

John 6vs41-71

LIFE!!

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LIFE!!

John 6 vs 41-71

Recap...

As we started ch 6, John reminded us that these events are happening in the middle of the Passover...

Read 6 v 4: *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.*

- The time when the Passover lamb was sacrificed and shared and....
- When God's people remembered that they had been rescued by God from their enemies and his judgement.

Furthermore, all the way through verses 1-40 Jesus repeatedly drew a connection between his feeding 5000 people, and God who - at the time of Moses - fed his people with manna from Heaven as they made their way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land.

With Jesus - the feeding of the 5000 was designed to point to Jesus as the fulfilment of what the Passover/manna in the desert was all about.....

- God rescuing his people for true and eternal life :

Read 6 v 32: *Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."*

And then Jesus had gone on to say:

Read 6 v 35: *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."*

So - Jesus has come to give living bread - "...Eat this and you will live forever..... and be eternally satisfied!"

Whereas under Moses - those who ate the manna in the wilderness – all still ended up dying!

In short – Jesus – is what the EXODUS pointed to!

Now let's look at some more of ch6:

Read 6 vs 41-51: *So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

It looks at this point as if the 'audience' to whom Jesus is speaking has changed...

Later in ch 6 John tells us that:

Read 6 v 59 : *Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

So it looks like Jesus has gone from speaking to the crowds in John 6 vs 1-40 to now speaking to the theologically educated in the synagogue...

The passage breaks into two parts, each headed up by a big theological question...

Question 1 – his identity

Can you see from v 42 what it is that the theologically educated Jews in the synagogue were unhappy about?

- They were grumbling over Jesus' claimed identity:

Read v 41: *So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."*

Amazingly in vs 43 - 51 Jesus both argues with them about his identity and turns the tables on them as he questions their identity!

- In v 44 Jesus says, “You can’t recognise who I am unless the Father allows you to...” (which implies he is questioning their relationship with the Father)

v 44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

- Now look at v45:

Read v 45: “It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.”

Here Jesus is referencing Isaiah ch 54 - God will win back his people – and ALL his people will be instructed by the Lord:

Read Isaiah 54 v 13: *All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.*

- In vs 45-46 Jesus claims to be the Teacher from God – that is, God himself:

Read v 45-46 : *It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.”*

So then... Jesus is claiming to have come from God - as God - to teach his people about God!

This ties in precisely with his claim back earlier in John 6:

Read 6 v 35 : “*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*”

So – he IS what the manna pointed to – God feeding his people – bread from Heaven.

YETjust contrast with what the Jews were saying:

Read v 42: *They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'"*

- They were grumbling – because they viewed him as just a man!

Jesus' response:

- vs 42-46: " I AM GOD!and if you can't see I'm God the problem is with you - not me - you are not one of God's people who's been taught by the prophet!"
- vs 47-51: "I AM GOD! – I bring eternity!and the cost is MY FLESH! THIS IS MY MISSION :

Read v 51: *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

Now let's read ch 6 vs 52-59:

vs 52-59: *The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"* ⁵³ *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live for ever."* ⁵⁹ *Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.*

Question 2 – his mission = to save us through his flesh

Read v 52: *The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

Can you see from v 52 what it is that the theologically educated Jews are unhappy about?

- How can he give us his flesh to eat?
- They are taking Jesus' words literally and seem to think he wants them to eat him..!

There is a lot of misunderstanding around these verses... so in order to get a clear picture we need to do two things:

First, we should note the context of John 6 v 35:

6 v 35: *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."*

In this verse when Jesus speaks of himself as the bread of life, he is using picture language and does not expect us to eat him literally!!

In fact **"to feed on him"** ... is to **"come to him"**

And to **"drink from him"** ...is **"to believe"**

The fact that Jesus is speaking metaphorically has already been underlined in ch 6:

Read 6 v 40: *"For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

- To **"feed on"** Jesus is to **"look on"**
- To **"drink"** is to **"believe"**

So then when Jesus speaks of **"eating"** and **"drinking"** he is using picture language for:

- Believing in him..... coming to him..... and looking on him

Read 6 vs 56-58: *"Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."*

- There is no doubt - this is all about Jesus!
- He is claiming to be the eternal Passover Lamb – the full and final payment for sin for all time.
- John has hinted at this already (1 v 29: **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**). This will be spelled out plainly at Jesus' crucifixion in ch 19.

Jesus is explaining to the theologically educated in the synagogue that his death on the cross will be the fulfillment that everything in the Passover pointed to:

- The forgiveness of sin
- God's wrath dealt with

Read 6 v 59: *Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.*

What rich promises Jesus makes...

- v 54: ***“has eternal life”*** + ***“will be raised on the last day”***
 - Can you think of anything more important than that?!
- Read v 55:

v 55: *“For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”*

- This is ***“TRUE”***! - REAL FULFILLMENT! Nothing else gets close!
- Read v 56:

v 56: *“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”*

- Through the cross, we can trust Jesus' promises – we can feed/rely on the cross!
- Sin is forgiven
- Jesus is abiding in me and I'm in him!
- The great I AM - God - is to dwell ***in me*** and...
- I'm to dwell in God!

Before we move to vs 60-71 we need to deal with two knotty issues!

Issue 1 - the grumbling of the Jews

Just as the Jews grumbled in Moses' day so they grumbled in Jesus' day. WHY?!

- Because they would not accept his identity
- Because they hated his mission
- In short – they did not want God and they did not want to be rescued by God!!

Issue 2 – do I chose God or does God chose me?!

There is no doubt from what Jesus says that I have to “**believe**”, “**feed**”, “**come**” and “**drink**”

....BUT there is also no doubt that I cannot “**believe**” or “**come**” unless he first allows and enables me to do so!

➤ My belief:

v 47: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”*

- But it is NOT as if I am doing God a favour, as if: “I have decided to put my trust in Jesus”!!

➤ Jesus’ choice:

v 44: *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”*

- In other words – “God has prepared me by all the events leading up to the time when I have put my trust in Jesus.”

Perhaps it is worth asking – what would it really be like if all this really did depend on me?!

Surely I would be both:

- Full of pride – I could boast and be proud of how clever I’ve been!
- Full of insecurity as I waver – some days I will follow... some days I won’t...

NO – However uncomfortable we might find it... becoming a child in God’s family is down to God – and his promise:

ch 1 v 12: *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...*

And the reason we find this hard to see is because we fail to realise how much our sin has affected us ...Remember John 5 vs 24?

ch 5 v 24: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

In and of ourselves we are:

- Spiritually dead..... condemned.
Dead men can’t raise themselves!!.....Condemned men can’t free themselves!!

Now let's look at the rest of ch 6:

Read 6 vs 60-71: *“When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”* ⁶¹ *But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offence at this?”* ⁶² *Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?* ⁶³ *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.* ⁶⁴ *But there are some of you who do not believe.”* (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ *And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”*

⁶⁶ *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.* ⁶⁷ *So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”* ⁶⁸ *Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”* ⁷⁰ *Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.”* ⁷¹ *He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.”*

So – even Jesus' followers are grumbling:

vs 61 - 62 : *But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offence at this?”* ⁶² *Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”*

- In other words - “You ain't seen nothing yet!”

Now let's look at v 63:

Read 6 v 63: *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”*

This is a key verse:

- We have no life from God within us – we've already seen that we are 'dead' and 'condemned'
- LIFE NOW – through what? THE WORDS OF JESUS!
- Life now comes through whom? THE SPIRIT
- He has to breathe new life into dead condemned men ...
- And this comes by Jesus' WORD through his SPIRIT!

Once again in v 65 Jesus re-emphasises the point that we can only have life if God the Father gives it to us:

Read v 65: *And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."*

The result of all of Jesus' teaching in this chapter – where he has promised so much- is that many...even many of his disciples (v 66) ...walk away!

This chapter was 'set up' as - v 6 says - "**a test**"...

The Jews grumbled... the disciples grumbled...and now some turn away.

BUT for Peter – who is one of those to whom Jesus has given life – there is nowhere else to go!

Read 6 v 68-69: *Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."*

Now he has tasted the "**living bread**" he'll never be satisfied with anything else!

And finally... have you spotted the fact that...all along... there IS a plan!! It's clear:

Read 6 v 70-71: *Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.*

Of course Jesus KNEW... he is the Son of God!

Coming next...

Confusion..... matched by clarity!

John 6 vs 41-71

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