of mankind in the way of faith in His Messiah. This is what the word of God does.

But the drawing must go beyond that to include a spiritual awakening, as we saw last week, since mere information about God's salvation does not give life. Unless we hear with spiritual ears and respond in faith, all of this talk about salvation will only be seen as foolishness.

**1CO 2:14** The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

This is why I've always said that salvation is not accomplished by simply giving information to people as if it were a mere intellectual pursuit. Salvation is not like one of those infomercials we see on TV where information is given at an irresistible price of only \$19.99.

If it were only an intellectual pursuit then the smartest people in this world would be flocking to Christ. And yet what are we told?

**ROM 1:22-23** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

1CO 1:20-21.30-31 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.

The problem with mankind is not that they have not or cannot be informed about God's salvation. The problem with mankind is they don't want God's solution. It's a heart problem. But God is in the business of giving us new hearts which desire to know God and His ways.

And so, what must happen is that God must give us spiritual eyes as His Spirit opens them to the truth and enables us to reach out to the One who gives life, who is Christ.

And this is what Jesus is pointing out in verse 45 of our text as He reminds these Jews one more time that, "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me." **John 6:45**

And who are the one's who hear and learn from the Father, so as to come to Christ?

We saw it last week.

**John 6:44** <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

Those who are chosen by the Father in His son, before the foundation of the world, are those whom the Father will draw to Himself through His Son. These are the one's who are given the ability by the Holy Spirit to learn from the Father so as to then be able to come to the Son in faith.

Our Lord Jesus then goes on to say that despite how the Jews think they have seen the Father, as is demonstrated through God choosing Israel to be the means by which the Messiah will come into the world, they have seen nothing.

They have closed their eyes to the truth. And yet, one who stands before them has words of life because He has come from the One who gives life.

JOH 6:46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.

Man, in his natural sinful state, cannot claim to have eyes to see that which is spiritual. Only God can make that claim. Early on in this study Jesus pointed this out to the Jews.

JOH 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

In that passage Jesus makes it clear that no man has the ability to see God who is Spirit. In fact, if God were to reveal Himself to man in all His glory a man would be consumed. This is what the Lord conveyed to Moses.

EXO 33:20 But, he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

But the one who is from God can see the Father because unlike sinful man, the one who has seen the Father is Himself God. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

What Jesus has just told these Jews is that He lives with the Father in heaven. He and the Father see each other, they commune with each other, they plan among each other what they will do for mankind as the Son comes into this world to reveal the Father and His will.

But to reveal the Father's will is not the only thing Jesus means when He says He has made the Father known. By this statement He also means that everything the Father is Jesus is. This is what He told His disciples.

JOH 14:7-10 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

“If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.”

By the way, Jesus does not mean to suggest that in His incarnation one has seen the full glory of the Father. Again, that would

contradict what the Lord told Moses. But to the extent that the Son of God dwelled among men, we have seen God in the flesh. His backside if you will.

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.

But then Jesus challenges these Jews in our text by saying that the One who has been in the presence of the Father, and who has now come down to earth to reveal the Father, is the one they must put their faith in if they are to taste life eternal.

JOH 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

Up to this point these people were not believing, they were trying to work their way to heaven. In fact, if the law wasn't sufficient they were willing to do other works as well, thus the statement in verse 28, Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

But as Jesus points out there is no work you can do to find favor with God. But there is one very important thing men must do.

JOH 6:29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

And this is precisely what Jesus repeats in our text.

JOH 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

But then Jesus makes a very interesting statement in the next verse; a statement which brings back the language of comparison, which is to say that He reverts back to the original premise that they were interested only in the bread which our Lord miraculously provided by the Sea of Galilee.

He wants to drive home the point of that which is earthly and that which is spiritual and which one is most important.

JOH 6:48 "I am the bread of life."

The last time our Lord made this statement was way back in verse 35.

JOH 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

And now thirteen verses later He repeats it once again for them after having told them that they were unable to hear the things of

God. But in His grace He is going to explain to them once more the distinction between carnal things and spiritual things.

JOH 6:49 "Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died."

Now on the face of it this seems straight forward enough. They ate physical food which was meant for their physical bodies. It was not meant to give them eternal life and the proof of this is in the fact that their physical bodies still died.

But Jesus is saying much more here because the Jews intimated much more when they bring up this food in the desert.

JOH 6:31 "Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

What these people were saying was not just that the manna supplied the daily needs of the Jews in the desert. What they were doing was attaching a spiritual significance to this food which didn't exist.

On the one hand this was spiritual food. It was sent by God to miraculously feed the multitude in the desert. But this spiritual food did not have any spiritual effect for them. This spiritual food, if you will, was sent to meet a physical need.

Jesus now comes on to the scene and reminds them that He is a spiritual food who was sent for their spiritual need. And yet, they only want to take this spiritual food sent from heaven and use it for their physical needs, be it in their access to fish and loaves, which He can multiply, or in their physical desires of being delivered from under the bondage of Rome.

In other words, they cannot get past the things of this world with any spiritual revelation from God. They are earthly. And even when Jesus tries to use earthly illustrations of spiritual truths they still don't see.

JOH 3:12 "I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

But of course, this isn't limited to the Jews. This indictment is on all mankind as Paul points out to the Philippians.

PHI 3:19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

This by the way, is why Paul reminds believers that since Christ has done a spiritual work in us by giving us life in Himself, we should no longer concentrate on the things of this world because the things of this world don't promote spiritual things.

COL 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

And so, Jesus is saying in our text that despite the spiritual significance the Jews placed in this spiritual food in the manna, God never designed it for spiritual life. And it's not unlike how many Christians today approach this life as well.

Many of them take a spiritual truth and give it a spiritual life all its own which was not intended by God. Let me give you an example which actually Paul gave.

He made the point, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that eating food sacrificed to idols was not prohibited, since there is only one God. This is a spiritual truth. But some of the people in Corinth, to whom this was addressed, took that spiritual truth and ran with it thinking that this now became a right to eat food sacrificed to idols under any circumstance, at the exclusion of how that might affect others in the body of Christ.

And so, what was spiritual, under certain circumstances, could become carnal. It's the same for us today. We are given liberties in Christ. This is a spiritual truth and something which can be spiritually good. But we can take a spiritual good and cause it to become something which is not spiritual at all.

We need to understand the purpose for any spiritual truth given to us by God and not attribute to it more than what was intended by God. Jesus takes this logic and speaks to the Jews about this very thing as it relates to eternal life. He reminds them that a spiritual truth does not necessarily translate to a spiritual reality when it was intended for an earthly purpose.

Now, granted, this does not mean manna didn't have a spiritual purpose in one sense. It was designed to remind the people in the desert to look to God for their provisions by faith. It was to remind them that this was a miracle that only God could perform. But it



was designed by God to sustain their earthly bodies in the desert which would ultimately point to a bread from heaven yet to come; Christ Jesus.

And now Jesus points out that there are spiritual truths which are specifically designed for spiritual ends, the greatest being, where you will spend eternity and how you will get to God in heaven.

JOH 6:50 "But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die."

One bread sustains life for only a period of time. You can eat it and still die. But there is a bread which you can eat and never die. Now you would think that these Jews would have picked up on the metaphor Jesus was using, but as we'll see they didn't.

But what He does next is to take any possibility of confusion out of the way as to what this bread is. This is no longer a puzzle or a riddle. He speaks plainly so there will be no confusion and no excuse.

JOH 6:51 "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Remember, Jesus has been dealing with bread, both physical and spiritual, all throughout this section from the beginning of chapter six up to the very end of this chapter.

But in verse 51 Jesus makes it clear to these people that the bread He speaks of is not bread at all; it's His body, His flesh. And He even points out what He will do with His flesh. He will give it for the life of the world.

If there was any doubt among the people, including His disciples, as to why Jesus came into this world, He removes it here by saying that He is going to give His life for the world.

A light should have gone off, or at least a red flag. This prophet, this possible deliverer and maybe even Messiah, has just told us that He is from heaven and that He is going to die for the world.

But this is not what the Jews hear. They can't get past the flesh. They can't get past the carnal. Their eyes are still closed to the truth despite the fact that God Himself has explained it to them.

This is why I don't get frustrated with people who don't accept the gospel from me. I mean if Jesus apparently couldn't explain it to where people could see it, who am I to think I can do it better?

Of course the answer is not in the mere explanation of the gospel, but in the One who opens people's eyes to the gospel of Jesus Christ. To receive this spiritual bread, if you will, a spiritual work must first happen. And it's no coincidence that it is the Holy Spirit who does this work of regenerating, or renewing a person, to where they now have eyes to see and ears to hear. This is what Paul tells us.

TIT 3:5-7 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Our salvation is Spirit planned among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from before the creation of the world. Our salvation is Spirit accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And we receive this spiritual life through the Spirit renewing the lives of individuals as He gives us a rebirth from above.

Remember what Jesus told Nicodemus in this very gospel.

**John 3:3** <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

Salvation is of the Lord, and we need to be thankful, humble and useful as we love and obey our Lord, taking this message of hope to a dying world. Jesus saves. He gives life freely to all who repent and embrace Him alone by faith.

But it's a life which is not meant to be carnal in nature, but spiritual as we walk in the Spirit to the glory of God. We have been called to be faithful witnesses. We don't save anyone. That's the work of the Spirit through the shed blood of Christ as the Father draws us to Himself.

May we be the kind of children in Christ who honors our heavenly Father in the power of the Spirit. All glory belongs to our God.