

John 6:25-71—I am the Bread of Life

- **Intro:**
 - Impersonal Knowledge—acquaintance level...you don't REALLY know the person but you just enough ABOUT them to recognize them, communicate easily with them on the surface level.
 - Personal Knowledge—knowing people on a level that is particularly intimate and personal, the unseen things.
 - We live in a world dominated by impersonal knowledge—social media and news and the pace of our lives has forced us out of the pursuing the deeper, more intimate knowledge of one another and into simple, surface level, base line knowledge and relationship.
 - Over the next 8 weeks we are simply going to be looking at Jesus, seeking to see and KNOW him and by doing this, to be transformed!
 - Our text today is really Jesus forcing us to deal with the call into REAL relationship with him...to really know him.
- **POINT OF THE TEXT—Jesus did not come to GIVE bread but to BE bread!**
- **v.1-21—Backdrop to the Conversation**
 - All this drama is mounting to the point that the crowd is now HUGE and they are all following Jesus and one day they are all getting hungry and somebody is getting HANGRY and Jesus sits them all down and with one little middle schoolers sack lunch, feeds them all with leftovers.
- **Jesus Rebukes the Crowd (v.22-29)**
 - **Jesus rebuked the crowds' MOTIVE for seeking him (v.22-26)**
 - The people were coming in search of Jesus but not for the sake of finding Jesus but with the motive of satisfying themselves. Themselves, not Jesus, were at the center of their yearning.
 - The people also were missing the point of engaging with Jesus...it was to get HIM, the living bread, not to obtain the material of food.
 - Jesus was angry at them because they were seeking him as USEFUL rather than DELIGHTFUL! Not, "Jesus is precious," but, "what a useful, great king he would be...he would keep us fed and happy!!"
 - **Jesus rebuked the crowds' MEANS of seeking him (v.27-29)**
 - The people were concerned about DOING, rather than BELIEVING, as the means by which to have him.
 - **THE WAY IT WORKS—CONCERN OVER WHAT WE CAN GET FROM JESUS LEADS US TO FOCUS ON DOING!**
 - These Jews, like people throughout the Scriptures, asked the first question of, "what must we DO?"
 - Our hearts LOVE to feel like we are DOING something for God yet he repeatedly tells us that the only doing that matters for eternal life is BELIEVING!
 - In pride, this crowd literally shows NO DOUBT that whatever works God might possibly require, they are ready and able to perform all of them—think Rich Young Ruler, Woman at the Well...this is why Jesus answer is so shocking!
 - **REAL FAITH—not abstract faith but REAL FAITH with a REAL OBJECT..."the one whom he has sent."**
 - **Romans 3:28—For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.**

- Saving faith is the complete antithesis of works of the Law. Our labor is to STOP LABORING!
- **Jesus is the True Moses and the True Manna (v.30-34)**
 - v.30—what work will you do?
 - **Exodus 16:11-36—Moses provides manna from heaven for Israel**
 - If Jesus was claiming to have BETTER manna than Moses, then these people would be expecting Jesus to do even a better miracle! Many Rabbis believed that the 2nd Redeemer (2nd Moses) would call down manna as well.
 - **Deuteronomy 18:15—The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.**
 - v.32—it is my father who gives you the TRUE bread from Heaven.
 - Just in the same way as the Israelites could not live in the wilderness without MANNA, so ALL PEOPLE cannot have eternal life without TRUE BREAD!
 - The crowd is all about the STOMACH...Jesus is all about the HEART!
 - v.34—Just like the woman at the well, these people totally MISS IT.
- **Jesus IS the substance that is able to satisfy our heart's hunger (v.35-40)**
 - v.35—Jesus responds to their blindness with CLARITY...."I am the bread of life"
 - Jesus then addresses their misconception by reminding them that all who come to him NEVER HUNGER AGAIN.
 - **Rev. 7:14-16—those "who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb...stand before the throne of God and hear God say, "never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst."**
 - Old Testament Parallel = Isaiah 55
 - **"Come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?"**
 - v.37—in the face of these Galileans' complete unbelief and blindness, Jesus' confidence is in the sovereign will of God, not the instantaneous responses of these curious people!
 - We must go with this same mindset as we now hold out the Bread of Life to the nations.
 - "All that come to me"—ALL is a singular neuter—one collective body of people representing God's elect. All of them WILL COME.
 - "WHOEVER comes...I will never drive away"—figure of speech conveying, "I will surely keep and preserve."
 - The ALL = a singular group (all believers)...the WHOEVER = each person (those who come will be kept in by Jesus).
 - v.38-40—the reason WHY Jesus will keep/preserve WHOEVER comes to him.
 - Jesus will keep WHOEVER comes to him because it was the will of the Father to HAVE each individual among his elect and it was for that purpose that Jesus came!
 - v.40—in v. 37 and 39 each person whom the Son does not lose and whom the Son raises up is referred to as a gift given by the Father to the Son. Here in v.40, though, these people are referred to as those who possess personal faith in Jesus.
 - Salvation includes BOTH predestination/sovereignty as well as choice/personal faith!
- **Jesus gives True Bread by Grace Through Faith (v.41-51)**
 - Just like these Jews' ancient ancestors who grumbled in the wilderness after receiving manna from heaven, these Jews now grumble and complain after Jesus teaches and demonstrates that he is the Truer Bread from Heaven.

- **By GRACE = v.44**
 - **v.44—no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.**
 - This drawing is unique, selective, distinguished. Place in contrast to v.37, it shows that God gives special drawing grace to those he is drawing to salvation.
 - Directly in the face of Jewish Nationalism—bloodline and lineage DO NOT MATTER!
 - Directly in the face of Prevenient Grace—the notion that God deposits the same small seed of faith in everyone and that this seed must simply be watered, nourished, etc in order to produce saving faith.
 - Jesus is saying here, the ONLY way that anybody ever comes is if the Father draws that person with special, unique, covenant-love-laced grace!
 - v.45—how does God do this “drawing”?
 - Is it like a dominant force? Is it brute strength?
 - No. It’s like the tender drawing of a lover by the pursuit of the other.
 - They will be “taught” by the Lord—the drawing happens as God, by his Spirit, brings illumination, insight, awareness, affection, etc.
 - John 14:26-27; John 16:12-15—the Spirit comes to teach and guide people into truth and life!
 - v.47-48—massively assertive statement from Jesus—everyone who believes HAS eternal life!
- **Through FAITH = v.47—Everyone who believes HAS eternal life**
 - Jesus can both say...”you only come if the Father draws you” AND “everyone who BELIEVES has eternal life.”—LOVE IT!
 - People MUST believe but on Jesus’ TERMS and by his GRACE!
 - v.51—the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh
 - think John 1:14—the word became FLESH.
 - “for the life of the world”—cannot help but remember Jesus has already been introduced as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!
- **We ENJOY the True Bread by Looking and Believing (v.52-59)**
 - v.53-54—these people were inevitably bewildered by what exactly Jesus was demanding that people do to him in order to gain eternal life!
 - **v.54—this would seem abhorrent to these Jews as the Torah strictly forbade the drinking of blood or even eating meat with the blood in it.**
 - notice the parallel to v. 40:
 - v.40 = everyone who looks to the son and believes has eternal life and i will raise him up on the last day.
 - v.54 = whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and i will raise him up on the last day.
 - Thus...v.54 is a metaphorical way to describe the same thing as v.40—eating and drinking IS looking and believing!
 - **v.55-56—“whoever feeds...abides in me and I in him...”**
 - Continually eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ causes continual abiding in him—it is the means by which we keep ourselves attached to the vine of Christ, from which our transformation and soul nourishment comes.
 - **This is not casual. This is not flippant. This is not just doing things and checking things off to feel ok with ourselves for another day. This is FULLY digesting and enjoying all that Jesus is!**
 - This feasting is also the means by which Christ continues to abide with us, to identify with us in help, blessing, grace, transformation.

- v.59—Jesus is saying these things in the synagogue—imagine that the readings happening at the time of Passover are Exodus 16 and Isaiah 54:
- **Jesus demands a personal response (v.60-71)**
 - v.60—Jews and disciples are finding this hard to swallow—John’s dividing line is NEVER race and ALWAYS response to Jesus!
 - Hard = not “hard to understand” but “harsh/offensive”
 - why so offensive:
 - the people were more into the physical food, political messiahship and manipulative miracles than they were the spiritual realities to which they pointed.
 - they were unwilling to relinquish their own spiritual authority for the sake of embracing personal faith in this Jesus.
 - they were offended at Jesus’ claims to be a Truer Moses, a Truer Manna and a Truer Law, sent by God to give eternal life!
 - v.66—What these people wanted, Jesus would not give....what he offered, they would not receive.
 - v.67—So what about YOU, believer?
 - Surely you don’t want to walk away too, do you? Surely you want to feast on me, don’t you?
 - Jesus knows that the disciples need to PROFESS an answer more than he needs to know where they are—they need to respond to all this with resolved faith in the Lord.
- **Conclusion:**
 - **With whom will you identify?**
 - **The Crowd**—focused on self, dazzled by what they have seen and heard but still more worried about physical nourishment than eternal life.
 - It is possible for us to sit here, hear these words spoken, see this miracle worker in action and be thrilled by it...to ask questions of it...to even want it—but on a superficial level rather than a soul level.
 - Please hear the warning—every other food, every other sustenance other than Jesus PERISHES and all consume them PERISH!
 - **The Disciples**—aware of their needs, not only on a physical level, but much more on a spiritual level, they recognize Jesus not just as a cool worker of miracles but as the Messiah, the Holy One of God, in whom is eternal life!