

The Heart of Christ: Committed to saving sinners (John 6:16-40)

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[0 : 0 0] now in our bibles we will be in john chapter 6 so if you have a bible or a device you can turn to john chapter 6 we're going to begin at verse 16 it will also be up on our screen so we're reading the section in john 6 immediately after the feeding of the 5 000 and actually i'll read verse 14 and 15 our screen begins at 16 but let me read there after the people saw the sign jesus performed they began to say surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world jesus knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force withdrew again to a mountain by himself when evening came his disciples went down to the lake where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for capernaum by now it was dark and jesus had not yet joined them a strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough when they had rowed about three or four miles they saw jesus approaching the boat walking on the water and they were frightened but he said to them it is i don't be afraid then they were willing to take him into the boat and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading the next day the crowd that stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there and that jesus had not entered it with his disciples but that they had gone away alone then some boats from tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the lord had given thanks once the crowd realized that neither jesus nor his disciples were there they got into the boats and went to capernaum in search of jesus when they found him on the other side of the lake they asked him rabbi when did you get here jesus answered very truly i tell you you are looking for me not because you saw the signs i performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the son of man will give you for on him god the father has placed his seal of approval then they asked him what must we do to do the works god requires jesus answered the work of god is this to believe in the one he has sent so they asked him what sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you what will you do our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness as it is written he gave them bread from heaven to eat jesus said to them very truly i tell you it is not moyses who has given you the bread from heaven but it is my father who gives you the true bread from heaven for the bread of god is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world sir they said always give us this bread then jesus declared i am the bread of life whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty but as i told you you have seen me and still you do not believe all those the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me i will never drive away for i have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that i shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day for my father's will is that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life and i will raise them up at the last day amen this is god's word so i want us to begin for the next couple of months to think about the heart of jesus christ

to see his heart in his public ministry as he faces the cross and after his resurrection to see his love in action to see the motivation of love um that leads him to serve and leads him to the cross and that's why we're in john chapter 6 and what i want us to notice from the beginning is that what we see in the crowds here is a reminder that as people we don't change and that as people we're still needing to find hope and we're looking for satisfaction so we have here around jesus a crowd who have lived under roman rule for a number of years they have the hope that a messiah would come they have the promises of the old testament to give them support in that they had hope that a greater prophet than moyses would come a greater king than david would come and for them that prospect of salvation it would be a political freedom life in the land free again our setting here is that

jesus has just performed this miraculous sign of feeding the 5 000 and in verse 14 we heard their response to this surely this is the prophet who's to come into the world and so they read the sign and they have this expectation here is this one like mooses who god has promised and their desire that follows from that verse 15 is that they want to make jesus king by force they want this political kingdom to come and then in verse 26 jesus also identifies another desire he says you're not looking for my signs you're coming because you ate the loaves and had your fill their wanting to be well fed their hopes are on the political and the physical level and i think it's fair to say that that's something that we can recognize today that's something that we see today lots of us are probably more engaged and interested in what's going on in the world of politics than perhaps we ever have been and there is this increasing hope and expectation being placed on our political leaders that that someone will be able to guide us through this pandemic and of course our current situation has us at the same time crying out for physical well-being as people we don't change we want to know that we can have a job and a job that's secure we want to have money to pay the bills and have food on the table we want to be sure that we can have social connections with friends and family and those won't be taken from us we want help for here and for now and so they're not so different from us and this is where the good news comes that the heart of jesus remains the same jesus the same yesterday today and forever what does he say to this crowd who are confused about his identity who have a variety of hopes in their hearts jesus says time and again in verse 35 to 40 come to me come to me as the one who can address your deepest longings come to me as the one who can promise true salvation and security come to me as the one who invites you into eternal life and what jesus wants to show to this crowd and what jesus by extension wants to show to us is that sometimes our hopes are too small we find ourselves too easily satisfied when the loving heart of jesus wants to give us himself as the greatest gift he has to offer so we're going to be in verses 35 to 40 this morning the first thing i want to say is that here we find jesus saying come to me for lasting satisfaction in verses 35 and 36 jesus declared i am the bread of life whoever comes to me will never grow hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty so he's in the middle of a conversation with this crowd that has gathered and he's has in verse 27 already been talking to them about food that endures to eternal life that the son of man will give you in verse 32 he talks about the true bread from heaven which comes as a gift from the father in verse 33 it's bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world from the father a gift that gives life he's talking about himself but there's misunderstanding at every point they see jesus but they don't see and understand his identity clearly and so they find themselves saying to jesus well mooses we know mooses he was the great prophet and he gave us manna in the wilderness to our ancestors what great miracle are you going to do to prove yourself they interpret his offer in physical terms when jesus is presenting spiritual reality to them jesus has come saying i am the son of man the father's father's seal of approval is on me i am the gift from god to sustain life but they don't see it so jesus in verse 35 begins to speak still more plainly with this great statement i am the bread of life i am one of the old testament titles names of god here is jesus making a claim to lordship jesus the bread of life for the people in jesus day bread was staple it was necessary an essential part of the diet jesus saying you cannot know god you cannot enjoy life with god without me without faith in me and notice he says not i will give bread it's not something outside of myself i am the bread they're confused and they're looking for a meal jesus is giving the promise of himself giving the reality of god to those who will receive what is he saying jesus is saying that to come to him it is to meet the core emptiness and hunger that we can find in our hearts that god-shaped hole that augustine spoke of so long ago and we hear it in different forms and we experience it in different ways sometimes that that simply comes as a sense of emptiness in our lives perhaps asking is this all there is i was reminded last week of the the autobiography of andre agassi a tennis player from a previous generation a very honest and candid autobiography and he said at one point he said this he said i marvel at how unexciting it is to be famous how mundane famous people are they're confused uncertain insecure and often hate what they do it's something we always hear like that old adage that money can't buy happiness but we never believe it until we see it ourselves super successful wealthy and unhappy is this all there is that's one way that that our longings find themselves in our hearts sometimes differently it's to do with a guilty conscience and a longing to find inner peace i was watching a little bit of the the netflix documentary the american gospel yesterday which a very helpful explanation of the true gospel over against the prosperity gospel and and on that section i was watching there was a former atheist who was very honest he was saying you know i had the

american dream i had like beautiful house wife and the kids and the car and the holidays but i was crushed by a sense of guilt and i had nowhere to go with that until a crisis in their family turned him to the church and to the hope of the bible and to jesus so it might be a guilty conscience of wanting freedom and peace a deeper longing wondering why why do i yearn for something more have you ever had that even at that point where everything seems to be so good still that restlessness longing for something more to all of these and in that quest for satisfaction that we all experience in different ways jesus is saying come to me he is presenting himself as the end of the search as the goal of all our hearts desires jesus would say of the growing spiritual interest that we've seen in our country during lockdown i am the answer to that longing find me and find life and find satisfaction because in jesus as we discovered in the bible that's where we find forgiveness and freedom from guilt it's in jesus that we find reconciliation with the god we were made for made by and made for it's in and through jesus that we enjoy this living relationship with a god of love that we have a relationship and a love that can never be broken it's through jesus we have the hope of eternity it's through jesus we have the hope that everyday life has meaning and purpose because everything we do we can do to the glory of god to love him to serve him and so there's this wonderful invitation from jesus to satisfaction and notice in verse 5 it's an open invitation whoever comes to me will never go hungry whoever believes in me will never be thirsty this is an invitation that's regardless of age and culture and background it's regardless of our our past sin or our present doubt and confusion it's an invitation to all of us the one condition on us is that we come and believe to use the language of verse 35 unlike the crowd in jesus day we need to recognize his identity this isn't just a medical worker this isn't just another great teacher this is none other than jesus the son of god who's become flesh to be our savior we need to recognize our needs of him to recognize our sin and our guilt and our inability to do anything of ourselves to fix that great problem and to respond to jesus in faith and that's where we find that satisfaction that our hearts are looking for now jesus goes on from there the second thing to notice is jesus says come to me for a secure salvation so here in bucclewe we have a system of security with a couple of different safes through the back we have a big heavy thick metal one for the valuables and then we have the electronic key safe that gives you access so you need to have two combination codes to have access it's a wonderfully secure system until it all starts to go wrong which it has been doing for the last week or so but the principle is good that double security gives you peace of mind and here in the teaching of jesus he is presenting us with the security of salvation because he is saying to us look at the heart of god the father look at the heart of jesus the son and recognize that they are united in their determination to save sinners that commitment is where our sense of security and assurance comes from for lots of us this our prolonged lockdown and restrictions has probably probably been a time when spiritually it's been a struggle for us it's hard without that routine of church church we understand now is so important for keeping us and setting us back on track but it's been hard to read our bibles probably hard to pray missing a sense of fellowship and so maybe we feel our faith is weak at this point jesus would say to us in our weak faith remember it's the father's grip on you it's jesus grip on you that gives you security that's your hope for salvation so look with me at verses 37 to 39 first of all see jesus confidence in verse 37 when he says all those the father gives me will come to me his confidence there is that the father's saving purpose is unstoppable he says all all who the father gives me will come to me when god sets his love on an unbeliever rescue and salvation is certain as john calvin put it long ago grace is irresistible and jesus is pointing us to that for our assurance what's jesus confidence that god's saving plan will come to fruition his confidence isn't on human response his confidence rests in the father's redeeming love and power his hope rests in god's electing love we also see jesus heart verse 37 whoever comes to me i will never drive away notice jesus isn't inviting us to an institution he's not inviting us to a set of doctrines he's inviting us to himself he's inviting us to relationship with god the savior and what he promises that all those who have been gifted to him by his father will be kept safe jesus will lose none of his own he won't drive them away rather he will hold his church close and to give us further confidence he then draws attention to the will of the father so notice verse 38 i've come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me and then he explains here's what the father's will is this is the will of him who sent me that i shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day what's the father's will that jesus will not lose any of his own that jesus will certainly save his own the puritan thomas goodwin who wrote a book called the heart of christ which is an excellent read he says of this god has given jesus a perpetual command to save sinners therefore his heart continues the same

[20 : 20] forever and we see it as jesus talks about the father's will he also talks about his own will and jesus says my will is to do the will of him who sent me so here we have this wonderful situation where we have the loving heart of the lord jesus in his determination to do his father's will that takes him from the glory of heaven to become one of us and ultimately to go to the cross to die to save his people so when we think about christian assurance this is where we find it it's in the reality that god saves sinners by grace through faith alone here is this double security that we find in the gospel it's the double security of god the father and god the son being united together in one will committed to love and to save their own last thing to see from this little section jesus says come to me to enjoy eternal life in verse 40 for my father's will is that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life and i will raise them up at the last day now you've maybe noticed as jesus has been speaking to the crowd that he's brought two themes of salvation together so he has spoken of our human responsibility in a variety of ways come to me believe in me verse 40 look to me but he's also at the same time spoken of god's sovereignty in salvation he's spoken of the father's will the reality that it's the father who plans initiates carries out and guarantees salvation jesus has no problem with holding these intention because they both hold true god is sovereign in saving sinners and we have a responsibility to respond to the offer of the gospel that we find in jesus so god's sovereign role here in verse 40 the father's will here in verse 40 is that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life and it shall be raised up at the last day so that's the father's will that's the father's plan and we need to recognize that this requires the obedience of jesus the son that the father's will and the father's plan hinges on jesus being obedient jesus living a perfect life of sinless obedience and then dying on the cross in obedience as a sacrifice on behalf of sinful people and what's our responsibility as jesus puts it in verse 40 we are to look to the son and believe in him it's an interesting phrase look to the son and believe what does jesus have in mind in that phrase well i wonder if it's not the same idea the same picture that he has in john chapter 3 and verse 14 so when jesus is speaking to nicodemus and just before we get to the most famous verse in the bible in john chapter 3 verse 14 jesus says this just as moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness so the son of man must be lifted up that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him so jesus uses

that picture from the old testament so there's a time where israel was in the the wilderness and they were grumbling against god and as a response judgment came poisonous snakes came into the camp but then god by his grace made provision he told moses to make a bronze serpent and to put it on a pole and everyone who looked to the snake found healing and they lived and now here is jesus in john chapter 3 saying that that bronze serpent raised in the pole that's a pointer to what i've come to do and i think we could argue that it's the same in john chapter 6 jesus saying look to me and live look to me as the cure to the the poison of sin leading to death that you find in your hearts and lives so here is jesus inviting us to life because he and he alone can deal with the poison of of sin that will destroy us if left unchecked how does sin work in our lives romans 1 is very helpful for laying it laying out for us sin works on our minds causing us to reject or suppress the truth about god it works in our hearts it works in our worship so that instead of worshiping god alone we choose to worship and live for created things rather than the creator sin affects our actions so that we can find ourselves in spirals of sinful rebellion against god and his law we reject his love to go our own way and the result of that sin left unchecked is death and not life is eternal condemnation and not the freedom that jesus offers so jesus here is offering hope he's offering the answer to the great problem that we all face he's extending an invitation to eternal life so here in john 6 to the crowd who are confused who have longings but they're physical and not spiritual jesus says i and i alone can give you the gift of eternal life and later on jesus would explain eternal life is something that begins now it's about life enjoying god knowing god knowing god the father and jesus the son but it's not just for now it also points us to the future to the great hope that we find in the bible of a perfect life in a perfect world filled with perfect relationships and as christians we need to use our imagination and we need to be future-orientated to recognize that yes there is suffering and struggle now but we are promised great hope imagine a world free of sickness and pandemic imagine a world without sadness and separation caused by death imagine a world of perfect peace and not division of absolute love and not hate of a life and a love that goes on forever where everything sad comes untrue and at the heart of that the joy of seeing jesus of having been made like jesus of enjoying his presence his beauty his life his truth his love forever and always jesus is offering himself as the answer to the longings of all our hearts and it's jesus promise if we come that

we shall be satisfied and we will find security and we will have eternal life to look forward to some of us were at a funeral here yesterday our oldest church member died and so we were mourning together and we were remembering her life and and one of those passages that was a precious to really that we read yesterday was from romans chapter 8 and that great hope that nothing and no one shall separate and the believer from the love of god that is in christ jesus that god's plan of salvation is to bring his people to enjoy life with himself jesus says that's his will and he will be faithful to it so we have this invitation all of us come by faith to jesus as lord and savior to find satisfaction salvation and true life you you you