

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 6.41-59



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Gospel of John: John 6.41-59  
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## Introduction to *John 6.41-59*

Jesus is teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum, and His words are difficult to understand and even harder to accept. People are muttering, getting angry, and demanding clarification. But Jesus presses on with His claims about eating His flesh, drinking His blood, and coming to Him

These were hard words, but Jesus expected the people to hear, understand, and receive them, and to believe in Him for the gift of everlasting life.

Instead, as we shall see, people began to turn away from Him. Was His ministry becoming unraveled? Was He failing in His mission?

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T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 Say What?

*Read and meditate on John 6.41-59.*

It's not hard to understand why the people of Jesus' day found it so hard to believe Him. That's why Jesus did miracles, all of which pointed back to well-known Old Testament teachings that would have explained everything. If only they cared to hear.

<sup>41</sup>So then  
the Jews complained about Him, since He said,  
"I am the Bread of heaven."<sup>42</sup>They said, "Is this  
not Jesus, Joseph's son? So how then is  
it that He says, 'I have from heaven come down?'"

- John 6.41, 42

*Reflect*

1. The Jews were complaining about Jesus, but only in a low voice, among themselves. Why were they not *more* outspoken? What was constraining them? Complete this prayer: *Lord, when enough of us who believe in You are willing to speak out as Your witnesses, we will break the spiral of silence and...*

2. In John's day, he confronted a heresy called *Docetism*, which insisted that Jesus only *appeared* to be a real man (Greek: *dokeo*, "so seem"), but He wasn't. He was more like a phantom. How does John refute that notion in 1 John 1.1-3? How do the comments of these muttering Jews refute the view of the Docetics? *I know You are the true Son of Man, Lord Jesus, and this means that I...*

3. We recall that Jesus made this claim about being the Bread of heaven in a context in which people had been fed bread, and were thinking about the manna which Israel was given in the wilderness (cf. vv. 26, 31). What were these people thinking as they heard Jesus make this claim? Were they correct? Was Jesus deliberately trying to mislead them? Why was this an apt metaphor for Jesus to use in referring to Himself? *Lord, I know You to be the true Bread of heaven because...*

4. The Jews understood Jesus' claim. They just couldn't make any sense of it. Why not? Were they trapped in some basic assumptions? Explain. *I know that many people today, Lord, have a problem with spiritual notions such as the incarnation and resurrection. My responsibility toward such people is not to make them believe, but to...*

5. Jesus' claim to be the Bread come down from heaven stretched the thinking of those who heard Him. He was fusing in Himself two ideas – one of earthly, bodily existence, and one of divine incarnational redemption. The Jews could not put these together, yet Jesus insisted *not* that they figure it all out, but that they *believe* Him (v. 40). Is it necessary, for people to believe in Jesus, that they reason themselves to such a decision? What *is* necessary? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"His meaning is, 'You must hear spiritually what relates to me, for he who hears carnally neither

profits nor gathers any advantage.’ It was carnal to question how Jesus came down from heaven, to consider him as the son of Joseph, to ask, ‘How can he give us his flesh to eat?’ All this was carnal when, instead, they ought to have understood the matter in a mystical and spiritual sense. ‘But,’ says someone, ‘how could they understand what “eating flesh” might mean?’ Then it was their duty to wait for the proper time and enquire, and not to abandon him.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

This passage (Jn. 6.35-59) brings into our purview three important obligations regarding the gift of salvation and eternal life: Hearing, understanding, and believing. Explain how these work together so that someone comes to saving faith. What obstacles do unbelievers need to overcome?

*Closing Prayer*

Fools, because of their transgression,  
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.  
Their soul abhorred all manner of food,  
And they drew near to the gates of death.  
Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,  
*And* He saved them out of their distresses.  
He sent His word and healed them,  
And delivered *them* from their destructions.  
Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,  
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!  
Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
And declare His works with rejoicing.

Psalm 107.17-22

**Psalm 107.17-22, 1-3** (*Faithfulness: Great is Thy Faithfulness*)

Foolish and sinful, afflicted and dying,  
All of our ways with iniquity fraught –  
You hear our tears, our laments, and our crying,  
You sent Your Word and to us mercy brought!  
Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,  
We give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!  
We who from east and west, north and south gather,  
Boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

## 2 Coming to Jesus

*Read and meditate on John 6.43-45.*

Jesus rebuked the Jews for muttering and murmuring. They should have been seeking to learn more from Him. Instead, they merely reinforced one another in their unbelief.

<sup>43</sup>Then Jesus answered, looking all around,  
“You should not murmur. <sup>44</sup>None can come to Me  
unless the Father draws him unto Me,  
and I will raise him up on the last day.

<sup>45</sup> As it is written in the prophets, ‘They  
shall all be taught by God.’ So everyone  
who hears, and from the Father learns, will come  
to Me.

- John 6.43-45

*Reflect*

1. Jesus pointed out to the Jews that muttering among themselves was not the right response to His teaching about being the Bread of life (v. 43). This may seem a small matter, but John thought it was important enough to include in his narrative. We will not come to truth and a greater experience of eternal life by complaining or murmuring or muttering with like-minded skeptics. What should we do instead? Complete this prayer: *Lord, much that I read in Scripture is hard to understand. Whenever I find myself puzzling over something in Your Word, help me to...*

2. Murmuring and complaining with fellow skeptics was just a way of keeping from coming to Jesus. Jesus immediately followed His rebuke of the Jews with the phrase, “No one can come to Me...” (v. 44). What does this mean? What’s another way of expressing this idea? *I need to come to You every day, Lord, so help me to...*

3. Notice, however, that coming to Jesus is not something people can accomplish on their own strength. What is necessary for someone to come to Jesus (v. 44)? Does this suggest anything about how you should pray for the people in your Personal Mission Field? *I want my lost friends to come to You, Lord Jesus, so...*

4. What does Jesus hold out as the result, the ultimate blessing, of coming to Him (v. 44)? What makes this such a special promise? *Thank You, Lord, that on that last day, I...*

5. Jesus emphasized again the role of the Father in people coming to Him, based on what the Old Testament teaches (v. 45). Who comes to Jesus? How? Why do we say that coming to Jesus is a work of grace? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“As if to say, I know why you do not hunger after this bread and so cannot understand it and do not seek it.... ‘No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him.’ This is the doctrine of grace: none comes unless they are drawn. But whom the Father draws, and whom not,

and why he draws one and not another, do not presume to decide if you want to avoid falling into error. Take the doctrine as it is given to you: and, if you are not drawn, pray that you may be.”

*Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Salvation in Jesus Christ is by the grace of God, but those who try to keep Jesus at arms' length, and who seek out like-minded company to reinforce their unbelief, will not come to Him. How can we help people who may be in this position? What should we do to encourage them to *hear* and *learn* from God?

*Closing Prayer*

Restore us, O God of our salvation,  
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.  
Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?  
Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You?  
Show us Your mercy, LORD,  
And grant us Your salvation.  
I will hear what God the LORD will speak,  
For He will speak peace  
To His people and to His saints;  
But let them not turn back to folly.  
Surely His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,  
That glory may dwell in our land.

Psalm 85.4-9

**Psalm 85.4-9** (*Lions: O Worship the King*)

Restore us, O God, renew us in peace,  
And cause all Your wrath against us to cease.  
Will You evermore all Your wrath to us show?  
Revive us, that we may Your joy again know.

Lord, show us Your love; restore us, we pray!  
And help us to hear the words that You say.  
Speak peace to Your people; in truth let us stand.  
We fear You; let glory and grace fill our land.

### 3 For the Life of the World

*Read and meditate on John 6.46-51.*

Jesus insists that He comes directly from the Father with His message of life for the world. He Who lived in heaven came down from heaven with the life of heaven for all who will forsake the hopes of the flesh and “eat” the heavenly Bread.

*<sup>46</sup>No one has ever seen the Father, except Him sent by God; He has the Father seen. <sup>47</sup>Truly do I say to you, he who believes in Me shall never die, but to eternity shall live. <sup>48</sup>I am the Bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers, all of whom are dead, ate manna in the wilderness. <sup>50</sup>But this the Bread which comes down from the heavens is, that one may eat of it, and never die. <sup>51</sup>The living Bread that came from heaven am I. Whoever eats this Bread will ever live, because My flesh this Bread is, which I give so that the world may live.”*

- John 6.46-51

*Reflect*

1. How can you see that Jesus claimed the very authority of God the Father for His teaching (v. 46)? Why is this important? Complete this prayer: *All authority in heaven and in earth is Yours, Lord Jesus, even the authority over my life to...*
2. Jesus keeps offering various combinations of the same ideas: Bread of life, believe in Him, have everlasting life. It's clear to Him that His audience is having trouble processing this information, but He keeps repeating it anyway. Why? How does this counsel us concerning our witness for Christ? *Father, just because people won't listen to the Good News doesn't mean we should forsake or alter it. What it means for me is...*
3. Again (v. 49), Jesus discourages His hearers from thinking in merely materialistic terms. If all they want is more physical bread, their end will be the same as that of their fathers. They need to raise their sights (v. 50). Getting past the limitations of our fleshly desires and merely rational worldview is a challenge for witnesses in every generation. How have you experienced this in your witness for the Lord? How do you deal with it? *Lord, I want to be faithful and effective in my witness for You, so help me...*
4. How is Jesus using the idea “eat” here (vv. 50, 51)? As we shall see, this only creates more confusion, and Jesus knew it would. But why is this an apt way of thinking about what it means to come to Jesus? *Lord, I would feed on You every day by...*
5. Jesus said that He would offer His flesh, not merely so that people could have eternal life, but

“for the life of the world” (Greek: *cosmos*). What does this mean? What “life” does Jesus’ death accomplish for the cosmos? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“But are we, who eat the bread that comes down from heaven, relieved from death? From visible and carnal death, the death of the body, we are not: we shall die, even as they died. But from spiritual death, which their fathers suffered, we are delivered. Moses and ... many who were acceptable to God ate the manna and did not die because they understood that visible food in a spiritual sense, spiritually tasted it and were spiritually filled with it. And we too on this day receive the visible food. But the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another. Many a one receives from the altar and perishes in receiving; eating and drinking his own damnation, as the apostle said. ... To eat the heavenly bread spiritually then is to bring innocence to the altar. Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly. Before you go to the altar, attend to the prayer you repeat, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” If you forgive, you are forgiven: approach confidently; it is bread, not poison.... None then that eat of this bread shall die.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ – His flesh on the altar of Calvary – brings from heaven the life of the Father to a world languishing in sin and unbelief. This is truly *Good News!* With whom can you share this Good News today?

*Closing Prayer*

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.  
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;  
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.  
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt His name together.  
I sought the LORD, and He heard me,  
And delivered me from all my fears.  
They looked to Him and were radiant,  
And their faces were not ashamed.  
This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.  
The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,  
And delivers them.  
Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;  
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 34.1-8

**Psalm 34.1-9, 3** (*Alleluia [Lowe]: Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*)

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!  
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!  
Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

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When I sought the Lord, He answered, and from fear delivered me.  
Those who look to Him are radiant; shamed their face shall never be.

Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I cried to God, He heard me, and from trouble rescued me.  
'Round their camp His angel lingers that they may delivered be.

Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.  
None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.

Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

## 4 Food and Drink, Indeed

*Read and meditate on John 6.52-54.*

The murmuring and muttering has degenerated into arguing and quarreling. Stubborn unbelief can get really ugly. Meanwhile, Jesus pours it on.

*<sup>52</sup>The Jews began to argue, saying to themselves, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’<sup>53</sup> But He explained, ‘I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of Him Who is the Son of Man, and drink His blood, then you in no way can have life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood, shall certainly be blessed with life eternal; on the last day, I will raise him.*

- John 6.52-54

*Reflect*

1. This verb *began to argue* is quite strong. It borders on a fight breaking out. But note: They weren't arguing with Jesus. They were quarreling with one another. Why? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I should not be afraid of people who get angry when they're confronted with the Good News. Instead, I...*
2. It's obvious the Jews were stuck on the *literal* meaning of Jesus' words. But Jesus does not appear to be helping them much. Into the midst of their confusion, He reinforces His insistence that they must eat His flesh with the statement that they must also drink His blood. Drinking blood of animals would have been regarded by the Jews as unclean and unacceptable (Lev. 17.10). Why is Jesus doing this (Lev. 17.11)? *My life is only in You, Lord Jesus, in Your flesh and blood. Thank You that...*
3. Jesus' use of "eat" and "drink" and "flesh" and "blood" is deliberately intended to cue up the Old Testament sacrificial laws, in which – drinking blood excepted – this is what people did to realize forgiveness of their sins. How does this help us understand what Jesus is saying here, and why it was an apt metaphor? *Help me to see You in every part of Scripture, Lord, so that, as I read Your Word...*
4. The Old Testament sacrifices could not *give life* because they could not *take away sin*, but merely *covered* it for a season. But the writer of Hebrews understood what Jesus was saying, and the Biblical basis for His claim. Look at Hebrews 10.1-10. How does this help us to understand what Jesus was saying here? *Thank You, Lord Jesus, for offering Your flesh for the life of the world, so that I...*
5. What Jesus was saying to these Jews was altogether appropriate, given their religious background. It might be harder for someone *not* from that background to understand what the Lord is saying here. How would you interpret Jesus' meaning here to an unbelieving friend? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“One cannot benefit from the Word of God for eternal life, except through his flesh. For until he was joined to the flesh, all flesh was held under the power of death. But now his life-giving flesh has been given. It nourishes the whole human race to life through the power suspended in it and joined in likeness to those who share the same physical nature.” *Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-392 AD)*

By eating a sin offering, an Old Testament Jew ate the flesh of an animal that forfeited its life to atone for his sins. This is the point Jesus is making, but with a significant difference related to the idea of blood. What is that difference?

*Closing Prayer*

The fool hath said in his heart,  
*There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,  
*there is* none that doeth good.  
The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,  
to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.  
They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy:  
*there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.  
Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and call not upon the LORD.  
There were they in great fear:  
for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

Psalm 14.1-5

**Psalm 14.4, 5** (*St. Anne: O God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

None understands, none seeks the Lord; they all have turned aside.  
Deception leads them from God’s Word who have His grace denied.

The workers of iniquity consume God’s sheep like bread;  
They trust not in the Lord, and He shall fill their hearts with dread.

## 5 This Way to Life

*Read and meditate on John 6.55-57.*

Despite the fussing and fuming going on around Him, Jesus continued to press the metaphor of His flesh and blood as food leading to life. He is not being obtuse or stubborn; He is appealing to these Jews on the basis of the Old Testament sacrificial system – which they don't seem to think as much of as He does.

<sup>55</sup>“For My flesh is food indeed;  
likewise My blood, My blood is drink indeed.  
<sup>56</sup>And He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood  
abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>The good  
and living Father sent Me, and I live  
because of Him; so also, he shall live  
who feeds on Me, because of Me.”

- John 6.55-57

*Reflect*

1. Food and drink: The staples of life. How might you use this cultural idea to help someone understand what we gain by believing in Jesus? Complete the following prayer: *You are the Bread of life, Lord, and people today still need to...*
2. Jesus introduces the idea of *abiding* in Him (v. 56). This is the first mention of the idea in John's gospel, but it will not be the last. The Greek word is *menei* and means *to continue* or *remain*. What does it mean to *abide* in Jesus, and how is that related to eating His flesh and drinking His blood? *Help me to abide in You today, Lord. That is, help me...*
3. Comment on Jesus' use of the idea of *living* in verse 57. What connections does He make? What is He offering? *Lord, I know I'm truly living in You when...*
4. In verse 57, Jesus substitutes the word *feeds* for *eats* and *drinks*. The Greek means literally, take a meal. Does this idea simply subsume eating and drinking, or does it add abiding, or anything else? Explain. *Abide with me today, Lord, and help me to abide in You, so that...*
5. With respect to the salvation Jesus brings, there is a “once for all” *eating* and *drinking* and an “ongoing” *feeding* on Him. Both are necessary to be truly saved. Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“The Lord and master was inviting his slaves, and the food he had prepared for them was himself. Who would ever dare to eat his own Lord and master? And yet he said, ‘Whoever eats me lives because of me.’ When Christ is eaten, life is eaten. Nor is he killed in order to be eaten, but he brings life to the dead. When he is eaten, he nourishes without diminishing. So do not be afraid, brothers and sisters, of eating this bread, in case we should possibly finish it and find nothing to eat later on. Let Christ be eaten; when eaten he lives because when slain he rose again.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Jesus calls all who would have everlasting life to feed on Him. The life of heaven came down to earth in Jesus' flesh and blood. As we partake of Him, we live. How will you partake of Him today?

*Closing Prayer*

Bless God in the congregations,  
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.  
There *is* little Benjamin, their leader,  
The princes of Judah *and* their company,  
The princes of Zebulun *and* the princes of Naphtali.  
Your God has commanded your strength;  
Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.  
Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,  
Kings will bring presents to You.  
Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,  
The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,  
*Till everyone* submits himself with pieces of silver.  
Scatter the peoples *who* delight in war.  
Envoys will come out of Egypt;  
Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.  
Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth;  
Oh, sing praises to the Lord,  
Selah  
To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, *which were* of old!  
Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice.  
Ascribe strength to God;  
His excellence *is* over Israel,  
And His strength *is* in the clouds.  
O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places.  
The God of Israel *is* He who gives strength and power to *His* people.  
Blessed be God!

Psalm 68.26-35

**Psalm 68.26-35, 32, 33** (*O Store Gud: How Great Thou Art*)

Bless God in all His holy congregations,  
Even the Lord, the Fountainhead of grace;  
He calls His people forth from all the nations  
And gathers them before His glorious face.  
Sing to the Lord, O kingdoms of the earth!  
Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!  
Behold, He speaks; His Word is going forth;  
Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!

To You, O God, are strength and exaltation,  
You fill the skies and dwell in holy awe!  
To us You give strength, pow'r, and full salvation,

Blessed be Your Name, our strong, majestic God!  
Sing to the Lord, O kingdoms of the earth!  
Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!  
Behold, He speaks; His Word is going forth;  
Ancient of Days – praise Him on high!

## 6 Bread for Life

Read and meditate on John 6.58, 59.

Jesus brings His teaching to a conclusion by returning to the manna in the wilderness one more time. This is stranger and more powerful teaching than these folks had *ever* heard in their synagogue.

<sup>58</sup>“For this  
the Bread that comes to you from heaven is,  
not as your fathers ate the manna, and  
are dead. But eat this Bread, now understand,  
and you will live forever.”<sup>59</sup>These things He  
taught in the synagogue, across the sea,  
when He was in Capernaum.

- John 6.58, 59

Reflect

1. Those who write for the Internet do their best to make their messages “sticky” – memorable and thought-provoking. Do you think this message of Jesus was “sticky” for the folks in Capernaum? Why or why not? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, I need to learn how to talk to others about You, so that my witness...*
2. Notice how neat and concise Jesus was in wrapping up His message. He returned to the place where His teaching began, and tied it all together (cf. vv. 26-32). More precisely, He returned to the place where *the people* had begun this conversation (vv. 31, 32), but which He took over and expanded. How can you see Jesus’ entire teaching in this chapter in verse 58? How important is it that we make the Gospel concise? *If I had to summarize the Gospel in one sentence, Lord, I would say...*
3. Jesus’ teaching was mysterious, profound, provocative, and divisive. He knew this would be the case. So why did He follow this tact, rather than find something more agreeable to the congregation? *Your Word helps me most, Lord, when...*
4. Jesus chose bread and flesh because these images were in the background of the people He was teaching. He used these images to communicate what He meant by the verbs *hear, understand, believe, come, live, and abide*. Can you think of a metaphor or image that might communicate with the people in your Personal Mission Field, to help them understand these verbs in a more concrete and “sticky” manner? *I need to work harder at getting to know the people to whom You send me, Lord. Today, I will...*
5. This congregation left the meeting confused, quarreling, and a little upset at Jesus (cf. v. 60). Why don’t preachers today preach like this? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“All the angels on high marvel at the affairs of earth  
For earth-born men dwelling here below  
Are exalted in spirit and reach what is on high

As they share in Christ, crucified.  
For all together partake of His body,  
As they eagerly come to the bread of life,  
They hope for eternal salvation from it.” *Romanus Melodus (fl. 536-566AD)*

Jesus did not shy away from being controversial or confrontational. But He was always clear, never mean-spirited or haughty, never merely frivolous, and always truthful and loving in His teaching. Is this how you experience Jesus, as He speaks to you from His Word? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

Those who trust in the LORD  
*Are* like Mount Zion,  
*Which* cannot be moved, but abides forever.  
As the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
So the LORD surrounds His people  
From this time forth and forever.  
For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest  
On the land allotted to the righteous,  
Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.  
Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,  
And to *those who are* upright in their hearts.

Psalm 125.1-4

**Psalm 125.1, 2** (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!  
Like the hills surrounding safe Jerusalem,  
Christ surrounds His Church and holds her in His mighty Hand!  
All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!

## 7 The Bread of Life

*Read and meditate on John 6.41-59.*

Throughout this difficult and divisive teaching, Jesus kept one idea consistently before the people.

<sup>41</sup>So then  
the Jews complained about Him, since He said,  
“I am the Bread of heaven.”<sup>42</sup>They said, “Is this  
not Jesus, Joseph’s son? So how then is  
it that He says, ‘I have from heaven come down?’”  
<sup>43</sup>Then Jesus answered, looking all around,  
“You should not murmur. <sup>44</sup>None can come to Me  
unless the Father draws him unto Me,  
and I will raise him up on the last day.  
<sup>45</sup>As it is written in the prophets, ‘They  
shall all be taught by God.’ So everyone  
who hears, and from the Father learns, will come  
to Me. <sup>46</sup>No one has ever seen the Father,  
except Him sent by God; He has the Father  
seen. <sup>47</sup>Truly do I say to you, he who  
believes in Me shall never die, but to  
eternity shall live. <sup>48</sup>I am the Bread  
of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers, all of whom are dead,  
ate manna in the wilderness. <sup>50</sup>But this  
the Bread which comes down from the heavens is,  
that one may eat of it, and never die.  
<sup>51</sup>The living Bread that came from heaven am I.  
Whoever eats this Bread will ever live,  
because My flesh this Bread is, which I give  
so that the world may live.”<sup>52</sup>The Jews began  
to argue, saying to themselves, “How can  
this Man give us His flesh to eat?”<sup>53</sup>But He  
explained, “I say to you, unless you eat  
the flesh of Him Who is the Son of Man,  
and drink His blood, then you in no way can  
have life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever eats My flesh  
and drinks My blood, shall certainly be blessed  
with life eternal; on the last day, I  
will raise him. <sup>55</sup>For My flesh is food indeed;  
likewise My blood, My blood is drink indeed.  
<sup>56</sup>And He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood  
abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>The good  
and living Father sent Me, and I live  
because of Him; so also, he shall live  
who feeds on Me, because of Me. <sup>58</sup>For this  
the Bread that comes to you from heaven is,

*not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. But eat this Bread, now understand, and you will live forever.”<sup>59</sup>These things He taught in the synagogue, across the sea, when He was in Capernaum.*

- John 6.22-40

*Reflect*

1. Go back to the beginning of this message in verse 26. Over the course of Jesus’ teaching, from verse 26 to verse 28, how many times do the words *life, live, or living* appear? Summarize the message of Jesus relating to these terms. Complete this prayer: *Lord, thank You for the gift of life, that is, for...*
2. The idea of life is associated, first, with Jesus Himself. Summarize what Jesus taught about life and Himself. *You are indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Lord, and I know this because...*
3. Life is available, and it’s to be had in Jesus. But certain responsibilities devolve upon those who want to have the life Jesus came to bring. What verbs in this passage tell the hearers what they must do? Complete this sentence, “To have eternal life in Jesus...” *Lord Jesus, I want to know more of the life I have in You, so today...*
4. People began to be upset as they heard Jesus’ message. Why? What was troubling them? Is this to be expected? Why or why not? *Lord, let me not shrink back from bearing witness to You, simply because...*
5. The issue Jesus put before these people is summarized in two words in verse 58: “dead” and “live.” Is the Gospel really that cut-and-dried? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“If it was possible without harvest or fruit of the earth, or any such thing, to preserve the lives of the Israelites of old for forty years, much more will he be able to do this, having come for a greater purpose.... He knew how precious a thing life was in people’s eyes, and therefore he repeats his promise of life often, just as the Old Testament had done. But the Old Testament only offered long life, whereas he offers life without end. This promise was an abolition of that sentence of death that sin had brought on us.... He said these things in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum, where many displays of his power took place.... He taught in the synagogue and in the temple, with the intention of attracting the multitude and as a sign that he was not acting in opposition to the Father.” *John Chrysostom (344-404 AD)*

As we share the Gospel with others, we need to sing the new song of life, praising the Lord and living the life of salvation joyfully and boldly before others. Then we’ll have a sound basis on which to invite them to consider the claims and promises of Jesus. What can you do today to improve your witness for the Lord?

*Closing Prayer*

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,

*And* His praise in the assembly of saints.  
Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;  
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.  
Let them praise His name with the dance;  
Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.  
For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;  
He will beautify the humble with salvation.  
Let the saints be joyful in glory;  
Let them sing aloud on their beds.  
Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand...

Psalm 149.1-6

**Psalm 149** (*Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Sing to the Lord a glorious song and new!  
Praise Him you people, to Whom praise is due!  
Let us rejoice, let us be glad in Him  
Who has created us and cleansed our sin.

Praise Him with dance, with tambourine and lyre!  
To be so praised is God's one great desire.  
Lord, beautify Your holy ones with grace;  
Show us the mercy of Your saving face.

Sing to the Lord, exult with great delight!  
Sing on your beds with joy to God by night!  
Sing praise and take His Word into your hand;  
Publish His grace and wrath in every land!

*The Gospel of John: John 6.41-59*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Overall, in spite of how people responded, would you say Jesus' message was *positive* or *negative*? Explain.
2. When we're sharing the Gospel with someone, what are the key ideas we want to communicate?
3. Should we be surprised, or feel like we've failed as a witness, if people either don't believe or even get upset? Explain.
4. What are some reasons people might not believe the Gospel? How can we adjust our witness for the Lord to take those reasons into account?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 6.41-59? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.