

For the past several weeks we've been considering our Savior's I AM the Bread of Life discourse—let me briefly suggest three things about it by way of review—[1] it consists of an explanation and interpretation of the feeding of the 5000—as I've said many times, there is a close and intentional connection between the miracle and message...

[2] It consists of a back-and-forth dialogue with unbelieving Jews who witnessed not only His feeding of the 5000, but many other miracles—thus, their unbelief was inexcusable...

[3] It consists of a happy blend of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility—our Savior describes Himself as bread given to them, repeatedly invites them to eat, and sternly rebukes them for their unbelief—all the while, affirming every person given to Him by His Father will come to Him, He's come to ensure it, and He will never cast them out...

I. The Jews Despise Jesus—vv41-42

II. Jesus Instructs the Jews—vv43-45

I. The Jews Despise Jesus—vv41-42

1. Verses 41-42—"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..."
2. [1] They murmured, v41—"The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven..."
3. It seems evident they largely understood what He was claiming—He was claiming a heavenly or a divine origin...
4. Jn.3:13—"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven..."
5. Thus—they were murmuring or complaining that Christ described Himself, as coming down from heaven, or as being divine...
6. Now—it's also interesting to notice, just in passing, that the Greek OT uses the same Greek word of the Hebrews in the wilderness in connection to receiving Manna from heaven...
7. That is—the wilderness Hebrews and First Century Hebrews—both complained when God gave them bread from heaven...
8. [2] They mocked, v42—"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..."
9. Nazareth was rather close to Capernaum—and it appears they were familiar with His rather humble upbringing...
10. Thus—they failed to understand or denied three great truths—[a] Christ's eternal divinity as the Son of God...
11. [b] Christ's sinless incarnation, v42—"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know..."
12. [c] Christ's humiliating work—the eternal Son of God became a sinless baby, born into a poor and humble home...
13. This was all a part of His humiliation—there was nothing about His physical appearance or social status to attract Him to us...
14. Isa.53:1-3—"Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed. For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him..."
15. Notice two things—first, the reason any person ever believes is because God has revealed it to them by His mighty arm...
16. Secondly—one reason why they would not believe is because of His humble condition—"a tender plant, a root out of dry ground..."

17. This refers to His humble origin—from a humble place and family—nothing special to commend Him to them...
18. Thus—the Jews complained about His lofty assertions—and mocked and ridiculed Him for His humble origins...

## II. Jesus Instructs the Jews—vv43-45

Here—we again come face to face with a great reality—and that's the patient kindness of our beloved Savior—even though His hearers continue to disbelieve and now even despise Him—He nevertheless continues to instruct them...

In particular—our Savior opens up the great theme of Effectual Calling—God's efficacious work in bringing sinners to Himself—and in particular, I want to suggest that our Savior provides five great truths about effectual calling...

### A. Effectual calling is NECESSARY

1. V44a—"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him"—this is a universal statement...
2. No one—whatever our Savior here means by this statement—it's true of every person by nature without exception...
3. "No one can come to Me"—no one has the native ability to come to Christ, to believe in Him for salvation...
4. It's rightly been said—our Savior does not say—"No man may come to Me"—but—"No man can come to Me..."
5. CAN is a word of ability—no man within Himself, possesses the native ability to believe in Christ, apart from grace...
6. Thus—here I want to suggest three reasons behind man's native inability to come to Christ in and of himself...
7. [1] Man is a slave—that is—man by nature is a willing slave to sin, Satan, and this world—a slave of unrighteousness...
8. Thus man by nature can not come to Christ—because they are willing slaves who refuse to leave their native masters...
9. Jn.8:34-36—"Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed..."
10. Jn.8:44-45—"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me..."
11. Notice—our Savior describes them as slaves of sin, and willing slaves of Satan, and thus, refuse to believe the truth...
12. [2] Man is a rebel—that is—man by nature loves sin and hates God—and thus He refuses to come to God through Christ...
13. Jn.3:19-20—"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed (Rom.8:7; 1Cor.2:14)..."
14. It's impossible for native man to come to the light—because he hates the light and loves darkness—his nature opposes it...
15. Jer.13:23—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? *Then* may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil..."
16. [3] Man is dead—that is—man by nature lacks all spiritual life—he is separated from Christ the source of life...
17. This is why man can not come to Christ—because he lacks any spiritual life to do anything of spiritual value...

18. Jn.5:25—"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live..."
19. This is our Savior's own description of native man—dead—the dead shall hear His voice because He gives life...
20. The ability to "hear the voice of the Son of God"—presupposes regeneration—being raised from the dead....
21. Those raised from the dead, are able to hear His voice—their spiritual ears have been opened to the gospel call...
22. Thus—I must remind you of an important distinction between physical and moral inability—the first is not true of man but the second is...
23. Physical inability would mean—man by nature lacks the physical ability or faculties to come to Christ on his own...
24. This is how some people wrongly interpret man's inability—they portray him as dead in the sense of a rock...
25. But man isn't a rock or stone—and he possesses the necessary faculties to come—he has a mind, heart, and will...
26. Moral inability means—though man possesses the physical faculties to come—these are ruined by the fall...
27. Thus—his mind is darkened and deceived—his heart is corrupt and depraved—and his will is a slave to his heart...
28. Or, put another way—man is a willing slave, a rebel, and spiritually dead—void of all spiritual life and ability...
29. Paul Washer—"Total depravity does not mean that men do not possess the necessary faculties to obey God. Man is not a victim who desires to obey but is unable to because of factors beyond his control. God has endowed man with an intellect, a will, and a freedom to choose. Man is therefore responsible before God as a moral agent. Total depravity DOES mean that man cannot submit himself to God because he will not, and he will not because of his own hostility toward God..."
30. A.W. Pink—"The fact is, the sinner's inability or absence of power is itself due to lack of willingness to come to Christ, and this lack of willingness is the fruit of a depraved heart..."
31. J.C. Ryle—"When our Lord says, No man can come unto me, we must carefully remember that it is moral inability and not physical inability that he speaks of...The impotence lies in man's will. He cannot come because he will not come..."

#### B. Effectual calling is TRINITARIAN

1. Here I want to speak for a few minutes on the fact that our Savior expressly attributes this work to the Father...
2. Now—let me simply say—that Scripture ascribes the work of effectual calling to all three persons of the Trinity...
3. The Father, Jn.6:44—"No one can come to Me unless the Father draws them"—unless the Father works in their hearts...
4. The Son, Jn.10:16—"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice..."
5. The Spirit, Jn.6:63—"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life..."
6. But I suggest—Christ mentions the Father because of v37—"All that the Father gives me will come to Me..."
7. That is—the Father draws or brings the elect to Christ by faith, as the expression of His eternal and electing love...
8. Jer.31:3—"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you (Hos.11:4)..."
9. Notice—the drawing work of God is the direct result of His electing love—He draws them because He loves them...
10. Thus—let me look at John 6:44 from a slightly different angle—as in fact it's a very beautiful text with great encouragement...

11. If you have come to Christ—then this means the Father has drawn you, and that is the result of His eternal love...
12. The Father brings His elect to Himself because of love—His electing love is the cause of His effectual call...

### C. Effectual calling is IRREVERSIBLE

1. V44b—"and I will raise him up at the last day"—that is—every person who is brought to God will be glorified...
2. Rom.8:30—"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified..."
3. Notice these are all in the past tense—as they refer to God's eternal decree of purpose—in God's mind they're done...
4. Rom.11:29—"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"—this refers to the elect remnant among Israel...
5. Thus—every person the Father draws, is saved, sanctified, preserved, and glorified—and that without exception...
6. God never calls someone only to leave that person to their own resources—everyone called is always kept...

### D. Effectual calling is RATIONAL

1. V45a—"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught by God"—our Savior is thinking of a few OT prophecies...
2. Jas.54:13—"All your children shall be taught by the LORD. And great shall be the peace of your children..."
3. The entire chapter is a prophecy of the restoration and salvation of God's elect, as collected into the church...
4. Paul applies v1 (in Gal.4:27) to the church—which he calls—"the Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all..."
5. Thus—throughout the chapter—promise is given that one day the true Jerusalem shall be greatly populated...
6. From v11 this Heavenly and New Jerusalem is beautifully described as a glorious city comprised of precious stones...
7. Every child of Zion in that day shall be taught of God—that is—every member of Zion shall be a true Christian...
8. But—they shall not only become true Christians, justified and sanctified, they shall be preserved and glorified (v17)...
9. Jer.31:34—"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more..."
10. Thus—when our Savior says "they shall all be taught by God" He's referring to what's called—effectual teaching...
11. That is—teaching that produces an effect—teaching that gets to the heart—teaching understood from the heart...
12. Now—this teaching is always through the word, and engages the whole soul—the mind, heart, and the will...
13. CHS—"Coming to Christ is the very first effect of regeneration. No sooner is the soul quickened than it at once discovers its lost estate, is horrified thereat, looks out for a refuge, and believing Christ to be a suitable one, flies to him and reposes in him..."
14. Thus—the first thing God does in bringing a sinner to Christ is—He regenerates Him or gives Him spiritual life..
15. Put another way—God changes the heart—He opens the ear—He enables the sinner to understand the truth...

16. The truth about God—the truth about man—the truth about Christ—the truth about salvation—the truth about eternity...
17. Thus—having changes the heart man now willingly turns from sin and this world, and comes to God through Christ...
18. In short—God makes man willing to come—He makes him willing to bow the knee to Christ as Lord and Savior...
19. Thus—God never brings a sinner to Himself against his will—He makes him willing, by the work of His Spirit...
20. Ps.110:3—"You people shall be willing in the day of Your power"—they shall be willing to bow the knee...
21. John Calvin—"As to the kind of drawing, it is not violent, so as to compel men by external force; but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing who formerly were unwilling and reluctant..."

#### E. Effectual calling is OBSERVABLE

1. V45b—"Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me"—that is—believes on Him...
2. Though the work of regeneration and effectual calling are mysterious works—they end in the sinner believing...
3. This is how you can know whether or not you've been chosen and called—have you and are you—coming to Christ...
4. Thus—here I need to explain what is meant by coming to Christ—in short—it's a whole soul embracing a whole Christ...
5. [1] Sinners come with a whole soul—that is—with the mind, heart, and will—each of these faculties are engaged...
6. The mind—we understand who God is, who we are, and who Christ is—we KNOW our need for a Savior...
7. The heart—we not only understand these things but believe them for ourselves—we are sincerely convinced...
8. The will—that is—we come intelligently and sincerely to entrust ourselves to Him—we hind ourselves in Christ...
9. [2] Sinners come to a whole Christ—that is—we come to Him as a priest to save us, king to rule us, and prophet to teach us...
10. A priest to save us—that is—this is the predominant reason we come to Christ—to find salvation from our sin...
11. A king to rule us—that is—we come to Christ as a gracious king to rule over us and protect us from our enemies...
12. A prophet to teach us—that is—we come to Christ to learn from Him as our prophet—to sit at His feet as disciples...

#### III. Clarifications

1. Here—I really want to address a single clarification—and that is—teaching effectual calling to sinners is not wrong...
2. Our Savior has been teaching and inviting these Jews to Himself—He has been exhorting them to believe on Him...
3. He has told them, that the Father has given them bread to eat, and if they come and eat they shall have eternal life...
4. They have refused to come, and thus our Savior teaches them about their need to be drawn to Him by the Father...
5. The Jews were unwilling to come to Him—thus our Savior intends to warn them of taking this for granted...
6. Thus—here is my single clarification (which I want to expand on)—sinners need to know of their native inability...

7. Now—let me briefly clarify—I am not saying, sinners need to fully understand the doctrine of total depravity...
8. But—I am saying this—our Savior desired His hearers to know—that they lacked all ability in and of themselves...
9. Now—I do believe, while this is necessary for all men, it is especially true of those who hear and refuse to come...
10. It is a part of the whole truth that we are to teach all sinners, and here I'm especially thinking of our children...
11. My young friends—there are some of you here—who have been exhorted again and again to come to Christ...
12. And yet—for all that, you remain in a state of unbelief—you refuse to come to Christ that you may have life...
13. Well—I would simply say to you what our Savior said to the Jews—"No one can come to Me unless My Father draws Him..."
14. Now—here I have to answer the question—WHY—Why did Christ teach these Jews about their moral inability...
15. Well—let's be very clear about it—He was teaching them for their good and not to discourage them from coming...
16. I know this simply because—He continues exhorting them to come to Him, throughout the remainder of the sermon...
17. Thus—our Savior did not teach them this truth—so that they would leave Him in total despair of any salvation...
18. But—He did teach them this truth that they would despair of any salvation in themselves—that they would come to Him...
19. Jonathan Edwards—"Before God appears to them as their help and deliverance, it is his manner to make them sensible, that they are utterly helpless in themselves. They are brought to despair of help from themselves. There is a death to all their hopes from themselves. before God opens the prison doors, he makes them see that they are shut up, that they are close prisoners, and that there is no way, in which they can escape..."
20. Thus—I want to suggest that our Savior taught this truth—for the purpose of teaching these Jews two things...
21. [1] Believing is no easy matter—this is a lie that has been propagated especially in this country for the past 20-40 years...
22. It's often called "easy-believism"—sinners are exhorted to "walk an isle, pray a prayer"—for believing is easy...
23. Now—I need to clarify—there is a sense in which believing is simple—you simply come to Christ for salvation...
24. Believing on Christ for the salvation of our soul is something that any person can do, regardless how young...
25. If you are old enough to understand your need for Christ, you are more than welcome to come to Christ for salvation...
26. But—there is another sense in which believing is no easy matter, and should not be delayed or taken for granted...
27. [2] Salvation is totally of God—that is—man is not the sovereign one that modern Arminian theology portrays him...
28. Now—the fact that salvation is from or of God is in fact a very good thing—God can and does give salvation...
29. If salvation was merely left to your free-will—if it all depended on you—you would be without any true hope...
30. It's true—you have no power in yourself to save yourself, neither do you have strength to come to Christ for salvation...
31. But—God can bring you to Christ very easily—God has power to change your heart and draw you to Christ...

32. Now—let me ask you—is God teaching you of your need for Christ—is making you desirous for gospel salvation...
33. That is salvation by the merits of Another—salvation solely and only in Christ—through His blood and righteousness...
34. If so—then this is the drawing of the Father—cry out to Him—Draw me—leave me not to my own free will...
35. Song 1:4—"Draw me and we will run after you"—grant me grace to come—to close with Christ as my Savior...