

## That You May Continue to Believe...



### AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Jesus...the True Bread of Heaven John 6:22-71

<sup>ESV</sup> **Exodus 16:4**...Then the LORD said to Moses, "**Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Exodus 16:11**...And the LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> "**I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'**" <sup>13</sup> In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. <sup>14</sup> And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground.

Twelve thousand four hundred and ninety times (based on a 365 day calendar) they had gone out and gathered manna. Six days out of every week, fifty-two weeks a year, for forty years they gathered manna. They had baked it and boiled and eaten it uncooked. It was an almost endless supply of food, seemingly as vast as the bounty of heaven. Of course in the same way, it was as an almost endless opportunity for labor. To be sure, it was not hard labor. Manna was light and easy to gather. It was plentiful. It was delicious. But it was so...daily. If you

picked too much and tried to keep it for the next day, it went bad and not just sort of bad. It went bad, like bad fish with a stench and with maggots. The only day you could pick two days worth was the day before the Sabbath. Otherwise, it was a job as daily as the sunrise. Pick it, pick it and pick it again. There was no question that God intended the manna to be picked daily as a sign of His daily provision. Still, it had to be gathered everyday.

They had heard that story ten thousand times. It was read almost every Sabbath in the synagogue. In Capernaum, there was actually a carving on the synagogue wall of a pot full of manna. Ancient Jews knew how their ancestors had complained and grumbled under God's good hand. They griped about everything. They had provoked God and they had angered Moses. Still they had seen, actually seen, God's provision in the manna. They had seen God supply bread from heaven and now they themselves had seen something of the same sort.

Of course, this prophet Jesus had offered something different. They hadn't had to gather at all.<sup>1</sup> In fact, He had them sit down on the grass. He distributed their food to them and people had as much as they wanted. It is true that the meal had been simple fare, barley loaves and dried fish. Still it was excellent and the prospect of another day and another miracle loomed large in their minds. Perhaps, He could feed them daily.

Of course, He had not responded to their admiration the way they had expected. They had wanted to make Him king. They were willing to make Him king. He was certainly a man they were willing to follow; after all there had been the fish and the loaves. But He had gone off into the mountains and it was pretty clear

He didn't want to be followed. His disciples had taken off in a boat for Capernaum but most of the people had hung around overnight waiting for the morning and another chance at some of those loaves and fishes. However, when the morning came, He was not to be found. They had expected the disciples to come back and pick Him up but that hadn't happened either. When the boats arrived from Tiberius they went looking. On the one hand they wanted to find the prophet Jesus. On the other hand, it was just about lunchtime.

Now, I have just related where we are in John 6 using a short narrative that I hope catches the spirit of what has gone before. I incorporated elements to put into your mind the manner in which the Galileans would have understood the implications of what Jesus had done. They weren't intellectually stupid. They knew it had been a miracle and apparently they believed it was a repeatable miracle. The text, starting in John 6:22, makes that abundantly clear.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:22**...On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

The only thing unclear in this particular text is how the boats came to such a remote place to pick up those that remained there. Most commentators speculate that they may have providentially blown there after the previous night's storm<sup>2</sup>. Others say that some of the boat owner's on the lake knew that a crowd had gathered and that there was an opportunity. Anyway, once they reached Capernaum and found Jesus they asked Him the obvious question.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:25**...When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "**Rabbi, when did you come here?**"

Now, of course, we know the answer but they didn't. We know that in sovereign majesty He walked over the waters of the tumultuous Sea of Galilee and rescued his disciples. But notice, He doesn't mention that fact at all. Instead, He points an answer toward their unbelieving hearts. I love the way Augustine puts it...

After the miracle, He sets before them a discourse, so that they who have been fed may be further fed, so that He may with discourse fill their minds, whose bellies He filled with the loaves...<sup>3</sup>

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:26**...Jesus answered them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.** <sup>27</sup> **Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.**"

Now, notice how He zeroes in on their true motivation. He puts it this way...

**"You're not looking for Me because of who I am.**

**You're not even looking for Me because of the miracles I did.**

**You're looking for Me because I filled you up with bread."**

Of course, He didn't stop there. Notice what He said, "**Don't work for food that spoils.**" On first reading, I thought perhaps Jesus was alluding to the fact that the manna that was harvested by the Israelites could not be kept and hence spoiled overnight. But when you look at the larger context it seems that He was focusing on the fact that the food they were interested in was only temporary. It is not the

idea that it spoiled so much as it was that it was fleeting. You ate it and it satisfied for a while and then you had to eat again.

Jesus was saying, **“Don’t spend so much energy on the food that doesn’t last. Work instead for the food that satisfies for eternity.”**

Now what does this whole conversation remind you of? It reminds me of the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 4:13...**Jesus said to her, **“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

And there is another similarity to what He said to the woman at the well. He said to her, **“I can give this water.”** To those that followed after Him to Capernaum He said, **“I can give this food to you but only because God has set His seal of approval or authorization on Me.”**

I think that is such rich language. Just as a GM auto technician has the official GM seal of approval or authorization to fix GM cars so Jesus had the seal of the approval of God the Father to offer heavenly bread. Now, of course, that leads us to ask, **“What was this seal of approval and when was it placed on Jesus?”** The answer is not crystal clear. It could have been the descending Holy Spirit at His baptism<sup>4</sup>. Perhaps, God’s seal of approval was demonstrated in the works He had done. That seems to have been the gist of His argument last week.

**ESV John 5:36...But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.**

God's seal of approval was all over Jesus. It was indicated in the fulfillment of prophecy. It was indicated in the works Jesus did. It was indicated in the words of God Himself. Still it didn't matter to the Galileans that had followed Jesus. They wanted to know about something else.

**ESV John 6:28...Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"<sup>5</sup>**

Do you get their question? **"What do we have to do to satisfy God's requirements that we might receive this bread of heaven?"** They are thinking in terms of a trade-off. **"We are willing to do certain things with the expectation that you will in turn do certain things, like feed us with the bread of heaven."**

Of course, Jesus is trying to make a different point all together. He is trying to make the point that He can give them eternal life. He did not want to focus on the miracle of the bread. He wanted to focus on the gift of eternal life that He can provide to all those that put their hope in His work and in His name. So He gives them a straight answer without any figure of speech or metaphor attached.

**ESV John 6:29...Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."**

Of course, there have always been those who want to try to define faith as some sort of work on the basis of this passage. But I think Calvin's response to that speaks directly to the issue.

It is idle sophistry, under the pretext of this passage, to maintain that we are justified by works, if faith justifies, because it is likewise called *a work*...Now *faith* brings nothing to God, but, on the contrary, places man before God as empty and poor, that he may be filled with Christ and with his grace. It is, therefore, if we may be allowed the expression, a passive work, to which no reward can be paid, and it bestows on man no other righteousness than that which he receives from Christ<sup>6</sup>.

You see the point is that the bread that Christ gives is not to be gathered like the Israelites gathered in the desert. It is to be gathered by faith and even that faith is not something intrinsic to sinful men and women. It is faith that is entirely outside of us. It is faith that is a gift poured out on us in mercy. I think you can make that argument based on the response of the crowd.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:30...So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"**

Now to be fair to those that ask for another sign, it is not altogether clear that they were actually there when Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes. It may be that many of the listeners were citizens of Capernaum who were listening to the discourse between Jesus and those that had been there when He worked the miracle. Calvin is less understanding.

At first, because they promise to themselves that Christ will flatter their vices, they eagerly embrace the gospel, and call for no proof of it; but when they are called to deny the flesh and to bear the cross, then do they begin to renounce Christ and ask whence the gospel came. In short, as soon as Christ does not grant their prayers, he is no longer their Master<sup>7</sup>.

What is clear is that they wanted a sign that would confirm once and for all that Jesus was on a level with Moses. In fact, it seems clear to me that when they refer to **"He gave them bread"** in verse 31 they are talking about Moses and not God.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:31...Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'**"

Jesus, of course, put things right and reminded them that it was God who actually fed them. That that should not have ever been an issue is surprising in light of the many passages to the contrary. Listen to Nehemiah.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Nehemiah 9:15...In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.**

Listen to this beautiful Psalm of Asaph...

<sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 78:19...They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert? <sup>20</sup> When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?"**  
<sup>21</sup> When the LORD heard them, he was very angry; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, <sup>22</sup> for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. <sup>23</sup> Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; <sup>24</sup> he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. <sup>25</sup> Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.

You see they should have known that Moses supplied nothing. It was God the Father who supplied their bread in the wilderness and still they did not believe. But just to reinforce that idea Jesus made a point of grammar. He did that by contrasting the tense of two verbs but He did even that in a remarkable way. He used a past tense verb to indicate that it was not Moses that gave their fathers

bread from heaven and you would have expected Him to say, **“No, it was my Father who gave them bread from heaven.”** Instead, Jesus switched to a present tense verb and said **“No, it is My Father who is....giving you the bread of heaven.”** Listen to how He said...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:32...**Jesus then said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.**

He then went on to tell them the bread of God was not actually manna or even barley loaves. The bread of God is a person.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:33...**For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Initially, they liked that. You can see why. They liked the idea because that means that they were going to get to see **“manna”** like their forefathers did. They wanted that and they wanted that perpetually.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:34...**They said to him, **"Sir, give us this bread always."**

The idea was **“Keep on giving us this bread.”** But Jesus didn't answer them the way they expected. Instead, He decided to go ahead and make His point perfectly clear and in doing so He began the part of His discourse that would eventually drive them away.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:35...**Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

He continued the same thought in verse 36 but added a new element in verse 40, where He raised the issue of **“looking to the Son.”**

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:36...But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**

Now, what was He alluding to by using that phrase **"looks to the Son"** and **"have life."**

<sup>NIV</sup> **Numbers 21:5-9...they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup> The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.**

Of course, the idea of **"coming down from heaven"** was as far as their listening went. Verse 41, tells us what their response was.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:41...So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"<sup>9</sup>**

Now, I love that phrase **"to grumble."** It was a word that was often used in the Pentateuch to describe the rebellious Israelites that followed Moses around in the wilderness.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Exodus 16:2**...And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, <sup>3</sup> and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

<sup>ESV</sup> **Exodus 17:3**...But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "**Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?**" <sup>4</sup> So Moses cried to the LORD, "**What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.**"

Now, I want you to understand what John was doing here. He was telling us two things. He was not only saying that Jesus was better than Moses in that He is the "**true bread**" come down from heaven but He was also saying that the Jews who refused to believe in Him were just like those "**grumblers**" that wandered around in the wilderness with Moses and died in unbelief.

Finally, Jesus told them to stop grumbling.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:43**...Jesus answered them, "**Do not grumble among yourselves.**

Stop grumbling among yourselves is an example of a figure of speech called an onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia occurs when a word sounds like the thing it is describing. For example, in English we have the word "**buzz**" which sounds like the thing it identifies. Other words that are considered examples of onomatopoeia are "**gurgle**" or "**hiss**". John uses a Greek word that does the same thing. It is the word γογγύζω and you can imagine how it sounds out the sound of their grumbling.

In verse 44, Jesus told them why they ought to stop grumbling.

<sup>ESV</sup> **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.

Draw typically means to “**drag or pull.**” It is used in John to refer to Peter pulling his sword and cutting off the ear of Malchus.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 18:10**...Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

But it is also used in John near the end of the book when the disciples caught a net full of fish and had to drag them on land.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 21:11**...So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

It was used in Acts when the enemies of Paul dragged him out of the temple so they could kill him and it had pretty much the same idea in James when it was used of the rich “**dragging**” the poor into court.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Acts 21:30**...Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

<sup>ESV</sup> **James 2:6**...But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?

You see the word “**drag**” is not a very pretty word. It is used to describe ideas of violence and mayhem. It is the kind of word that would describe a frustrated mother at the mall dragging a screaming, fighting child out to the car. Yet to us that are saved it is the most beautiful word in the world. We do not mind that we were dragged into the kingdom. Oh, for some us it was more subtle than that. Our minds and wills were made anew through the preaching of the word and

suddenly we loved the gospel. One day we were unbelievers and the next day it all made sense. We thought we came unaided. We thought it was our own spiritual sense that caused us to turn to Him but the truth is that we came to Him because He drew us; He dragged us in sovereign, irresistible love.<sup>10</sup> Calvin puts it like this...

Unbelievers...have the hardihood to condemn the Gospel because it does not please them. On the contrary, therefore, Christ declares that the doctrine of the Gospel, though it is preached to all without exception, cannot be embraced by all, but that a new understanding and a new perception are requisite; and, therefore, that faith does not depend on the will of men, but on God who gives it<sup>11</sup>.

Now look at verse 45.

**<sup>ESV</sup> John 6:45...It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me--.**<sup>12</sup>

Now, the point could be that even in judgment God was instructing them. But I think the point was typological<sup>13</sup>. I think that it was a picture or example, that in the kingdom of God, God instructs all the people there. He comes to them and woos them like lover and gives them faith. But just in case, they think that their instruction is direct, personal or mystical Jesus reminds them that the only way to have a relationship with the Father is through the mediation of the Son.

**<sup>ESV</sup> John 6:46...not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.**

You see what He is saying is that people can only come to God through the Son. He communicates life only through the Son. In verse 48, He says it plainly.

**ESV John 6:48...I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.**

Do you see His point? He's was saying something like this, **"You are so infatuated with the notion of manna or even of barley loaves that you are missing the point of everything I have been saying. I am the bread of life. You want what you fathers ate but you ought to remember this. They ate bread and died. They ate the bread that God gave them and their carcasses were strewn all over the Sinai desert. I am offering you something better, far better. Right here, right now."**

Look at verse 50.

**ESV John 6:50...This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."**

Of course, they didn't get it. He was talking about believing in Him and they can't get past the metaphor.

**ESV John 6:52...The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"**

They began to fight with each other over what He meant by what He said. I love D.A. Carson's words here...

"Any dullard could see that Jesus was not speaking literally: no one would suppose that Jesus was seriously advocating cannibalism and offering Himself as the first meal. But if His language was figurative what did He mean?"<sup>14</sup>

**<sup>ESV</sup> John 6:53...So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."**

Of course, Catholics have developed a whole sacramental theology around this passage. They see it as absolutely crucial that consecrated bread and wine become His body and blood. They do because they are insisting on a literal interpretation of the words. Hence, for them, if the bread and wine of the Lord's Table do not become His actual body and blood they have no life. We too believe Jesus is present in the Lord's Table but in a much different way. What I would like to argue for a few minutes is that Jesus is not talking about the Lord's Table here at all. What I would like to argue is that He is talking about the same thing here that He was back in the very beginning of the discourse. The meaning of what He is trying to get across occurs much earlier in the passage. In fact, He never introduces any new idea at all. Instead, He uses several metaphors to say the same thing in a bunch of different ways trying to get them to understand their need of Him.

Work for eternal food (vs. 27) means to believe in the one He has sent.

To do the works of God (vs. 28) equals to believe in the one he has sent. (vs. 29)

You have seen me and still you do not believe (vs. 36) is contrasted to but whoever Comes to Me (vs. 36)

Looks to the Son (vs. 40) means to believe in him (vs. 40).

Here's the point I want to make...

Eat this bread (vs. 51)

Eats my flesh (vs. 54)

Drinks my blood (vs. 54) all mean **"to believe in Him"**

And that matches precisely with what we have seen so far. You see the Gospel of John was written to encourage those first century Jewish converts who were straddling the fence between Jesus and Judaism.<sup>15</sup> It was written to those who were thinking about going back to the synagogue. It was written to show that the beauty of believing in Jesus was greater, far greater, than the beauty of the synagogue or Jacob or the ceremonial law or even as we have here in our passage this morning, Moses. Look how He finishes out the story.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:59**...Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. <sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "**This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?**" <sup>61</sup> **But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?** <sup>62</sup> **Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?** <sup>63</sup> **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.** <sup>64</sup> **But there are some of you who do not believe."** (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)

You can see then how these passages fit into the idea of the book. John is casting those who give up on Jesus along similar lines to Judas Iscariot. He is reminding them that even those Judas was there and ate the bread, even though He was there and saw the miracles, He betrayed Jesus. He is reminding them that their defection would be just like that of Judas.

Verse 65, then, forms a bookend with the idea of **“No can come to Me unless the Father draws him.”**

He did that in verse 65 by writing...

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:65...**And he said, **“This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”**

Still, John did not want to paint the idea of continuous belief as hopeless. So he reminded them that eleven of the twelve disciples did stay. Now why did they stay? They stayed because they saw that their only hope was in Jesus. They saw that He alone possessed the secret of eternal life. They saw that He had a unique relationship with the Father of all the men that had ever lived. He had a relationship with the Father that allowed Him to dispense eternal life to all those that believed in Him. He was God’s only, unique Son.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 6:66...**After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, **“Do you want to go away as well?”**

What thing that is interesting about the construction of the question that Jesus asks here is that it expects a negative answer. You see in Greek you can ask a question just like you can in English so that you hinting that you already know the answer. In English, you know when your wife says to you, **“I am going to the mall, you don’t want to go do you?”** that you are not expected to get off the couch. On the other hand, if she says, **“I am going to the mall. You are coming aren’t you?”** you know that you might as well turn off the television and get up and get ready. Jesus asks the question here knowing their answer, **“You do not want to go away also do you?”**

Jesus knew they could not say yes for they had been chosen by God to believe in Him.<sup>16</sup>

Still Peter's answer is beautiful.<sup>17</sup>

**ESV John 6:68...Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."**

John finishes the chapter restating the danger of apostasy.

**ESV John 6:70...Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil."** <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

Now in summing up, I want to try to draw out an application for our own time. Obviously, we are not first century Jews and there is no danger that we will forsake Jesus and return to the synagogue. Still, there is a danger that we might become so infatuated with the cares of this world that the gift of Jesus becomes a hollow thing in our lives. You see sometimes Christians can become so infatuated with the things of this life that forget that the central purpose of Jesus' ministry was to reconcile us to God.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes, we can get in a frame of mind that if this job doesn't work or this relationship doesn't work or this tragedy doesn't resolve itself that Jesus has failed.

Brothers and sisters, He never fails. He is there not to allay all our temporal problems. He is there standing alone as the one great solution to our one great problem, the abiding white-hot wrath of a Holy and just God. He is there and what He promises is that He will never turn away those that come to Him. Let us

make it our prayer that God will grant to us the insight that Peter had when He answered the same question, **“Where else can we go? He alone has the words of life.”**

Let us come and buy bread without money and eat our fill.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 146. “If this was the second Moses, he would surely do for them what the first Moses had done for their ancestors and deliver them from oppression. This time no long journey was necessary to bring them to the Promised Land: the Promised Land now was national independence right where they were. If the Galileans did not live directly under Roman control, as their brethren in Judea did, the ruler Herod Antipas was a creature of Rome, and they experienced no feelings of patriotic pride as they contemplated the Herod dynasty. The Herods stood or fell with the Romans: to oppose the one was to oppose the other. It may well have been in the hope that Jesus would lead the cause of liberation that the crowd came to him on this occasion (verse 5); his feeding them there in wilderness confirmed their assurance that he was indeed the one of the hour.”

<sup>2</sup> B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954) pg. 100. He writes: “The multitude, some that is, who still lingered when the rest were dismissed (Matthew 14: 23), the more eager zealots, as it seems, who wished still to make Christ fulfill their designs. They were not more than could cross the lake in the boats, which came over (v.23). These boats, perhaps, were driven by the “contrary wind” (Matthew 14:24) across the lake. Their coming probably explains the reference to the “disciples” in v. 24.”

<sup>3</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *Gospel of John* (Ages CDRom pg. 325)

<sup>4</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 284. This Son of Man, Jesus insists, is the one on whom *the Father has placed his seal of approval*. The idea is that God has certified the Son as his own agent, authorizing him as the one who alone can bestow this food. God has attested the Son, in much the same way that someone who accepts the Son’s testimony thereby attests or certifies (the same verb) that God himself is truthful. *When God ‘placed his seal of approval’ on the Son is not specified*. If we are to think of a specific time (though the aorist tense of the verb does not require that we so limit ourselves), perhaps the reference is to Jesus’ baptism (*cf.* 1:31-34).

<sup>5</sup> Westcott, 100. Westcott says: The questioners appear to admit in word the necessity of the higher aim of work, and inquire as to the method of reaching it; but the phrase the works of God make the external conception of the service of God to which they still cling. The *works of God—works* which He requires—are assumed to be the one condition of obtaining the spiritual food. The Lord deals with the error and the truth in the question, which was put to Him. In the one work, which God requires of man and man owes to God, all fragmentary and partial works are included. It is a true work as answering to man’s will, but it issues in that which is not a work. Carson (pg. 285)

follows him, so does Morris (pg. 319) and even the Catholic Brown (pg. 262). The work of God is the work God requires...to believe in Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on John* (Calvin CD Rom by Ages), 215.

<sup>7</sup> Calvin, 216.

<sup>8</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 339-340. "In vi. 27-34 Christ is the Giver of bread, as in iv. 10-15 He is the Giver of water. Such a description could, at a pinch, be kept within the limits of Jewish eschatological beliefs which conceived the Messiah as a second Moses or, shall we say, as a Moses-like figure sublimated or 'etherialized for Moses gave the people both water from the rock and bread from heaven'. But if Christ is Himself the food and drink of eternal life, we are well beyond merely messianic categories. It is God alone of whom it can properly be said that through union with Him (mutual indwelling) man enjoys eternal life (vi. 53, 56). Here therefore, as unequivocally as in v. 17ff. specifically divine functions and prerogatives are ascribed to Christ."

<sup>9</sup> Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 64-65. "Some have said the unspoken subject is the virgin birth. This could be the case, for a reader's knowledge of that tradition certainly sharpens the irony; the crowd would be dead wrong in their claim to know Jesus' father. There is no evidence, however, that the author has this tradition in mind. The irony is present regardless, for whether or not Jesus' biological paternity is at issue, John is quite clear that God is the true Father of Jesus. On this level, in fact, the irony is actually deeper (if not sharper) than it would be if Mary's virginity were the point."

<sup>10</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 232. "What they regard as possible or impossible by their human standards (cf. 5:43ff) will never bring them to faith in his name or make them participants in his imperishable gift. This demonstrates the powerlessness of the natural person ('no one') to come to the salvation disclosed in Christ unless the Father who sent him "draws" that person, that is, moves him or her toward it (for this is "drawing" see also 12:32 and Jr. 31:3; Ho. 11:14)."

<sup>11</sup> Calvin, 226.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from: NIV Isaiah 54:13...All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

<sup>13</sup> Carson, 293. "Jesus proceeds to explain what kind of 'drawing' (v. 44) the Father exercises. When he compels belief, it is not by the savage constraint of a rapist, but by the wonderful wooing of a lover. Otherwise put, it is by an insight, a teaching, an illumination implanted within the individual, in fulfillment of the Old Testament promise, *They will all be taught by God*. This is a paraphrase of Isaiah 54:13, addressed to the restored city of Jerusalem that the prophet foresees: 'All your sons will be taught by the Lord and great will be your children's peace.' The passage is here applied typologically: in the New Testament the messianic community and the dawning of the saving reign of God are the typological fulfillments of the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile."

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pg. 295.

<sup>15</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 445. "Not that the cross will bring a second and new offence; it simply makes it ultimately plain what the *one* offence is: it is that a mere man, whose life ends in death, solemnly lays the claim that he is the Revealer of God! And this declaration, which demands of man the abandonment of all his securities, is clearly seen at the cross to be a demand for the surrender of life itself, a demand to follow right to the cross."

<sup>16</sup> Philip W. Comfort, & Wendell C. Hawley, *Opening the Gospel of John* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1994), 118.

<sup>17</sup> William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-1954), vol. 1, 248. "Simon Peter is the man who gives the answer, and a glorious answer it was! He uses the plural, showing that he was the spokesman for all, though not in reality the spokesman for Judas. Peter answered him by asking him a question: Lord (on this see 1:38; footnote 44) to whom shall we go? Man is so constituted that he must go to someone. He cannot stand by himself. What Peter means is clearly this: 'There is no one else to go to; no one who satisfies the yearning of the heart.' He continues: 'Thou hast the words of everlasting life. The reference is clearly to what Jesus himself has said (6:63). Peter knows that the words of Jesus are more than mere sounds or dead utterances. They are vital and dynamic, full of spirit and life, means unto salvation, means of grace (on everlasting life see 3:16; cf. 1:4). Peter adds: 'And we have believed and know — i.e., we have begun to believe and we still believe; we have come to realize, and we still are convinced — that thou art the Holy One of God. Jesus is confessed to be the Holy One; i.e., consecrated unto God to fulfill his Messianic task; he is set apart and qualified to perform whatever pertains to his office (cf. 10:36; Acts 3:14; 4:27; Rev. 5:7). He is God's Holy One, belonging to God and appointed by God. — It was a most meaningful and glorious confession!'"

<sup>18</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Notes and Commentary on the Greek Text*, (London: S.P.C.K, 1967) 249. "Jesus next uses the defection of many disciples as a means of challenging the faith of the Twelve. They, being (with the exception of Judas) men whom God himself has drawn to Jesus, make their confession of faith: there is no other than Jesus to whom such men may go. The reply of Jesus emphasizes, with trenchancy remarkable even in this gospel, both that he has chosen the Twelve (they have not chosen him— cf. 15:16) and that he well knows the future treachery of Judas. The frailty of man and his complete dependence upon the predestinating grace of God are alike brought out."

<sup>19</sup> <sup>NIV</sup> Isaiah 55:1..."Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare."