

JOHN

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to John chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We will see in this chapter the feeding of the 5,000 and this is mentioned in all four Gospel's and thus, it must be important. We will also see Jesus walk on water, show that He is the Bread of Life, the rejection by many of His followers and Peter's confession of who Jesus is, "**the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" So, let's dig into John chapter 6 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word.

JOHN 6**VERSES 1-4**

John starts out by telling us the timeframe, "**After these things . . .**" After what things? What was recorded back in John chapter 5. Jesus leaves Jerusalem and is probably coming up on the east side of the Jordan River and He crosses over the Sea of Galilee.

These events happened some six months from the events in chapter 5 of John. And at this point we are about one year from His crucifixion, Passover was near!

In Mark 6:31 we are told that as these crowds began to gather around Him, Jesus and His men did not have time to eat, not even to rest!

Now just a few more details of what happened prior to this event here in John chapter 6. At this point John the Baptist was beheaded by King Herod.

Also, the 12 Apostles have just returned from their mission trip and they are excited, they are pumped-up at what God has done through them, and yet, they are tired from the work they just completed.

So, Jesus takes them to a deserted place by the Sea of Galilee, a hilly area overlooking the Sea of Galilee. When we were in Israel a several years ago we sat on this hillside and it truly is a beautiful and restful place to relax at!

Now the problem came as the multitudes were seeking after Jesus. Why were they seeking after Jesus? Because they saw and kept on seeing all the miracles that He was doing. And when they saw Him get into a boat to cross over the Sea of Galilee, they ran on ahead of Him and beat Him to the other side!

What I want you to notice here is that they did not seek Jesus because He is Almighty God, the Messiah, the Savior, but because He did miracles. We will see how that plays out in our study this evening. But think about this for a minute, because many do the same today. ***“You are following Me because of the things I have given you, because you believe I am a material Savior.”***

If that is the reason you are following Jesus, you are not saved. All the material things of this world will go away! Thus, we long for those things because we are trying to fill that void in our hearts and the only thing that will satisfy, fill that void, is Jesus! Peter will also acknowledge that fact of who Jesus is and why they were following Him and it was not because of the material blessings, but because He is the Messiah!

Also keep in mind that it was the time of the Passover. That means that these multitudes may have been on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast.

Thus, as we are going to see, some 5,000 men plus women and children had gathered around Jesus, maybe some 15,000 to 20,000 people in all!

Keep in mind Jesus came to give His men some rest, but there was ministry to do and God will give them and us the strength for the work that is out there, He will meet the needs of the people.

VERSES 5-7

Now as Jesus looked at the crowds of people, we are told in Mark 6:34 that He had “**compassion**” on the people. He saw them as lost, as wandering without a shepherd to guide them, He felt their pain, their loneliness, so He began to teach them the things of God.

They came to Jesus for the wrong reasons and yet Jesus did not hold back, He spoke the truth to them, He taught them because He loved them! Any pastor who is good will do no less, he will teach his people the Word of God!

But now it is getting late and Jesus asks Philip a question that is going to blow his mind because he is going to try to figure out how to accomplish this task in the power of the flesh.

He asks Philip, “**Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?**” Keep in mind we are talking about feeding some 15,000 to 20,000 people!

Now keep in mind that Jesus did not ask the question because He did not know what to do. John points out that Jesus knew what He was going to do, He is just trying to stretch Philip’s faith, help him to grow.

And I love Philip's response, "**Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.**" A Denarius was the ordinary pay for a day's labor and thus, this would be about six month's wages, but even that would not be enough to feed all these people!

Again, Philip is looking in the physical realm and when you look to man instead of the Master, you will always come up short! And for Philip, they not only didn't have the resources to buy the bread and to feed the multitude, but even if they had enough money, who would have enough food to feed all these people?

The reality was that the answer was right before them. ***JESUS!*** And for us, no matter what we are going through, the answer is still right before us, ***JESUS!***

VERSES 8-9

Andrew points to a young lad who has five barley crackers, which barely was the grain for animals. Also, he had two small pickled fish. Worthless things in the eyes of man!

How in the world can this help feed all these people? You see, that is our problem many times, God has given us things to use for His glory, to minister to people, and we object or become discouraged when we look at what we have compared to the situation and we say, "**what are they among so many?**"

Keep in mind that, "Small things are not always contemptible. It all depends on the hands in which they are." (Taylor)

VERSE 10

Being the time of the Passover, springtime, the hills were bursting forth with beautiful wild flowers and grass and Jesus has the people sit down in groups of 100's and 50's. Why did He do that? Because He is a God of order and not disorder.

Like a shepherd, He makes His sheep lie down so He can feed them. That is what David said in Psalm 23:1-2, "**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.**" Don't be too busy to lie down in His green pastures to receive from Him, *THE BREAD OF LIFE!*

VERSES 11-13

Make no mistake about it, what we think as insignificant God can use and multiply as we see here. All this young lad had to do was to give what he had to Jesus and Jesus took it and fed all these people.

Something else that we need to remember. His disciples have been with Him for some two years. They have seen all the miracles that He did. They went out with the Good News and God worked miracles through them. And yet, in spite of all that, none thought to ask Jesus, "*Lord, can you provide food for them?*"

Now before we are too harsh on them, how often do we see an impossible situation and throw our hands in the air and say, "I guess nothing can be done!" Maybe we should think about saying, "*Lord, can you provide food for them?*" And then see the salvation that the Lord will bring to the situation!

Now the word "**filled**" speaks of being stuffed like you are after a Thanksgiving meal! In fact, they were not only filled but they had 12 large baskets of leftovers!

Some commentators feel that this story is just symbolic, that it didn't really happen. Others say that the miracle was seen in the people watching this young lad give of what he had and share it with others and they in turn gave what they had of their food and began to share it with the other people.

William Barclay, in his commentary on John, leans in this direction, that it was a miracle in them sharing food not multiplying food! He does list the other possibilities but then says,

There may be another and very lovely explanation. It is scarcely to be thought that the crowd left on a nine-mile expedition without making any preparations at all. If there were pilgrims with them, they would certainly possess supplies for the way. But it may be that none would produce what he had, for he selfishly – and very humanly – wished to keep it all for himself.

It may then be that Jesus, with that rare smile of his, produced the little store that he and his disciples had; with sunny faith he thanked God for it and shared it out. Moved by his example, everyone who had anything did the same; and in the end there was enough, more than enough, for all.

It may be that this is a miracle in which the presence of Jesus turned a crowd of selfish men and women into a fellowship of sharers. It may be that this story represents the biggest miracle of all – one which changed not loaves and fishes, but men and women.

- William Barclay, *The Gospel of John* Volume 1, p. 204

And some listen to that and they are like, “Wow, they shared their food with each other! That was the miracle!” Folk's, think about it. If everyone had food to eat, why would then even need to share?

And I don't agree with either of those ideas, that this was just symbolic, it didn't happen or they shared their food, for that is not what John is saying here.

God did a miracle and fed all these people with just five barley crackers and two small fish and we will see that confirmed in verse 14, "**Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.'**" And we will look at this verse in a minute.

But if all they did was share their food, why did this impact them so much that they see Jesus as "**the Prophet who is to come into the world**"?

I like the way that one writer put it, he said "You do what you can do; I'll do what I can do; and God will do what we cannot do." Amen to that!

VERSES 14-15

So as the people saw this miracle, this bread from heaven you might say, I am sure they remembered what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15, "**The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.**"

Jesus was like Moses, whom they thought fed their ancestors in the wilderness for those forty years, but it was really God who was doing that. But they felt this must be the Messiah because of what He was doing.

Not only that, but this Messiah will also lead them out of this Roman bondage just as Moses led them out of their Egyptian bondage!

So, in their excitement, they wanted to make Him King but Jesus withdrew. Why? Because the crowds were willing to support Jesus as long as He gave them what they wanted, and that is what many do today! God didn't accept it back then and He won't today. If you refuse to make Him Lord and Savior of your life, He will depart!

Also, it was not time to usher Him in as King. That is still about one year down the road when He will ride through Jerusalem as Messiah the King as we read in Daniel chapter 9. In fact, it is the exact day that Daniel said this event would take place. So, He withdrew because it was not time yet!

VERSES 16-18

In Matthew and Mark, we are told that Jesus made His men get into the boat to go to the other side. And the reason I believe He wanted His men out of there is He didn't want them to get caught-up with this idea of making Him King, it was not time yet.

So, He is going to teach them lessons of faith as they travel across the Sea of Galilee.

The time frame here is the "**fourth watch**" (Matthew 14:25, Mark 6:48) or between 3 and 6 in the morning.

Now as they begin their journey, and understand that most of these guys were seasoned seafaring people, a strong wind arose and it paralyzed them, they tried to row but they were getting nowhere because of the wind and waves. In fact, they were rowing against the wind and going nowhere!

Now some may wonder where Jesus was during all this, how could He let His men get into a situation like this? Well, we don't have to guess because in Mark 6:48 we are told that Jesus was watching them from a mountain where He was praying for them. Keep in mind that it was a full moon, being Passover, so He saw all that was happening to them.

In regard to these storms on the Sea of Galilee, one writer explains that, "The Sea of Galilee is six hundred feet below sea level, in a cuplike depression among the hills. When the sun sets, the air cools; and as the cooler air from the west rushes down over the hillside, the resultant wind churns the lake. Since the disciples were rowing toward Capernaum, they were heading into the wind; consequently, they made little progress." (Tenney)

Notice the lesson that Jesus is going to show these men.

VERSES 19-21

Think about this. They rowed hard for some six or eight hours and they only made it half-way across the Sea of Galilee, only some three or four miles. And now they are going nowhere as the wind is keeping them from reaching their destination.

And I am sure they were frustrated as they rowed and rowed and went nowhere. "Hey, we are doing what our Lord has told us and we are not going anywhere. What is up with that?"

Think about this also. None of them thought to pray, to seek Jesus. They just continued to try and accomplish this in the power of the flesh and they found out that the only thing that will do is get you frustrated and tired!

So, Jesus comes walking out to them on the Sea of Galilee, walking right over those things that held them down, stopped their progression. And as they see Jesus He literally says, “**I AM, do not be afraid.**” It is Almighty God who is now with them and when God is with you, you don’t need to be afraid.

But they were surprised when Jesus showed up to help them and I wonder if we don’t do the same at times. That we are not looking for Him and when He does show up we are surprised.

Also, let me say this. Just because you are doing the will of God doesn’t mean you will have calm seas! As followers of Jesus we sail our lives into the winds of this world and the world is fighting hard against us. The world does not want us to progress any further. And we try, and we try and we get frustrated.

Pray, seek the Lord, ask for His help. Don’t become frustrated and tired in the work, look to Jesus to be the strength of your life!

We should also note that there are *storms of correction* when we are not obeying the Lord and He is trying to get us back on track. There are *storms of perfection* where the Lord is making us more like Him, causing us to depend upon Him more. I think these men were involved in a storm of perfection because they were doing what the Lord told them to do! There are *storms of direction* where the Lord is leading us to go somewhere, to do something.

Then, in verse 21 we are told, “**Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.**”

On this, one writer tells us, “From this detail given by John it is inferred that the ship seemed to move automatically, without sail or oar, in obedience to His will: so that without effort of the disciples or crew it quickly passed over the remaining distance (two miles or so) and came to shore.” (Trench)

What about all those people who were following Jesus, what happened to them? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 22-25

First of all, when you think of the thousands of people, how did they all find boats to get into so they could follow Jesus? It doesn't say that all of them got into boats, I am sure many traveled on foot to get to Capernaum and find Jesus.

So, picture what is going on here. The crowds of people get up, "What's for breakfast Jesus? Jesus, where did He go?"

Now you may be thinking I am not being fair here but as you will see, these people are not hungry to know God, they are just hungry! Therefore, we will see Jesus not deal with this question of how He got to Capernaum, but a bigger issue, a matter of the heart.

VERSES 26-27

Jesus exposes their hearts by saying the only reason they are coming to Him is to have their bodily appetites satisfied, and that is empty faith. One writer summed it up like this,

Jesus made a contrast between *material* things and *spiritual* things. It is almost universally true that people are more attracted to material things than spiritual things. A sign that says *free money and free food* will get a bigger crowd than one that says *spiritual fulfillment and eternal life*.

- David Guzik

Does Jesus provide for our material needs? Of course He does but that is not the biggest issue. You see, Jesus wanted to give them eternal life but they were thinking on the physical level even though they should have received what Jesus was saying because the Father has set His seal upon Him. And this seal was a mark of ownership and a guarantee of the contents, the Father has done this! And the miracles that Jesus did authenticated who He was, the Messiah!

VERSES 28-29

“What do I need to do to get into heaven?” That is a question that many ask, that many seek and what we see is that religion gives us the works we have to do. Look at the millions of gods the Hindus embrace. The Buddhists have their 8 steps to Nirvana. Islam has its 5 pillars of faith. Roman Catholicism has its sacraments and Purgatory! Even in Judaism they had the Law to keep.

It is a works relationship and yet, how much works, what kind of works will get me in and for that matter, what works will keep me out? No one knows and thus, just work a little harder and maybe you will get in!

There is no hope in that. What works do we need to do? “**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.**” Notice though, in these verses, they are still thinking on the physical level, trying to work their way into heaven and Jesus tells them the only work that is needed to be saved is believe in Him, put your faith in Him.

In other words, if you believe in the Father you will believe in the Son. And this belief is not just acknowledging who Jesus is, it is living in obedience to what He has said. Works don't save us but the identify who we are serving!

We are told in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

In Titus 3:5 we are told, **“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”**

And in Romans 6:23, from The Living Bible, we read **“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

The work has been completed for us by Jesus on the cross of Calvary, we just must receive that grace gift into our lives by faith!

VERSES 30-33

Here we see that Jesus corrects their theology. They said Moses fed their fathers in the wilderness and Jesus correctly reminds them that it wasn't Moses who provided them the manna in the wilderness to eat, but God. And now God has provided them the true bread, bread that is needed for their spirits to grow, just as physical bread is needed for the body to grow and be healthy.

We might paraphrase the reply of Jesus like this, “What other work will I do? This is the work: to give you the Word of God and eternal life in and through Me. This is the spiritual bread you must feast on to have life.”

VERSES 34-40

They wanted the material *bread* Jesus miraculously provided, and they wanted it *always*. They are still thinking on the physical level and Jesus is speaking on a spiritual level. Thus, Jesus is going to try and lift them from this physical thinking to spiritual thinking.

And here in verse 35 we see the first of the seven “I AM” statements that John records for us. And John wants us to understand and Jesus wants us to understand that He is the great “I AM” of Exodus chapter 3, the EGO AMI in the Greek, the becoming one has become the bread of life for our spirits to partake of.

You see, if you come to Jesus, partake of Him, you will “never” hunger or thirst again and in the Greek, it is emphatic, you will always be filled, your thirst will always be met in Him!

Over the next several weeks as we go through the Gospel of John we will be looking at these seven “I AM” statements by Jesus but here they are: Jesus said, “I AM the Bread of life” (6:35, 41, 48, 51). “I AM the Light of the world” (8:12). “I AM the Door of the sheep” (10:7, 9). “I AM the Good Shepherd” (10:11, 14). “I AM the Resurrection and the Life” (11:25). “I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life” (14:6). “I AM the true Vine” (15:1, 5).

And the reason John listed all these and for writing this Gospel, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” John 20:30-31.

Now starting in verse 37 we see that all who come to Jesus He will receive. “But I don’t want to come to Jesus!” Then I guess you are not His and thus, He will cast you out! Sorry, but that is just the reality and that is what Jesus is saying to this multitude of people.

Then, in verse 39 Jesus says that He will not lose anything and He is speaking of us. Let me ask you this, how many of you have lost things before? All of us have and the great thing here is that Jesus says to us that once we are His, we will never be lost again, He won't misplace us!

It is as Paul said in Philippians 1:6, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**

Thus, as we come to Him we will have that abundant, that everlasting life that is only found in Him, where there is true satisfaction! We can know that we are saved and we don't have to wait until we die. For those who reject Him, Jesus would tell them, *“I never knew you!”* But for those who believe, we have that assurance and that confidence that He will lose none who come to Him, He is the Great Shepherd!

The tragedy today, like back then, is many have seen or heard of Jesus but they still do not believe and they have not entered into that everlasting life with Him!

VERSES 41-46

After all they saw Jesus do they were still murmuring, grumbling because they just could not believe what Jesus was saying even though the things He did proved who He said He was! In fact, “Six times in this immediate context Jesus says that he ‘came down from heaven’ (6:33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58). His claim to heavenly origin is unmistakable.” (Tenney)

So, they knew what He was saying, but again, they just refused to believe! Listen again to verse 42, their response to what Jesus has 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’?’**” You see, their familiarity with Jesus prevented them from receiving Him into their lives.

Jesus also tells us that the Father is drawing people to Jesus and thus, election. That means that God chooses some and the others, not so much! I don’t think so. I realize that Reformed Theology proponents will use this to help support what they believe, but as you look at the Scriptures, God is drawing all men to Jesus.

We are told in II Peter 3:9, “**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**”

You see, it is then up to us to receive the gift of life found in Jesus, to yield to the Spirit’s calling, drawing us to Jesus, or to reject it. One leads to eternal life, the other to eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.

And in verse 46 Jesus tells us that no one has seen the Father except Jesus! How can that be? It is simple. Because He was eternally in heaven, one with the Father, and then sent to earth by the Father, the Son can speak authoritatively about the Father. No one else can rightly make such a claim. Thus, only the Son is qualified to speak firsthand about the expectations of the Father and the truth of salvation.

VERSES 47-51

Everlasting life, it is what people are looking for and they have all kinds of ideas of what that everlasting life is all about and how to obtain it. And once again we see that Jesus says that if you want this everlasting life with the Father, then you must **BELIEVE** in Him, repent and receive Him as Lord and Savior of your life.

I know, it does not say that we have to repent and receive Him but as you look at the Scriptures, that is exactly what they say and we can't edit them to fit what we want. This belief is a total change of life. You were moving away from God and now you have turned to Him in belief and you are following Him – that is what **REPENTANCE** is all about!

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:19-21, **“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”** He is the bread of life, everlasting life if you would only partake of Him; receive Him into your life!

Then, in verses 49 and 50 Jesus speaks of the manna that God fed the children of Israel in the wilderness. You see, this met their physical needs, but their bodies still died.

Now when we speak of physical death we are talking about the separation of our consciousness from our bodies.

When we speak of spiritual death we are talking about a separation of our consciousness from God. And that is what sin has done and because our sin separated us from God we see that Jesus came to restore that separation by paying in full the penalty for our sins.

Peter put it this way, “**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.**”

I Peter 3:18.

You see, we can enjoy that relationship with God now by coming to Christ and when our physical bodies go back to the dust of the earth, we will go to be with the Lord.

If we reject Jesus, our spirits are already dead, separated from God, and when these physical bodies go back to the dust of the earth, they will remain separated from God for eternity!

I like what Spurgeon had to say regarding this. He wrote, “Every man feeds on something or other. You see, one man getting his Sunday newspaper; how he will feed on that! Another goes to frivolous amusements, and he feeds on them. Another man feeds upon his business, and upon the thought of his many cares! But all that is poor food; it is only ashes and husks. If you did but possess true spiritual life, you would know the deep necessity there is of feeding upon Christ.”

And in verse 51 many see this speaking of communion and the eating of Jesus’ flesh! Not at all. What is the context of what we have been reading? Everlasting life by believing that Jesus is Almighty God, the Savior. And if the children of Israel all ended up dying in the wilderness because the manna was only physical food, why do we thinking that eating the flesh of Jesus would give us eternal life? That is crazy and it is very wrong.

I realize that some may be offended by that. But the point that Jesus is making when He says that the bread He is to give that we must partake of “**is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world**” He is speaking of dying on the cross of Calvary!

Bruce put it like this, “To give one’s flesh can scarcely mean anything other than death, and the wording here points to a death which is both voluntary (‘I will give’) and vicarious (‘for the life of the world’).”

And Clarke wrote, “Here our Lord plainly declares that his death was to be a *vicarious sacrifice* and *atonement* for the sin of the world; and that, as no human life could be preserved unless there was *bread* (proper nourishment) received, so no soul could be saved but by the merit of his death.”

That just flows with what Jesus is saying and not some man-made doctrine that has come into the church. Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

And for those who still think this relates to communion, Morris should dispel that kind of thinking as he wrote, “When a man once takes it (‘eat’ is in the aorist tense, of the once-for-all action of receiving Christ) he will not die.”

Again, we receive Christ once into our lives and then we grow in Him and that is exactly what Jesus is saying here.

We will get into more controversy as we read on regarding this communion idea, so let’s read on.

VERSES 52-59

Now think about this. These Jewish leaders are quarreling and saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” I am not sure that they really believed that is what Jesus was saying but to discredit Him, they went down that path.

The reason I say that is because in John 6:51 He just spoke of the bread being His body and that He would give His life as a sacrifice for the life of the world. They twisted what Jesus said and gave the people the idea of this bizarre cannibalism to obtain eternal life!

Now the problem with that, if that is what Jesus was saying, is that it went against what God said in His Word. Do you really think that the Word, Jesus, would tell them to do something that was contrary to the Word? Of course not.

In Leviticus 17:10-14 we are told, **“And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.’ Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.’ Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”**

I think that is very clear. What is the blood for? To make atonement for our sins. What did Jesus do for us? He shed His blood to make atonement for our sins. So, there is no way that Jesus would tell them to drink His blood!

Morris puts it like this, “Eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood point to that central saving act described otherwise in, say, John 3:16. Christ’s death opens the way to life. Men enter that way by faith. . . . Eating the flesh and drinking the blood represent a striking way of saying this.”

Now as you read verses 53 to 58 it does seem to say that Jesus is speaking of partaking of His actual body and blood. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

Some have taken this and said that it speaks of communion where they then say the wafer becomes the actual body of Christ and the wine the actual blood of Christ.

Spurgeon commented on this as he wrote, “Our Savior was, however, led to make these remarks from the fact that the ignorant Jews, when he talked about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, really thought that he meant that they were to turn cannibals, and eat him up. You may well smile at so ridiculous an idea; yet you know that the idea is still prevalent in the Church of Rome. The Romish priest solemnly assures us that the people who eat the bread and drink the wine, or the stuff he calls bread and wine, do actually act the part of cannibals, and eat the body of Christ, and drink his blood.”

Folk’s, what Jesus is saying or really, He is illustrating, that just as you need to take into your physical bodies food and water you must also receive into your spirit Jesus for He alone can give life! And in a few verses Jesus is going to clear that misunderstanding up for us about physically, literally eating His body and drinking His blood.

And this took place in the synagogue in Capernaum, so there were many Jews and Jewish religious leaders there listening to this and remember, they did not like Jesus, so they looked for ways to discredit Him.

VERSES 60-63

I like what one writer wrote regarding the response of some of His disciples. He wrote, “It is little wonder that the disciples found the discourse of Jesus hard. The Greek word is *skleros*, which means not *hard to understand*; but *hard to accept*.” (Barclay)

They did not like what Jesus said, it was too hard for them and this verse can literally be stated that they were saying “*Who can stand and listen to such offensive doctrine?*”

Why did it bother them so much? Because Jesus was not doing what they wanted, giving them physical bread, and when that didn’t happen, when what Jesus said went against what they wanted to believe, they just left!

Not only that, but they were looking for a King and a Kingdom and when Jesus said that He was going to ascend back to heaven, they didn’t like that as well!

What got in the way of these disciples? Pride, the flesh, they wanted what they wanted and when they wanted it.

You see, as Jesus was dealing with issues of the flesh they did not like it and when people refuse to crucify it, they will leave. That is what we see here.

Today we have marketing strategies for the church that don’t make room for the flesh to be dealt with, but instead they tend to feed the flesh, help it to grow, encouraging people to follow Jesus for purely physical reasons, fleshly motives!

As you can see, Jesus did not accept that back then and He doesn’t do so today! I am sorry, the flesh needs to be crucified, not fed!

Also, as I have said, Jesus speaks of something even more troublesome for them, the cross. Paul said, “**but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.**” I Corinthians 1:23.

In other words, what Jesus is saying here in John, if this issue bothers you, look out because the cross is going to be even more offensive to you than this. And it was and still is for many today. You see, for Jesus to ascend back to heaven, to be received into glory, he had to go through the cross!

And when Jesus said, **“What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?”** He was basically saying, “If all this has offended you, what will you think when you see Me in glory, and have to answer to Me in judgment?” Better to be offended now and to get over it, then to be offended on that day.

Now why do I not accept this as being the literal body and blood that we are to partake in communion? First of all, communion was not even established at this point, the New Covenant is not given to the disciples until the night of the last supper.

And if you look at what Jesus said in verse 63, He is not speaking of physically partaking of His body and blood. How can I be so sure? Because He says that the flesh profits nothing. He is talking spiritual, receiving Him, receiving His Words into your life, partaking of Him and you will have life!

Let’s not make the Word of God fit into what we want to believe, let God speak for Himself and if we do, I think it is very clear in what He is saying!

VERSES 64-66

How tragic, many left Him because they refused to submit to Him, to His authority, to His control of their lives. They were more interested in feeding their body appetites, and when Jesus was not doing that, when their faith was challenged, they left.

We have to be careful here that we don't encourage people to follow Jesus for material reasons. "You need Jesus and your life will be great. All your problems will be gone!" I have heard that before and that is wrong.

I don't know about you, but when I came to Christ all my problems grew! But now I have Jesus who will see me through those difficult times. And if you get people to come to Christ for material reasons, then when those things fail, and they will, they will leave just as we see here!

VERSES 67-69

Peter hits the nail on the head here. Yes, it is not always easy to follow Christ. The challenges we face, but where else can you go, who are you going to run to? There is no one else who loves you more, who has what is best for your life than Jesus. His Words are eternal life. Yes, the world may tempt us but it can't give us life, it can't give us joy and satisfaction, for that is only found in Jesus as we partake of Him.

And I love what Peter says, "**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**"

Look at what Peter believed,

That Jesus was LORD!

That Jesus was the answer despite the difficulties that may come!

That Jesus had the Words of eternal life and thus, he looked to the spiritual rather than the physical or earthly things.

That Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

This is what the others rejected but Peter says that they are not going anywhere, they are following Jesus. May we have that same passion!

VERSES 70-71

Remember that Peter said “**we**” and thus, was speaking of all 12 of the apostles and the Lord is correcting him here, one will betray Him, Judas! Of this Bruce wrote, “One of them was a *diabolos* – the Greek word means a ‘slanderer’ or ‘calumniator’ or ‘false accuser’, but it is probably used here as the counterpart to the Hebrew *satan*, ‘adversary’.”

Make no mistake about it, Jesus prayed all night for these men before He chose them, and Judas was one of them, but he chose not to receive Jesus and in the end, he betrayed Jesus.

You see, God gave all a chance, just as He does today, all have the same choice to make, to come to Him or to reject Him, those are the only choices that matter for they have eternal consequences attached to them! It is a matter of the wills, God’s or ours!

As I close let me leave you with this to think about. You can know if you have eternal life. I know that is hard for some to believe, but listen carefully to what Jesus said in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

Again, John picks up on this same thought in I John 5:13, where he says, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

What a joy, what a comfort, what peace we can have in knowing that we have eternal life that is given to us through believing, receiving, partaking of Jesus!