

Intro

- **Last July, Thai soccer team (10 boys and their coach) trapped in cave northern Thailand:** after being trapped for 10 days, 3 miles in, in pitch dark, flooded cave, with no light and no hope and only each other. After so long lost, many assumed the worst. I know I did. They had no food, limited oxygen, and may have drowned in the rising water. But as you know now, they weren't dead. They were alive, they survived, and all of them were rescued. **One interesting detail:** immediately after the first divers found them (couple of British guys), one of the first things one of the boys said to them (in broken English), was "FOOD, FOOD, FOOD." **Can't blame the kid, I'm sure after 9 days in a cave food would be near the top of my list.**
- **What's the first thing you want if you haven't eaten in a LONG time? FOOD, FOOD, FOOD! Some of you get downright grumpy if you haven't eaten in a while. (You know who you are!)**
- Can you imagine life **if we never hungered?** If eating didn't give us **pleasure and satisfaction?** **If we didn't need to eat to live?**
- **Truth is:** We are hardwired to hunger. We have a biological impulse to desire food—especially when our stomachs are empty. **Those of you with infants know what I'm talking about!**
- **You were made to hunger, and to satisfy that hunger by eating.** You don't need a PhD or MD to know you need nourishment to live. And God, in his grace and infinite wisdom, made you to experience hunger, and to act on that desire, that physiological impulse. **Don't feel guilty, at least not too guilty:** you are **hard-wired to hunger. He made you that way...so you would eat and live.**
- And **it's not any different for our souls.** He also made us to have a **spiritual** impulse to desire him. Just as our physical bodies hunger for nourishment that will satisfy us, likewise **our souls hunger for nourishment** that will give us **joy, comfort, contentment, love, peace for the present and a hope for the future.**
- **Deep down, deep in our souls, deep in our hearts, deep in our guts, we hunger.** Something is missing. We may try to ignore it or fill it with something that won't satisfy, but **the truth is without Jesus, we're empty and broken, wicked and weak, desperate and dying. We need hope and healing and life. We need something—or someone—that will satisfy our deepest longings and meet our greatest needs.**
- **The question is:** **What satisfies you?** What satisfies your deepest desires and longings? What satisfies that hunger in you?
- **Not physical food. Not any thing:** Not that house or that car or that job or more money or those shoes or your team winning that game or getting that grade or getting into that school. **Not people:** Not your spouse or your parents or a child or a friend or boyfriend or girlfriend. Ultimately, **you won't be truly satisfied with anything this world has to offer or that you can earn for yourself.**
- What **will** satisfy you? **Jesus, only Jesus.**
- **Jesus is the answer to that critical question** as we'll see repeatedly in today's passage, a continuation of the story we started last week. **Today's is part 2 of a 3-part series through Ch. 6.**

Last Week: Tony taught us from the first part of **Ch. 6:**

- **Jesus is the Greater Moses**
- **Spiritual hunger is universal, you can only find satisfaction for that hunger in Jesus. Only Jesus satisfies.**
- **Today we dig into the details and learn how he satisfies and what we are to do in response.**

Warning: you will hear some hard, but good, truths in this passage

1. **God's Sovereignty:** **V. 37 - All** the Father gives [to Jesus] will come to him & **V. 44 - no one** can come to Jesus unless the Father draws them.
2. **Human Responsibility:** We must "eat his flesh and drink his blood" to have life. If we don't eat, we don't live. But if you do eat, you will live forever.

Main Point: Jesus is the bread of heaven who gives and guarantees eternal life to those that believe in him.

1. Jesus is the Bread of Life, Given by the Father (6:35-40)

Background/context (“in last week’s episode”):

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. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

they said (v. 34):

³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Give us this physical bread—always (for the rest of our lives). Like Moses, you should be a king that will provide for our physical “needs” (wants & demands). You should be the kind of leader we want and provide what we think we need to live.

- Demanding **physical food and a king** that will **feed their cravings for physical deliverance**. But Jesus is talking about **spiritual food**, about himself, and about his mission to give life to the world. And they don’t get it. Or at least they act like they don’t get it. They **can’t seem to think past their stomachs and their situation**.
- **Augustine:** “These Jews were far off from the bread of heaven and knew not how to hunger after it. They had the jaws of their heart languid; with open ears they were deaf, they saw and stood blind.”
- **May it not be so with us, with you.**

Jesus said (v. 35-40):

V. 35: 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.”

- **I am the bread of life:** 1st of Jesus’ “I am” claims in John. The other six are: I am the light of the world (8:12), the gate (10:7, 9), the good shepherd (10:11, 14), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way and the truth and the life (14:6), and the true vine (15:1, 5).
- Jesus gives a **two-part response** to their demand:
 1. **Simply and clearly:** he is the bread of life that will truly satisfy their hunger and thirst. Filling stomachs was their primary concern, but it wasn’t his.
 2. **Whoever comes to him for this bread shouldn’t be concerned about the supply running out.** Jesus wasn’t talking about a temporary satisfaction; His concern was eternal life and forever satisfaction. He knew only He could satisfy their deepest need; only He could give them what they required for eternal life
- **Those who comes to Christ will not hunger, those who believe in him will never thirst. That’s as true today as it was then. Apart from Christ, nothing satisfies our souls.** He is our permanent sustenance and our lasting satisfaction.
- **Tenney:** “Jesus claimed to be the only permanent satisfaction for the human desire for life. He desired that men should receive him, not simply for what he might give them, but for what he might be to them.”

V. 36: ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

- “But” - strong contrast as Jesus exposes their **unbelief**.
- They have seen, heard and received **physical** blessing from the hand of Jesus and still don’t believe.
- **D.A. Carson:** “This crowd has witnessed the divine revealer at work, but only their curiosity, appetites and political ambitions have been aroused, not their faith.”
- **Desiring God Article:** “Wanting the blessings Jesus provides is not the same thing as believing in him...Desire is not the same as digestion.”

V. 37 (sovereignty and security): ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

1. Jesus speaks of Sovereignty:

- He teaches that it is **God who is sovereign in salvation** (we'll see this even more in V. 44). He is in control. He is in such control that He gives people to Jesus as a gift!
- **Important:** The redeemed people of God—the church—is a **gift from the Father to the Son**.
- **Gettys (O Church Arise):** “Christ will have the prize for which He died.”
- **Remember:** If you have come to Christ as Lord and Savior, if you believe in him, it is because **the Father gave you to him**. **You are part of “the prize for which he died”** You are a gift, from father to son, that will **never** be lost or forgotten or thrown out.

2. Jesus speaks of Surety (Assurance):

- One of the **strongest assurance** texts in **John** and parallel to **17:12**, where Jesus says to the Father:
¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction [Judas], that the Scripture might be fulfilled.
- **Tenney:** “No man needs to fear that he will come in vain, for Jesus said emphatically that he would not refuse anyone. Man does not make his opportunity for salvation; he accepts its free offer. A superficial attachment to God is not enough, for if the desire for salvation is not inspired by God, true salvation will not result.”
- If you are in Christ, if you have partaken of him, your **assurance** is not based on your effort but on the **sure guarantee that God is both active and effective in your salvation and preservation**. He created the universe and conquered death. He sustains creation by the power of his Word. He won't lose you and He won't let you go.

Vv. 38-40 (Jesus & the will of God): ³⁸ **For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.** ³⁹ **And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day.** 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.”**

- **For:** Jesus is telling them and us why he came to earth (the purpose of his incarnation): **to do the will of the Father**
- **What** is that will? That...
 1. He **will not lose anyone** the Father gives him.
 2. He **will raise up everyone** the Father gives him.
- **Leon Morris:** “The salvation Jesus brings is no ephemeral [brief, temporary] thing. It is ultimate and final. This thought is of the greatest comfort to believers. Their assurance is based not on their feeble hold on Christ, but on his sure grip on them...It is unthinkable that death should blot out forever the life that Christ gives. Because he is what he is, he will assuredly raise up those to whom he gives life.”

2. **Jesus is the Bread from Heaven, Sent by the Father (41-51)**

they said (v. 41-42):

⁴¹ 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’?” Give us a break! We know who you are! We know who your parents are and where you came from. Who do you think you are saying you “came down from heaven?!”

- **“The Jews” in John:** those opposed to Jesus, not simply those of Jewish origin, **“the opposition party”**
- **Local and knew of Jesus’ family.** Knew he was the son of Joseph and Mary. They knew his Jesus’ humble origins, he was from Podunk Nazareth, he was the son of a carpenter, and son of a “virgin”
- **“they grumbled”- confused & discontent.** Much like their forefathers (the Hebrews) in the wilderness who **complained** before **and** after manna was provided by God.
- They were **irritated and highly uncomfortable with the claims and demands of Jesus**. So, they did what came **natural** to them (**and what comes natural to us**): they **complained** and the criticized. They **grumbled** when they heard the Good News!

Jesus says (v. 43-51):

Vv. 43-44: 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.

- V. 43: Jesus rebukes their grumbling rather than answering their objection: They can’t hear and learn truth from God if they are complaining and arguing among themselves. (Neither can we!)
- V. 44: Jesus repeats himself (v. 37) but now even stronger. Now he says that no one can come unless the Father draws them.
- Divine initiative & sovereignty in salvation: People like to feel independent. We want to believe we can do it ourselves and come to Jesus of our own “free” will or based on our good deeds. Jesus says: that’s not how it works. That’s not possible. You don’t initiate or accomplish or secure your own salvation. The salvation of sinful human beings is fundamentally and essentially based on the work and call of God. But—humans—that doesn’t mean you don’t have a responsibility.
- Gerald Borchert (NAC): “Salvation is never achieved apart from the drawing power of God, and it is never consummated apart from the willingness of humans to hear and learn from God.”
- Rather than resolving the tension, the best solution is to live with the tension and believe and obey Jesus. Our responsibility isn’t to secure our own salvation and eternal life, and it’s not to unravel the mystery of the gospel. (We can’t.) Our responsibility is to believe it! And then to follow and obey Jesus as Lord.

V. 45 (how does God do this drawing?): 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.

- Jesus proceeds to explain how God (the Father) draws those who comes to Jesus: he teaches them (through his Word).
- Jesus quotes from Isaiah 54:13 to explain God’s plan: He will teach his people himself; he will teach them through his Word. Jesus makes it clear: God will call people to Jesus by his Word, by his teaching. And that those who respond by faith to God’s call—his teaching—will believe and follow Jesus.
- This is why it’s so important for us as a church and as individuals to faithfully “teach the Word.” When we do this, we are doing God’s will and we are instruments in his hands. We are part of his work of calling people to Jesus and eternal life!!! We are part of his divine plan to call the lost out of darkness, to tell them about the light that came into to the world. We are serving up the only meal that will truly satisfy them. We got one song folks, and it’s called the gospel, and we’re going to sing it over and over again!

V. 46: ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.

- Side comment by John? Doesn’t seem to fit with everything else Jesus is saying. Maybe, but upon further reflection we can see the connection, and that these are Jesus own words.
- Jesus is authoritatively claiming, as only he can, that he has a unique, intimate relationship with God the Father, that he has seen him and was sent by Him.
- Parents: Your kids don’t know me as father. Only my kids do, which is probably a good thing! Recently we “sent” our oldest, Gabrielle, to college (far off place called Chapel Hill - like 20 miles away), which reminded me of some things in a very profound, difficult way: She’ll always be our firstborn, special to her mother and I. And I’m the only father she has, and only I know what it’s like to be the her Dad as we send her out. (it stinks!) And, bless her heart only she knows what it’s like to have me as her Dad through this hard process.
- Similarly, but perfectly and eternally, Jesus and the Father have a fundamentally unique relationship, an intimacy and connection that our human relationships can only reflect in tarnished, imperfect and limited ways.
- Carson: People cannot have a direct, personal, mystical knowledge of God apart from Jesus. “Only Jesus has seen the Father; no-one has seen God except the one who is from God.”
- Our knowledge of God, our relationship with God, and our forever future with God (where we will see him!) must come through the Son, the Son who knows the Father, has seen the Father and was sent by the Father. We cannot have a vision, cannot see God, apart from seeing and believing in Jesus.

V. 47: ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

- For the third time in Ch. 6 Jesus says “Truly, truly” (“Amen, Amen”) (Vv. 26 and 32). The Lord Jesus is bearing down and pressing in the truth. Underline and amen it!

- As emphatically as he could, Jesus says: **the one who believes in me will have everlasting life.**
- **THIS IS A PROMISE FROM THE SON OF GOD.** A certain guarantee. **If you believe—if you truly believe (not just say it but believe it) that Jesus is the bread of life, come down from heaven, the one who gave up his body and shed his blood to save you, if you genuinely receive him as your savior—you will have eternal life.** This life isn't it. Far from it. The best is yet to come, and it will last forever. Believe in Jesus and count on it!

V. 48: (repeat of V. 35) ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life.

- **Again, Jesus says he is the bread of life.** There is a lot of repetition in this passage! (more on that in a minute)
- **2nd "I am" saying of this passage:** emphasizes that Jesus is the bread that "came down from heaven." Jesus is explicitly claiming to be the fulfillment of the manna associated with Moses. That was only a foreshadowing, Jesus is the fulfillment!

V. 49-51 (Jesus continues): 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.

- **Yes,** When the Jews ate the manna in the wilderness, their **physical needs were met** (God was gracious despite their grumbling). **But, they still died.** The manna sustained them for their earthly years, but it could not, nor was it intended to, provide for eternal life. **They ate bread that rained down from the sky and they still died!**
- **And so will we, without Jesus,** whether we eat Whole Foods or Whole 30, Paleo or South Beach, Mediterranean or McDonald's. Nothing you eat physically—or don't eat—will give you ultimate satisfaction. Not Funyuns, not buffalo wings, not Fudge Rounds, not Oreos, not chocolate of any kind, not Moose Tracks, not a tender steak or chocolate cake—none of it will satisfy you permanently and completely. None of it will give you eternal life. It might be tasty, but it's all temporary.
- **Jesus said he (alone) "is the living bread that came down from heaven"** and if **"you eat of this bread"** you **"will live forever."** **That's good news folks!!! Eating is believing and believing is living forever!** Jesus is saying: Eat & live!
- **And don't miss:** while there is a clear invitation to believe and a promise of eternal life, there is also **warning against unbelief.** If you refuse to partake of Jesus, you will die (in your sins).

V. 51 (Jesus repeats): 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."

- **Don't miss:** Jesus just added a very important term to his discourse: **my flesh**
- **Flesh:** refers to the **human life** of Jesus – **his body**. Should remind us of **1:14**, the incarnation statement where John says **"the Word [Jesus] became flesh."**
- **Jesus is saying:** the bread that I will give is **my flesh, my body**. He is telling them, and us, that **he will give up his body—physically—as a sacrifice.**
- Because of that and Jesus' other bold proclamations, the Jews dispute (argue) among themselves and ask a final question: **How is this possible?**

3. Jesus is the Son Who Saves by His Sacrifice...Eat, Drink and Be Living (52-59)

they said (v. 52):

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

- **Disputed** very strong verb meaning to argue sharply, quarrel. **They went at it!**
- **Eat his flesh???** This is too much to swallow. (**1st pun, there's another coming**)
- They either couldn't understand the metaphor (**perhaps too busy arguing and focusing on their physical desires to hear and understand God**), or they did understand but they couldn't stomach the truth (**2nd pun**). In either case they weren't really learning; they were questioning and rejecting the teaching of God.
- **Carson:** "Any dullard could see that Jesus was not speaking literally: no-one would suppose Jesus was seriously advocating cannibalism and offering himself as the first meal. But if his language was figurative, what did he mean?"

Jesus says (v. 53-59):

So, what does Jesus do? He doesn't correct or retract one word of what he's already said, no "my bad," no retraction or correction. **No—on the contrary—**Jesus lays down **another "Truly, truly"** (for the 4th time in this chapter).

Vv. 53-54: 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.

- He wants there to be no doubt: **you must feed on my flesh AND drink my blood to live!**
- Say what Jesus?!? As if eating his flesh wasn't enough, now he tells the Jews to drink his blood too? This would have been abhorrent and repulsive, especially to a Jew, who are **forbidden to drink of blood or eat animal flesh with blood still in it**. The law of **Moses (Lev 17:10–14)** strictly **forbid it!** There could be no mistaking what he said now. At this point, they were not only confused and testy, they were probably angry and offended (**more on all that next week**).
- **But it's not just them is it? You** might be a little uncomfortable or confused right now! And the truth is, this passage **very shocking and even graphic**. It probably is **disconcerting and perplexing** for many of you. But I think perhaps we need to be more **unsettled** when we hear from Jesus. I think it does us good to be shocked by the truth and good news of the gospel. We shouldn't get so comfortable in this world and wise in our own eyes.
- **In any case...He has your attention now, doesn't he? The question is....**
- Why would Jesus say such a thing? Why would he say that one must feed on his flesh and drink his blood to live forever? What does he mean???
 - **Not** advocating cannibalism! **This isn't Silence of the Lambs! Let's nip that in the bud right now.**
 - **Jesus is speaking in shocking—but simple—metaphorical terms.** Simply put: He is referring to his **sacrificial death on the cross**.
 - He is saying:
 - If you don't receive me—**ME**—I who will give **my** body and shed **my** blood on the cross in **your place** to atone for **your sin**—if you refuse to believe in me—if you reject me—you will have no life.
 - Only **I can** atone for your sins. Only **I can** satisfy your soul and save you. Only **I am** the perfect sacrifice.
 - **Friends:** to receive eternal life, you must receive him, you must believe in him; and if you do, he will receive you; He will never, ever let you go, and you will live forever.
 - **Yes,** eating and drinking his flesh and blood is a **very graphic** way of saying it, but **this is the gospel! This is good news!!** If you believe, he will never let you go. If you believe, he will raise you up. If you believe, he will give you eternal life! If you eat, you will be satisfied, you will live forever!

Vv. 55-57 (Jesus repeats): 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.

- Jesus is **real food** and **real drink** that produces **real life**. To partake of Christ, to receive him as savior, brings you into an abiding relationship with him.
- Direct reference to Communion? Short answer: **No (I don't think so).** Not a direct reference, but an allusion. John (Jesus) is **not** saying you must take communion in order to be saved or keep your salvation, or that the bread and wine/juice is actually the body and blood of Jesus. He is talking about **Jesus' work on the cross** to save sinners like you and me—that believing **that truth (the gospel)** is the only way you'll be saved. He is saying that **you must receive Him as savior in order to be saved**.

Vv.58-59 (Closing) 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." ⁵⁹ Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

- Jesus concludes by once again referring to himself as the **"bread that came down from heaven,"** not like the manna their forefathers ate in the wilderness and died. **Moses was great, but Jesus is far greater.** The food he provides satisfies throughout all eternity.
- But you must receive him, partake of him in order to be saved.

- **Calvin:** “It is of no avail to unbelievers that Christ is the bread of life, because they remain always empty; but then does Christ become our bread, when we come to him as hungry persons, that he may fill us. It is in consequence of being driven by the feeling of our hunger that we fly to Christ to seek life. For faith does not look at Christ only as at a distance, but embraces him, that he may become ours and may dwell in us. It causes us to be incorporated with him, to have life in common with him, and, in short, to become one with him.”

Conclusion: Important Repeated Truths (Jesus repeats them so we will too.)

1. Twice Jesus says: **The Father calls and gives believers to Jesus** (6:37, 44)
2. Twice Jesus says: **Truly, truly** (4x in Ch. 6)
 - a. **6:47: whoever believes (in me) has eternal life.**
 - b. **6:53-54: Unless you believe (in me), you have no life in you. If you believe you have eternal life, and he will raise you up on the last day.**
3. Twice Jesus promises **assurance, that he will not lose or let go of those that believe** (6:37, 39)
4. 8 times Jesus says: **I came down from heaven/ I was sent by the Father** (6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 57, 58)
5. 8 times Jesus says: **I am the bread of life, the living bread, the bread from heaven, or the true bread** (6:33, 35, 41, 48, 50, 51, 55, 58)
6. 9 times in 25 verses Jesus promises **resurrection & eternal life to those that believe in him** (6:35, 39, 40, 44, 47, 51, 54, 57, 58)

Final Application

Unbelievers:

- **Physical food comes from our work, but spiritual food comes from his work.** No matter the quantity or quality of our effort, we can't manufacture the food that will give us eternal life.
- **Stop looking for material things to satisfy your soul and give you life. May not feel like it, but you are starving and empty without him.**
- **It's not enough to see and sense there is a meal. You must eat to live!** The food of this world will sustain you and please you for a short time, maybe even 80, 90 or 100 years. But like the Hebrews in the wilderness and everyone before and after, including every person in this room, **the bread of this world won't give you eternal life. It can't.** Only Jesus can do that. **He alone is the bread of eternal life.**
- I know don't know if God is calling you right now, but I going to assume he is, so I'll say this simply but urgently: **Believe in Jesus, and receive eternal life.** Answer the call now. Don't wait. He wants to give you hope and peace and the guarantee of eternal life today.
- **Embrace the truth of the gospel. Feed your hunger. Quench your thirst. Receive Christ and live forever.**

Believers:

- 1- **You need to remember**, especially when God seems distant, or the brokenness of this world comes crashing down on you and you feel crushed and hopeless, **remember that: He's got you and he will never let you go. He will raise you up and you will live forever.** Jesus promises you: **He will receive you. He won't lose you. He will never let you go. He will raise you up. You will live forever.**
Phil 3:20-4:1²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
4 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.
- 2- **Tell others about Jesus. Tell them the Good News!** Jesus has the words of eternal life and he has entrusted them to you. Tell someone. Tell lots of someone's. **The king of the universe has provided the meal that will give life to his people. Serve it up** and urge people to partake in the only one who can satisfy their souls.