

Subject: *Receiving the Bread of Life*

Scripture: *John 6:41-71*

In this chapter Jesus speaks of Himself as the bread of life. Some believed in Him and some did not. This chapter defines the difference between a believer and an unbeliever.

- A real believer accepts Christ for who He claims to be
- A real believer realizes his desperate need for Christ
- A real believer comes to Christ in humble faith and submission

The difference between someone who receives Christ and someone who doesn't boils down to one thing: do you believe what Jesus says?

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE IDENTITY OF CHRIST (vs. 41-42)

In our text we see Jesus teaching the people who He was and what He offered to them. Most of the people heard Him and walked away. They were curious, but not committed. At this point in chapter 6, Jesus is speaking to a large crowd of people who apparently were interested in Him. What did He say? Was He only interested in pleasing the crowd and keeping them onboard?

Jesus made the claim that He came down from heaven. They murmured (grumbled) for two reasons: He said that He was the bread of life (the source and sustainer of life) and that He came down from heaven. They thought they knew everything there was to know about Him. They knew He was the son of Joseph and Mary. It was a case of mistaken identity.

Many people still fail to recognize Christ as the Son of God and only Savior. The Jews and the Muslims don't recognize Him as the Son of God. Some cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses don't recognize Him as the Son of God from heaven.

If we are to receive Christ as the bread of life we must recognize Him as the heaven-sent Son of God. He is God in human flesh. Mary was His mother, but God was His Father. He is no ordinary man. He is the God-man. **1 Timothy 2:5** *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

WE MUST REALIZE THE INITIATIVE OF GOD IN SALVATION (vs. 43-46)

- All believers are drawn by the Father

Jesus spoke of God's sovereignty in salvation. He spoke of the Father's drawing believers to Him. "Whosoever will" may come to Christ and be saved, but only those who the Father draws will come to Him. This drawing is special, selective, supernatural, gracious, and effective.

- All believers are taught by the Father

Jesus paraphrased Isaiah 54:13 about being taught by God. When someone comes to Christ in genuine repentance and faith, it is only because that God teaches them the truth and they receive it. He enables them to grasp the truth about Jesus and then drawn to embrace Him as Lord and Savior. **1 Corinthians 2:14** *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the*

Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

WE MUST APPRECIATE THE IMPACT OF CHRIST IN A BELIEVER (vs. 47-59)

These are words of absolute certainty (vs. 47, 53, *verily, verily* = most assuredly). Jesus said He is the bread of life and whoever believes in Him has everlasting life.

- Jesus predicted His death – In verse 51 He spoke about His crucifixion. The bread of life He gave was His flesh. It was a gift for the life of the world. How could one man's death be a blessing for the whole world? He was no ordinary man and His death had eternal value as a sacrifice for sins. John stressed that Jesus died to save the world. **John 1:29** *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
- Jesus promised eternal life to all who received Him by faith

Moses and the nation of Israel ate the manna and died, but everyone who partakes of Christ will live forever. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood is not to be taken literally, but is a figure of speech for accepting what Jesus did on the cross. He offered His body and blood as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus was not speaking of Communion here. He had not instituted Communion yet, and partaking of Communion does not give eternal life.

Just think of the eternal impact of receiving Christ. Every person who believes in Him will live forever.

WE MUST KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST (vs. 60-70)

Jesus knew that some people believed in Him and others did not. In this final section it is obvious that some received Christ as the bread of life and others had no appetite for Him or His teaching. This was true even among His twelve apostles.

This was a hard saying (vs. 60). It was difficult to accept. For the Jews it was unthinkable that their Messiah could be crucified. They were interested in physical bread, but not the spiritual bread that Jesus spoke of.

Again Jesus reminded them and us of the Father's initiative and sovereignty in drawing men to salvation (vs. 65). Verse 66 describes a decisive and final walking away from Christ.

Judas Iscariot was present when Jesus spoke these words. He had heard everything Jesus said, but was not convinced. Peter spoke on behalf of the group (vs. 68, 69, "we"), but Jesus corrected him (vs. 70). You would think those words would have gotten the attention of Judas, but they did not. He continued in stubborn unbelief, yet nobody knew but Jesus.

APPLYING THIS MESSAGE TO YOUR LIFE

1. Do you understand that Jesus is the Son of God who came from heaven to be the only source and sustainer of eternal life?

2. Do you see the evidence of God's drawing and teaching in your life so you could know and believe in Christ?
3. Are you sure that you have personally partaken of Christ's sacrifice by faith and now you dwell in Him and He dwells in you?
4. Do you realize that your faith or lack of faith in Christ has eternal consequences?