

## “JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES

### #11: “The Bread of Life”

**SCRIPTURE:** John 6:22-71

#### **INTRO:**

The day after the crowd of thousands had been fed, Jesus and His disciples were at the plain of Gennesaret, where many were brought for healing. After they had left, people from the other side of the Sea came looking for Jesus. Not finding Him, they got into their boats and rowed to Capernaum, where they found Him.

When they expressed their concern that they couldn’t find Him, He said to them, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For, on him the God the Father has set his seal”*** (v. 26-27). In other words, their temporal physical needs took precedence over their eternal spiritual needs. Are we any different?

When He told them that they must not work for the food that perishes, they asked, ***“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”*** (v. 28). Jesus told them, ***“...believe in him whom he has sent.”*** They then said, ***“...what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”***

In the following verses, Jesus notices what they said and teaches about...

#### ***...THE BREAD OF LIFE.***

The first thing He pointed out is that His Father, not Moses, gave them bread from heaven. He tells them that His Father gives the *true* bread from heaven. He said to them, ***“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”*** (v. 33). All they heard was that the bread of God gives life to the world. They didn’t hear the part that said that Jesus Himself was that bread.

So, Jesus has to be more direct. So, he said, ***“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst”*** (v. 35). But then He tells them, ***“...you have seen me and yet do not believe”*** (v. 36).

Of course, when He said that those who come to Him believing shall never hunger or thirst, He wasn’t speaking literally. He was talking about *spiritual* food and *spiritual* water, you understand.

Now, look at verse 37: ***“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”*** There are two things here: (1) ***“All that the Father gives me will come to me”*** and (2) ***“... whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”***

The first thing evokes the question: How does the Father give people to Him? Does this mean that only those given to Jesus by the Father will be saved? The answer is “No.” God draws people to Himself and his Son by a combination of His love and our desire to turn to Him. We all have the freedom of choice, and God desires all of us to be saved. Paul wrote in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:13-14: ***“... God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** In other words, when we believe in the truth, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, and we obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. God chose us in that He gave us the opportunity to believe in the truth.

The second thing evokes the question: Does this mean that once we accept Jesus, we can never be lost? The answer is “No.” What Jesus is saying here is simply that He will never drive anyone away from believing in Him. However, our freedom of choice is never taken away. We are always “in Christ” because we choose to be. Freedom of choice has been ours since Adam and Eve were created. Sure, God’s omniscience enables Him to know what choices we’re going to make before we make them, but the choices are ours. God’s omniscience doesn’t change that. So, we always have the option to turn away from Christ or to deny Him. Judas exercised that option. Demas, one of Paul’s cohorts, apparently exercised his option due to his love for the present world (2 Timothy 4:10). I’m sure there were others. Jesus said, ***“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few”*** (Matthew 7:13).

Verses 60 through 71 offer further reason to believe that many option out...

### ***...AS JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT THE WORDS OF LIFE.***

When those who were following Him heard what He taught about the bread of life, they began to grumble, ***“This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”*** (v. 60).

The response of Jesus to this thinking was, ***“Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”*** (vv. 61-63).

Then He really gets to the heart of their problem: ***“But there are some of you who do not believe.”*** When you don’t believe that Jesus is who He said He is, chances are, you won’t believe anything He taught, and you will find his words to be very hard to get your mind around. I’m reminded of what the apostle Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:12-14: ***“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”***

In verses 66 through 71 we see three types of disciples of Jesus, two who are false, and one who is a true disciple.

The first type is the one seen in verse 66. John tells us that ***“...many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.”*** While they believed Jesus to be who He said He was, and would accept the free meals, they wouldn’t accede to the demands of discipleship. They go along with the crowd for a while, but eventually they disappear. I’ve seen a lot of these in my day.

The second type of disciple is exemplified by Judas. He knows the cost but stays around anyway. He appears to be a true member of the flock, but he never submits to the Lordship of Jesus. He’s a real hypocrite. Today’s church is full of these.

The third type of disciple is exemplified by Peter, who’s a true disciple. He realizes the cost of discipleship, but he also realizes that no one else has the words of eternal life. In other words, if we want to go to heaven, we have to go through the blood of Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to heaven except through Him.

## **IN CLOSING...**

This chapter closes with John revealing that Judas was the ***“devil”*** who would betray Jesus.