

## John 6 v 32-59

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Let's turn again to John chapter 6. I'm looking at the section really from verse 41.

So the Jews grumbled about him because he said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. They said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

And so on. We looked last week at that great statement that Jesus made where he said, I am the bread of life. And we know that in this gospel there are various statements, the I am statements where Jesus says.

And sometimes he, like for instance, where he said, I am the resurrection and the life. He said that standing at the grave. He said that how he was like the true water while he was standing at the well. He said in the upper room after they had the bread and the wine, he says, I am the true vine. And Jesus, after feeding the thousands, he said, I am the bread of life.

[ 1 : 19 ] So Jesus was often making that statement, making this great I am statement in a particular situation that sort of threw light on what he was saying.

But the problem, as we saw last week when Jesus was saying, I am the bread of life, was that they weren't understanding. They weren't grasping. They weren't getting the drift really of what he was saying.

And part of the problem was that a lot of them didn't want to understand. You see, to begin with, there was a sense of euphoria. The people marveled at what Jesus had actually done.

And they wanted to make him king. Remember, we looked at all that. And Jesus withdrew from them because that wasn't the way. That wasn't God's way. Yes, there was to be a crown, but it was to be by the way of the cross.

Satan tempted Jesus to take the crown without the cross. And we know that, for instance, one of these temptations came through Peter after Peter had made his great declaration.

[ 2 : 23 ] You are the Christ, the son of the living God. And then when Jesus began to explain what he was about and what he was going to do, Peter said, no, no, no, no. Put these things away from you.

And Jesus could hear the very, almost like the voice of Satan coming through Peter. Peter, get thee behind me, Satan.

It wasn't that Peter was Satan, but there was a satanic attack coming at that particular moment. And this would be at another of these places where they were wanting to make him king.

So Jesus withdrew himself. And we looked at all that. And then how he crossed the water. And then how he began to teach them. They went looking for him again. And he was saying to them, look, I am the bread of life.

We, like them, we have a spiritual side. And it is absolute folly to try and satisfy the spiritual part of our life with anybody or anything other than Jesus.

[ 3 : 25 ] God made us for himself. And God has sent his son Jesus into this world to give us what we cannot find and what is impossible for us to achieve anywhere, by anything we do, wherever we search, but in and through himself.

And that's the great mistake so many people make is that they're trying to find meaningful, lasting satisfaction for their heart, for their life in other things.

And you cannot. Of course you enjoy things in life. There are many great things in life. And we're not saying that. Of course you enjoy. And there are many people tonight who aren't Christians who are enjoying life.

But there's something missing deep down within each single person. We have a soul. And that soul can be dead, spiritually dead, and so on.

But it is still, there's an emptiness, a deep-rooted emptiness, and will continue to be without Jesus. That's what Jesus is saying. Just as in those days bread, of course we're not as dependent maybe on bread nowadays as we were back then.

[ 4 : 38 ] But just as back then bread was an essential in life, Jesus is saying, look, I am the true bread that God the Father has sent down into this world.

And so we find that there was this dilemma because the Jews were following Jesus for practical reasons, for temporal reasons, for physical reasons.

A, they wanted to make him king, and B, they had got a free meal. That's what Jesus, in fact, said to them back in verse 26. Jesus answered them, truly I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

See, they were seeing Jesus as a, at one level, we can understand that, somebody who provided, but they were grounded in the physical.

They weren't understanding the deep-rooted spiritual things of life. And what was the problem? The problem was unbelief. And I want to say it's exactly the same thing tonight that causes a problem of not being able to understand.

[ 5 : 48 ] If you're here tonight, maybe, you see, this is, this is one of the great dilemmas we face. And if you're here tonight and you're not a believer, you might be saying to yourself, I need to understand an awful lot more before I become, before I come to believe.

Now, you're putting it the wrong way around. You see, our default position in life is unbelief. That's where we are. And it's not until we come to believe that we really come to understand.

Not that we understand everything. There's lots of things we won't understand. For instance, we cannot understand. Nobody in this world can understand the mystery of godliness, the incarnation, Christ manifesting the flesh.

That's what the Bible says. It's a mystery. So nobody can say, oh, I fully, I fully, we believe it. But we cannot completely understand it.

It goes beyond our capacity or capabilities of being able to explain all that happened and understand it. However, when we come to faith, things take on a new meaning.

[ 6 : 57 ] We begin to understand because the Holy Spirit is shining light into our hearts so that things that before were dark to us, things that we couldn't grasp or hold on, they now make sense.

We have that example when a person comes to faith. I remember myself, the many struggles I had of trying to get from where I was to believing in Jesus Christ.

And there seemed to be this massive gap. And I couldn't get it. It seemed so hard. I was told all you have to do is believe. And I believed that that's all you had to do was to believe. But how do you believe?

And there were times I thought, I'm just not going to get there. But you know, when you do get there, it's so simple. And then you're almost saying to other people, how can you not see it?

But that's where you wear yourself. But this is what happens because it's when we come to believe that we then begin to understand. And so one of the great problems facing the Jews was that they just didn't understand.

[ 8 : 10 ] And of course, we've always got to remember that we have an enemy in our souls who doesn't want us to believe. He doesn't want us to understand. We're told that the God of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, lest they should come and understand, lest they should see the glory, the wonder, the beauty of Christ in the gospel.

So even tonight, if you're sitting here and Jesus is not your savior, there is somebody at work in your life. Somebody who's trying to close your eyes, eyes that are already pretty closed, but trying to make sure that's Satan's great aim.

Oh, I want to make sure he or she doesn't believe. I don't want that light to shine into their heart. It doesn't want you to focus. It doesn't want you to be listening because faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes through the word of God.

Satan will try and distract you and take your mind away so that you're not focusing. There's no attention. It's at work. So there are forces.

There are enemies about. And then in response to his having told them that he had come down from heaven, they, of course, start grumbling and complaining. And they're saying, how can this be?

[ 9 : 27 ] We know who you are. You're Jesus. You've grown up amongst us. We've known you really since you were a wee boy. We've known you from the streets of Nazareth.

We remember seeing your father's workshop. That's what they're saying. We know your father. We know your mother. Of course, they didn't understand that Joseph actually was the stepfather. They didn't understand that Jesus had come down from heaven. And it's very interesting that it's at this point we find the Jews beginning to grumble. So the Jews grumbled about him because he said, I am the bread that came down from heaven.

As it's quite interesting here how you'll find a whole change in direction. Because not so long back when Jesus said that his father was giving this through bread, and they were saying, evermore give us this bread.

And as long as Jesus was working for them and giving them a free meal and healing their illnesses and saying nice things, they were happy with that.

[ 10 : 39 ] But the moment he began to make claims and challenges and demands on them, things changed.

And it's still the very same today. You will find people who aren't Christians at all, sometimes they will quote. They will quote something from Jesus. A saying or a quote that's, you know, there are lots of biblical quotations that circle in everyday life.

You will find it, journalists write it, broadcasters will say. Of course, as we heard today about David and Goliath, so often it is used. You use it in football terms and politics and all the sort of things that are so many.

The writing on the wall from Daniel. There's 101 expressions from the Bible that come out in everyday language and such like. And people will often quote a saying of Jesus because it suits them.

It's something that they can identify with and in the particular situation, they're glad to quote it. But go into Jesus' challenges, his personal challenges into our heart, into our life.

[ 11 : 50 ] The claims, the demands he makes. And all of a sudden it's a different ballgame. Ah, we don't want that. And people can very quickly change. And people will begin to grumble and to mock and to ridicule.

And that, you know, that's the bottom line. That is why so many people today, they hate Christians and they hate Christianity. Because it's a challenge to their life.

They may be not aware of it. But it gets in under their skin. It does something. It provokes a reaction. And that is why there's an intolerance to Christianity more than to really to any other religion.

Because Christianity gets right into a person's heart. Jesus really hit in. And particularly where there is hypocrisy and self-righteousness, all these things.

And that's why the poor of this world. That's why the downtrodden and the marginalized. That's why they made their way to Jesus.

[ 12 : 55 ] Because they saw in him somebody who could meet them at the very depth of their despair and their emptiness. But the religious leaders who were just absolutely full of their own importance and full of their own worth and their own works and prided themselves in their own goodness and righteousness.

Jesus was a challenge to them. Because he was going like a knife, just scraping the veneer. He told them they were like painted sepulchers. And he kept chipping away that covering that was on them.

And it hurt. And it's still the same today. When you meet people who are really angry about Christianity, it is because this very gospel is provoking them.

It's a challenge to them. They don't know that. They're probably not understanding it. They're not analyzing it. But deep down, that's what it's doing. And it's the same. That's exactly how it was in the days of Jesus.

There was no grumbling. They were happy with Jesus until he became personal and challenging and making great claims about himself and their response to these claims.

[ 14 : 11 ] And so we find after this that Jesus then says, he goes on and he says, and they will all be taught by God.

But then Jesus says something. Now, I deliberately missed that out last week in verse 37 where I looked at the great invitation.

Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. That's one of the most beautiful gospel invitations. But prior to that, Jesus has said, all that the Father gives me will come to me.

And he keeps emphasizing this theme. Verse 44. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

And I will raise him up at the last day. And so on. And he keeps emphasizing this about nobody can come to me except the Father draws him.

[15:10] Wow. Wow. In many ways you say to yourself, wow, that is quite a statement. And straight away you say to yourself, that really puts us in a position where there's nothing really we can do.

A lot of people will say that. And I say, that's it. Do you mean to say that unless God the Father draws me, then I can't be saved?

That's exactly what Jesus is saying. And that shows us our own utter helplessness in being able to do anything about our salvation.

But let's turn this around the other way. It is because of our own utter helplessness to do anything about our salvation that the Father sent his Son into this world.

And as Father, as he sent his Son into this world, one of the great claims that Jesus made, He said, I am the good shepherd.

[16:28] And what does the shepherd do? The shepherd goes out after the sheep. And what did Jesus say? He said, I am come to seek and to save that which is lost.

So, he is the good shepherd who goes out searching and seeking for all who are lost.

All the lost sheep. So, rather than straight away saying, right, unless God the Father draws me, I can't come. And folding your arms, let's follow it through.

And we see that God has not left us on our own. But he has sent his Son, the good shepherd, to seek and to save that which is lost.

What's our position in life? We are lost. That's how we are by nature. Lost. And it's an awful word. It's a terrible word. Somebody who is lost. Can't find your way.

[17:32] You don't know where to turn. It must be one of the most disconcerting things in life. Of not knowing where you are. And how to get out of where you are.

And that's really where we are. And that's what God has done. And his mercy is so great. He's come to show us that we're lost. Because we didn't know we were lost. That's the extraordinary thing.

He's come to show us. Jesus has come. And he says, I'm the light of the world. And I'm going to lighten up to show you that you're lost and that you need me. We'll take it even further.

When the Bible will show us that when even two or three meet together in the name of Jesus, that he is there in the midst to bless.

So where is the good shepherd most likely to be? It is here and everywhere where the gospel is preached. Where people gather around the word.

[18:33] So straight away you see you're putting yourself into the place where the good shepherd is seeking and saving people.

And this is where the work of the gospel goes on. Wherever the word of God is read and studied and preached.

And wherever the work and the witness of that goes on. Jesus is there. So we are putting ourselves tonight and every time in whatever way God's people gather together.

And people come together around the word in whatever way. The Lord is present. So you see it's all working together.

And if you tonight are saying, Israel, well, I actually don't feel right now the need of Jesus as Savior.

[19:29] That shows you're lost. And if you're lost, remember only the Father can draw you. So what does that mean to you? What's your responsibility? Your responsibility is to pray and say, Lord God, Father in heaven.

Will you draw me to yourself tonight? So that your son Jesus will save me. Will you pray that?

And if you honestly, sincerely, with all your heart pray that, God will, he has said in his word that those who seek, they will find.

And that is the seeking that is required. Where you, with all your heart, seek him and ask him to draw you, to search you out, to find you, and to take you to himself.

And if that is your prayer, if that is your prayer, he will answer that. That is what his word declares. So when we look at it straight away, initially, our first reading of it, we feel, and rightly, we feel our helplessness.

[ 20 : 45 ] But then we have so much encouragement in the word to see that our responsibility is to go in order that we will be drawn by.

And you know, when the Father begins to draw you, you'll find different things happening. Sometimes it will happen instantly. Some people come into church with not a thought in their mind. And God deals with them.

Other people, it's very, very gradually. It's maybe a softening process goes on. Not just in church, but meeting with other Christians in other situations and so on. Bit by bit by bit, God is at work through different influences.

And as you maybe come to church, you find that it's getting a wee bit more interesting. And the Bible is, there's a reality about things that you didn't know before or experienced before.

And you're beginning to see things and understand things. And there's a dawning, as it were, of light. This is God gradually working within a person's heart.

[ 21 : 50 ] And so we find here that these amazing, amazing words. And then Jesus goes on to say, not that anyone has seen the Father, except he, that's what he's saying, he who is from God, he has seen the Father.

And that really is highlighting to us, that highlights many things. But one of the things that they're saying, because the Jews were elevating the people like Moses and Abraham and all these. What they didn't understand, that it was Jesus, this very passion that was speaking to them, was the same passion who revealed himself to Abraham and to Moses and to Jacob and to all these great people in the past.

It wasn't the Father. It was Jesus when he took the form of a theophany, where he took the appearance of a human. But now he has come, not just in the appearance, but in the actual reality. And then in verse 47, Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. And he keeps reiterating this, has eternal life.

[ 23 : 06 ] Eternal life is not something that we get at the last day. Jesus keeps talking about the last day. I will raise him up at the last day. There's life at the last day and all that.

Eternal life begins the moment we embrace Jesus Christ as Savior. We have at that moment we've passed from death to life.

The fullness of eternal life is what we will experience later on. We cannot experience that fullness because we're still within our sinful, broken bodies here.

We're still under the curse. We have to go through the process of natural death and all these things. But the fullness, the glory is still to be. That's where we will come to really bathe eternally in eternal life.

But we already have it here, the blessings of it. We know forgiveness of sin. And what a release that is, to have your sins forgiven.

[ 24 : 14 ] Wow. Wow. What a liberty, what a weight comes off you. Where there's this sense of belonging to God. The apostle Paul, when he's right, he's always using the expression, I know.

I know. See, that's the assurance of the believer. I know. I know that my Redeemer liveth. We have that in the Old Testament. But we have it so often in the New. I know. I know. And that's where the believer knows.

He is taught of God. God's Spirit reveals. And God's Spirit is assuring us and saying, that's what God's Spirit is doing. He's assuring us, you belong to God.

That you and the living and true God are at one. So that all of a sudden, you know what you're about here. You have an identity.

You have a sense of not only belonging, but you know where you're going. And all these things are so important in this world. Because so many people have no clue what they're about.

[ 25 : 20 ] They have no sense of identity. They have no sense of purpose. They don't know where they're going. They don't know what life is about. But in Jesus Christ, it changes everything. And so this is what Jesus is talking about here.

About this life. Now again, there are many things. The time is going. But just to say one or two things very briefly here.

And Jesus then goes on to talk about it. He says, 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.

And so on. Now, this took things to a new level. Because they're saying, the Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

So Jesus said, And 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. No wonder they talked amongst themselves. They were saying, Is this cannibalism?

[ 26 : 21 ] What on earth is he talking about? And you see, the problem often with the Jews was that they were stuck in the physical. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again, Nicodemus went straight into the impossible situation of saying, How on earth can I go back into my mother's womb?

When Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria about the water of life that he could give, she straight away saying to me, How can you give me that water when you don't even have a bucket?

When Jesus spoke about destroying the temple and raising it up in three days, the people looked at the glorious structure of the temple and they thought, What's he saying?

But they weren't understanding that he was speaking in spiritual terms. And here again, this is what he's talking about. And really what he's homing in here on is his atoning work, his atoning sacrifice, his atoning death.

And it is where we take his passion and his work to ourselves. Because he broke his body. He poured out his blood for us.

[ 27 : 35 ] There's almost a sacramental sign to this, although this is not what it's teaching. But may I say with regard to the sacrament, Jesus says with regard to the sacrament, this is what he says to his people, Take and eat.

Take, eat. This is my body that's broken for you. He doesn't say to his people, Observe the sacrament. And may I say to believers who don't come to the table, Observing is not taking. It's not enough to come to the sacrament service and observe. It is to take and to eat. It is in the act of obedience to Christ.

It is a means of grace to strengthen our faith. Now last week, I think it was, we looked at, at no point are we thinking that coming to membership in the church is the same thing as coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

I'm not going to go over that. We spoke about that already. Because some people have this idea that the moment you join the church, then you, that's you become a Christian. We come into membership in the church once we have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 28 : 57 ] But it's the very same thing Jesus is saying here. You've got to take of me. You've got to partake in me. You can use the picture of food. I remember we were taken once in London, we had a visit there with friends.

And we were taken to this restaurant where they cooked the meal right in front of us. And it was amazing. It was sizzling. And there was all the sounds and the aromas. And it was wonderful seeing this happening.

But, you know, by the time the meal was ready, I was absolutely starving because the whole thing that was happening in front of you was just wonderful. But unless I had actually eaten of it, I wouldn't really know what it was like and it wouldn't do any benefit to me unless I actually took it. It wasn't enough just to watch. Although there were sights and there were sounds and there was a smell and different things, you had to take in order to know what it was really like.

And that's what you've got to do with Jesus. You have to take him. It's not enough just to come to church and to hear and to know and to see things. You've got to take, get right in, accept him so that he, his work, his person, his work becomes part of your life.

[ 30 : 17 ] And it's only then that you derive the benefit. It is only then that this eternal life becomes yours. And again, when you take, it's like food.

We're told you are what you eat. And that's quite a thought sometimes. But anyway, you are what you eat, we're told. And you know what? That's true spiritually. Because the more we feed upon Jesus, do you know what happens?

The more like him we'll become. But again, in order to feed upon Jesus, we have to have an appetite for him. And if we spend all our life eating junk, we won't have a spiritual appetite.

It's just the same as in the natural world. If we eat rubbish all the time, or I shouldn't say if we eat rubbish, if you spend all your time eating junk stuff, and then when you come to eat your proper meal, you will have no appetite for it.

And it's true spiritually as well. In order to enjoy Christ, to really enjoy him, to have this hunger for him, then it's Jesus we have to be focused upon, not on the things of this world.

[ 31 : 40 ] Many blessings in this world, don't get me wrong, but we need to get our priorities right in all these things. And so, as I say, there are many things we can say.

But in conclusion, I will come to look at this again. The time has gone. We see that, verse 60, many of the disciples heard it. They said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?

And we're told that many of them walked away. What are you going to do? Is there anybody here tonight who is listening to this, and that's what they're saying? This is hard stuff.

This is too, I'm not ready for all this. I hope nobody will walk out this door tonight saying, no, this is not for me.

It's a dark night outside. It's a windy night. It's a wet night. You know, to walk out into the darkness without Jesus, it's a spiritual picture in itself.

[ 32 : 46 ] I hope that's not the way you're going to go in life, into the dark. Because it's a lonely place. It's an empty place. Jesus tonight is offering himself in the gospel.

He's here. Don't let the opportunity pass by. Him or her that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray to cleanse us from our sin. We pray to accept us. We pray, Lord, that the prayer in the song of Solomon draws, that we will run after you will be our prayer as well.

Oh, Lord, draw us. Draw us with cords of love. May there be a growing desire within our heart to know and to experience Jesus. Lord, bless and pity us.

Shine on us with your face. Guide us in everything and take away our sin. Take us home safely, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.