

The Bread Of Life

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[0 : 00] If you would, please open up your Bibles this morning to John chapter 6. John chapter 6. We've been walking through John's Gospel together and every week I encourage you to have your Bibles open.

I don't want you just to hear the words from me in my mouth. I want you to see it with your eyes on the pages of Scripture and see what he says. So if you would, turn there now, John chapter 6. If you're using the pew Bibles there in front of you, I'm thinking this is around page 835, 836, but it'll be there for you to read.

So we're going to read John chapter 6 verses 35 through 51 this morning. Follow along with me as I read. 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. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

[1 : 19] 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. 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.

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? How does he now say I've come down from heaven?

And Jesus answered them, Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.

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. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God.

He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

[2 : 33] This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 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. Church, the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our Lord endures forever.

If you would, let's bow once more and pray. Father, we ask again, as we open up your word, that my voice would go out, and that my voice would become small, and your voice would become great, that I would decrease, that you would increase, that what is true and helpful would land on fertile soil, and what is unhelpful would bypass their ears.

God, we pray that your truth would build up this church. In Christ's name, amen. How do we understand the miracle of salvation?

One of my favorite things to do as a pastor here at Seaweed Bay is to hear your stories of how you came to faith in Christ. And for the most part, at the basic level at least, the stories are all the same.

[3 : 51] You at one point heard the gospel, maybe one time, maybe two times, maybe ten times, maybe a hundred times, but at a certain point, you heard that gospel truth, and by the grace of God, you believed it.

But in the specifics of how exactly that came to be, those stories are all diverse, and unique, they're different, and they're fascinating to me. I love to hear the stories of your salvation.

I want to share with you the story of somebody named John Wesley this morning. I read his conversion story again this week. John Wesley is not a member of our church. He is best known for being the founder of Methodism, but I want you just to listen closely to his testimony of how he

came to Christ.

John Wesley was at the age of 20. He was, from all outside appearances, very religious. He was devout. If you and I looked at him, observed his life, you and I would say, without a doubt, this man knows the Lord.

He is a believer. His journals, they say that he set apart an hour or two every day for religious retirement. This is how they spoke back then. For religious retirement, he communicated every week.

[5 : 04] He watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. He aimed and prayed for inward holiness. He was, by all accounts, a devout religious man.

But despite all of this, by his own admission, he was not yet converted. Twelve years later, when he was 32 years old, he set out as a missionary to the Indians of Georgia.

And when he was asked, why? Why are you going? Why are you doing this? His answer revealed a lot. He said that he had hopes of saving his own soul. He hoped that by bringing the gospel to others, that he might obtain the holiness that he so desperately desired.

And then he, by bringing the gospel to others, would be made right with God. Well, the story goes that there in Georgia, he met a Moravian pastor, a guy named Augustus, who began to talk with John, and he asked him some very pointed questions.

Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? He asked. John had no answer.

[6 : 17] Do you know Jesus Christ? He asked. To which John said, I know that he is the Savior of the world. But do you know that he has saved you?

I hope he has died to save me, John said. He continued to minister there in Georgia, preaching the gospel as an unconverted minister of Christ.

And almost three years later, he wrote this in his journal. He said, That is a good question, isn't it? How could anyone, a man so religious, so devout, so eager to please the Lord, yet by his own admission, not be converted? And not see the truth clearly?

Well, as we read in John chapter 6 this morning, what we see here is a similar situation. Jesus is in the middle of a conversation with a group of Jews. And there in verse 35, Jesus makes this incredible statement.

[7 : 39] It's an incredible promise. He says, I am the bread of life. And whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

So this is a promise of eternal satisfaction for your soul, for any who would come to Christ simply by believing in him. And he extends that invitation broadly and widely to any who would come to him in faith.

Any who come to me will lack nothing and will be satisfied in God forever. But then we get to verse 36 and there's a problem.

Do you see it? He says to the Jews, But I said to you, you have seen me and yet do not believe. How can that be?

Well, this is a shocking issue when you see it. Apparently, you can be face to face with the living God. You can hear his words week in, week out.

[8 : 42] You can see his works unfold in real time. You can be zealous to obey the Lord and yet you can still miss it. You can still not truly believe.

You can mistake familiarity with Christ, with faith in Christ. So the answer that I, the question that I want to let Jesus answer for us this morning is how does anyone truly come to believe in Christ? How does anybody truly actually come to him and receive what he's offering to us here in the gospel? How is anyone saved? And what I hope you'll come away convinced of and assured by and strengthened of this morning is the good news that God must do it.

God must do it. We're going to see three answers to that question this morning. How is anyone saved? If you're a note taker, this will help you to follow along.

Three answers to the question, how is anyone saved? First, answer number one, we see that salvation is arranged in eternity.

[9 : 56] Look there to verse 37, John 6, 37. Here we see the roots of our salvation. This is the basis of our salvation. You know how sometimes you ask somebody, hey, tell me your story, and they go like way back to when their parents were born and how their parents met and their grandparents' story.

They go way, way, way, way, way back. Well, Jesus here, he goes back further than that. He's going all the way back to an arrangement that happened in eternity past, before time, as we know it, began.

Look there. Now, Jesus says, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. So, before you existed, before I existed, before the world existed, what we see here is that God the Father gave a people to God the Son.

And the result of that giving in eternity, look there what it says, the result of that giving in eternity is their certain coming to Christ at some point in time.

All that the Father gives me will come to me. Now, the order here is important, isn't it? We sometimes tend to think in the opposite direction.

[11:11] We read these verses backwards as if it said, all that come to Christ, well, that's who the Father will give to him. If we come, then he gives. That's not what it says. I just want you to look at what the verse says.

He says, all that the Father gives me will come to me. So, how is anyone saved? Well, if we zoom out, get ourselves out of the picture, zoom out of our own experience, zoom out of our lives, if we had the whole picture of eternity in mind, as Christ does, we would say that your coming to Christ, believer, in time, was a direct and certain result of God's giving you to Christ before the ages began. Now, I want to show you two other places in John where we see this. Because this is not a one-off comment. It's all throughout the Gospel of John. This is not the first time Jesus says something like this.

This is where Jesus roots our salvation. It's not ultimately an hour willing, hour working. He roots salvation ultimately in God's working, God's willing, God's planning, God's arranging.

So, two places here in John. Mark this down. You can go digging in here a little later this afternoon if you'd like. John chapter 10 and John chapter 17. John chapter 10 and John chapter 17.

[12:33] John chapter 10, verses 26 through 29. Jesus says, You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Notice what he doesn't say. The order here, again, is important. He doesn't say, You are not among my sheep because you do not believe, although that is true.

What does he say? He says, You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. Why? Because the Father has given them to Christ.

Example number two, John 17, 6 through 10. Listen to the words of Jesus, how he prays. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

[13:44] Do you hear that? Yours they were and you gave them to me and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you.

For I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me. This is a glorious truth, Christian.

And when we begin to understand the big picture of our salvation, this is a glorious truth. Do you see what this means for your salvation? When we begin to understand the miracle of salvation in this way as the outworking of the eternal plan of God, there is joy and there is confidence.

Our salvation does not depend on us. It does not depend on our strength, on our willing, on our working, on our goodness, on our knowledge, on our ability to muster up the strength to believe today.

Our salvation is rooted in the unshakable, eternal plan of an unchanging and faithful God. God, a few months ago, I was sharing this with somebody.

[15:02] We took our boys to Legoland and it was awesome. But of course, a trip like that, we don't just do spur on the moment. Okay? Amanda and I had planned it out far in advance.

We purchased the tickets. We booked the hotel. We planned the exact day, the exact moment we would go. All of this before we told the boys anything. And then when the time was right, at the moment of our choosing, we revealed to them all of the incredible plans that we had made for them. And it was amazing. Then we got them in the car. We packed up all their stuff. We drove them safely to the park. Their coming was a direct result of our planning.

All that the Father has given me will come to me. Now let me ask you something. What kind of a father would I be if when we arrived there at the park, we got to the gate, we got ready to go inside, if I turned around to them and I said, what are you doing here?

I changed my mind. You're not coming to the park today. I'm not bringing you inside. You thought you were coming inside here. Forget it. What kind of father would I be if I turned them away?

[16:21] That would be ridiculous, right? Why would that be ridiculous? Because at the root, at the basis of this whole thing was my arrangement to make it happen.

It was my plan. It was my gift to them. Why would I turn them away? This was their confidence and their joy that this would happen.

It was their freedom in receiving this gift. It was because mom and dad had planned it. They had purchased it. They told us it's happening and we believe it. Now we get to enjoy it. Christian, this is the confidence that we have in our salvation.

Your salvation, your assurance, your confidence, your joy, your hope is rooted in the unshakable will of God.

This is good news. Look there to verse 38. You might ask, what is that will? What is the will of God? Look to verse 38.

[17:27] Jesus says, For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 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.

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.

But how will we look? And how will we believe? This is the second answer to our question this morning. How is anyone saved? Second, salvation is applied in time.

Salvation is applied in time. Look there to verse 41. Because the Jews didn't like what they heard. It seems like they pretty much just ignored everything that Jesus had just told them about salvation, about the will of God, about what he's come to do because they were so hung up on what he said in verse 35.

It says the Jews grumbled about him because he said, I am the bread of life that came down from heaven. They said, Jesus, what are you talking about? You didn't come from heaven.

[18:42] We know your father. We know your mother. Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know Joseph. We know Mary. How does he now say, I've come down from heaven? See, they still don't get it.

They still can't perceive the truth that's standing there right there in front of them explaining the gospel. They're so close to Christ, yet they still don't get it.

Maybe you can think of a friend, a family member, a co-worker, someone that you know and that this sounds a little bit like, someone that you have attempted to communicate the gospel to.

You've spoken the words of Christ to them. You've tried and tried to articulate it as clearly as you possibly can, but they still just don't get it.

Why? Why is that? It's because our sin runs so deep in us that until we are born again of the Spirit of God, we cannot see spiritual truth clearly.

[19:47] This is what Jesus told Nicodemus. You might remember from John chapter 3. He said, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Again, he says, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

This is the necessary condition of spiritual life and here we see another unless, don't we? Jesus answered them in verse 43. Do not grumble among yourselves.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day. And so the necessary condition of anyone coming to Christ we see here is God must draw them to Christ.

And so here's my question. What in the world does that mean? What in the world does it mean for God to draw someone to Christ? And there are, I think, two very clear possibilities here.

Possibility number one is that this drawing to Christ is a sort of wooing. I had a friend growing up, I would go over to their house, every now and then they would have kittens under the porch and we would go down and try to call them over to us.

[21:10] Come here. Come on. Come on. Let me get you. Let me pet you. Come on. Come on out. And if that didn't work, when that didn't work, we would put out some milk, maybe put out some

food.

We would try to lure them out to us. But at the end of the day, we were powerless to make them, to call them, to bring them. We were powerless to bring them to us.

It was hopeful drawing. That's how many think that God draws people to Christ. I'm going to argue for option number two here.

Option number two is that this drawing is not hopeful, it is effective. What God has planned in eternity, He certainly accomplishes in time.

All that God has given to the Son in eternity will come in time. Not one will be lost. All will come. Why? Because God Himself will draw them effectively.

[22 : 11] Think on your own story, Christian. If you're here and you are a believer in Christ, just think back on your own story, how you came to believe in the gospel.

Some of you, I know, have a dramatic testimony. You were far from the Lord, living in sin, living in rebellion, and somehow, some way, you opened up a Bible, somebody came and shared with you, you turned on the radio, and you, whatever the tool was, you heard the gospel, and by the grace of God, you believed.

Others of you have a story, like what I pray for my children. You have a very boring testimony. You know, I pray that my children have a terribly boring testimony. They grew up in a believing home. They heard the gospel from mom and dad over and over and over and over and over and over again. They came to church. They heard the gospel from dad over and over and over and over and over and over and over again. But at some point, something clicked.

They heard it differently. Not just as information that they know, but truth that they cherish. They believe. They begin to trust that Jesus Christ is their Lord, and their God, and their Savior, and their hope.

[23 : 23] Do you know what happened in you, believer? That when you finally believe that gospel message, you heard it from someone, but you were taught the truth by God.

Look there again to verse 44. Look what Jesus does. He says, No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.

And then he backs up this statement with Scripture. He says, It is written in the prophets, and they will all be taught by God. See, the way that God draws his people is by teaching them.

And we see the result. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Christ. This is a reference to what we call the new covenant.

The new covenant. This type of teaching of God is not just information that touches our ears. It's transformation of the heart. It is the internal work of God in the hearts of his people where he himself writes the law of God on their hearts.

[24 : 37] It's no longer external. It's no longer outside of them. It is now in them. No longer familiarity with Christ. It is personal faith in Christ. God himself replaces their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh.

God himself places his own spirit within them. God himself promises to be their God and for them to be his people. And when God teaches you in this way, all of a sudden you begin to see everything with new clarity that you didn't have before.

You begin to see the worth and the glory of Christ like you've never seen before. You begin to open up the pages of scripture and see the glory of God in ways you've never seen before.

You see your own sin and a desire to put it away in ways you've never felt before. You desire holiness to please the Lord in ways you've never felt before. Where did this come from? It came from the teaching of God in your heart.

I've got to share this story with you. I had the opportunity to speak with somebody in our home this past week. And this is a person who has gone to church for years and as we spoke, it just became clear that she did not understand the gospel.

[26 : 00] She did not understand the truth of the gospel, what we're talking about here this morning. In her own understanding, being right with God was about her works, what she knew, right and wrong, yes and no.

So it was an improvement message for her. And so we talked about the gospel, those four parts that we talk about all the time. God, man, Christ, response. We walked slowly through each one. I said, I don't want to put words in your mouth. I just want to explain this and stop and see if you believe what I'm talking about here. And we talked about God. God is the creator of everything.

He's good. He's worthy of our praise. She said, yeah, I believe that. We talked about sin, how all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All of us bear personal responsibility for our rebellion against the Lord.

She said, you don't have to tell me that I'm a sinner. I believe that. And then we talked about Christ and how anyone who looks to the work of the Savior who came and lived in our place and died in our place and rose to offer eternal life to any who don't work for it to simply believe.

[27 : 11] That's how anyone is saved. And she said, I've never heard that before. Now, I know she'd heard it before. She sat under my teaching for about a year.

I know she'd heard it, but she hadn't heard it until that moment when for the first time God opened up her ears and her eyes to perceive the truth of the gospel and to believe it with all of her heart and soul for the first time.

She left that room, that moment, justified. This is the work of God. The work of God to draw sinners to faith in Christ by opening their eyes to see the glory of Christ in the gospel.

You know, here's the thing, church. We don't know who God will draw. God alone knows who He will effectively draw to be His own in time.

God alone knows who He will draw to Christ effectively. This is not ours to know. God alone knows whom He's given to Christ in eternity past and He will draw them in time.

[28 : 28] We have the privilege of seeing in real time the unfolding of the eternal plan of God. And not just seeing it passively, but church, we have the privilege of being actively used by God to bring salvation to the lost as we proclaim the message of the gospel.

We have the joy of proclaiming our third point this morning. third and final point. That salvation is made available to all right now in the gospel.

Salvation is made available to all in the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you're here this morning and you're not a believer, first I just want to say I'm thrilled that you're here.

We welcome you to be here. I hope that you are hearing truth for the first time. I'm glad that you're sitting under the word this morning. You may be wondering what in the world we're talking about when we talk so much about the gospel.

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. And we believe that if sinners like me and like you if sinners like us are ever going to know God it is only through faith in Jesus Christ.

[29 : 54] This is what Jesus tells us here in verse 46. He says no one has ever seen the Father except he who is from God. He has seen the Father. So how can anyone know the Father?

Well they must look to Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known. If we want to know what God is like we have to look to Jesus.

If we want to know what it's like to be made right with God we have to listen and come to Jesus.

And he tells us when we look at Christ with eyes of faith look again to what he holds out for us here in verse 47.

Jesus says truly truly I say to you whoever believes has eternal life. life. This is the free and broad invitation of the gospel.

Not by our working not by our doing not by our knowing not by our believing anything other than believing and trusting by faith that Christ is enough.

[31 : 02] Whoever believes has eternal life. And this life is available to you right now. If you would simply come by faith.

We often read the words of Isaiah 55. We read them last week. I'm going to read them again. He invites us come everyone who thirsts come to the waters. He who has no money come buy and eat come by wine and milk without money without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy. Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear and come to me here that your soul may live. How often do we ignore the feast that Christ offers us in the gospel?

This is an invitation to stop eating not bread and to stop eating that which does not satisfy and to stop living for that which will never fulfill the deepest desires of your soul and to come and partake of that which will satisfy your soul forever.

[32 : 27] Do you see the contrast that Jesus makes here in verse 49? God did something miraculous there in the wilderness for Israel. He rained down bread from heaven.

Life-giving sustaining bread. He fed the Israelites there for 40 years with this miraculous provision of God but it was temporary. It was a miracle but it had an expiration.

They ate it. They were filled. They got up. They did it again over and over and over again for 40 years and then the bread was no more and then they died. Jesus says this bread, this bread that comes down from heaven, comes down to feed you forever and if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

This bread is offered freely to any who would come and eat. Eternal life is available to any who would come. And what is this bread?

The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. This is an incredible promise at an incredible price.

[33 : 42] The body and blood of Jesus broken and shed for you. Do you believe it? Are you feasting by faith right now in what Jesus Christ offers you in the hope of the gospel?

And if you are, are you bringing this bread to others that they might hear and believe? John Wesley, by the grace of God, eventually came to know the Lord.

And 285 years ago, actually, as of last Wednesday, he wrote in his journal, the date, Wednesday, May 24th, 1738.

It was about five o'clock in the morning that I opened my testament upon these words. There are given to us great and exceeding promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature. Just as I went out, I opened it again upon these words, thou art not far from the kingdom of God. In the afternoon, I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice.

[34 : 59] In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society on Outersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change whereby God works on the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.

I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation. And the assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and he saved me from the law of sin and death.

Do you have a story like that? In just a moment, you see here, we are going to partake of the Lord's Supper. we have the body and the blood of Christ visibly portrayed for us here.

Believer, I want to invite you right now before we prepare to partake, to pause and to reflect on the gift of God in your salvation.

To praise God for what he's done in giving Christ for you, for drawing you. to know and to be satisfied in Christ.

[36 : 21] Let's bow and pray. Jesus, the offer is set before us.

Come any who are hungry, come any who are thirsty, and find true life in you. We thank you, Lord, for the gospel, the good news that you have come down from heaven to give eternal life to any who look to you in faith.

We pray, God, for strength and encouragement, for assurance and confidence for the believer. We pray for conviction and for drawing for the non-believer this morning.

We love you, and we pray all this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.