



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

John 6:41-51: The Bread of Life Discourse, Part III

"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"

43Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48I am that bread of life. 49Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Background Notes

This great Bread of Life discourse was given in association with the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. In verse 41 we read that *"the Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven."* The Jews here were the Jewish leaders at Capernaum. They too were listening to the Lord's discourse, along with the Galilean multitudes that had participated in that great miracle.

Whenever John mentions "the Jews" in his Gospel, they are part of the opposition party – those Jews who were hostile to Jesus. In verse 42 they said, *"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"* This is certainly their denial of the virgin birth, isn't it? More than that, it is a denial of the deity of Christ. These Jews realized that when the Lord said that He was the Bread (*"I am the bread which came down from heaven"*), that this was a claim to deity.

Throughout the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus claimed to be God. Verse 46 is another claim to deity: *"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."* Certainly this is a claim to deity. The Lord Jesus was not claiming to be the Father -- He is the Son -- but He was claiming deity. This is the great theme of the Gospel of John: Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Jews didn't believe Jesus, and they tried to make Jesus out to be just a man with an earthly father and mother. This is exactly what many people do today with Jesus, by saying "He was just a man -- oh, a good man, but He was just a man." They deny His deity.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. God draws a person to Christ on the basis of His sovereignty.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"(v44). How does that verse strike you? When you first read this verse, you may not like it because it sounds like we have no choice in the matter of our salvation. God chooses, and that's it! That might be your first reaction to this verse.

However, I have come to love verses like this! You know why? Because I have come to know myself, and I know that if God didn't draw me, I would never have come to God on my own. Would you? I know that God had to make the first move, or I'd still be doing my own thing. So don't let this doctrine scare you!

You can be sure that if you want to choose the Lord, you can come, but at the same time, you can't deny that God is drawing you. God draws a person to Christ on the basis of his sovereignty. Don't let that doctrine rattle you -- be thankful for it, because we have got to face the facts: we would **not** choose God **on our own**.

When the Fall of Man took place in the Garden of Eden, it affected all of us -- every part of us, including our minds. Our minds don't naturally want to go toward God -- we want to go away from God. If God doesn't make the first move, with the Holy Spirit probing our hearts and drawing us, we would never come to Christ. So, while it seems like a tough doctrine -- the sovereignty of God, election, choosing, and so forth -- yet it is a wonderful doctrine! God draws a person to Christ on the basis of His sovereignty.

2. God draws a person to Christ by the means of Scripture.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"(v45). This verse is a quote from Isaiah 54, and it indicates that the primary way in which God reaches out, draws a person to Christ, draws a person to Himself, is through His Word. Romans 10:17: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Think back on your conversion to Christ. I'm sure that you'll agree that it was Scriptures that you were reading, or that you had memorized, or that your parents or Sunday school teachers taught you, that God used to draw you to Jesus Christ.

In my own life, the Scripture the Lord used was Revelation 3:20: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."* I realized that I had a responsibility to open the door of my heart to Jesus. *"If anyone will open the door, I will come in and have communion with him, sup with him, and he with me."* As Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, *"...the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* God draws a person to Christ by the means of Scripture.

3. God draws a person to Christ for the purpose of salvation.

In verse 48 the Lord Jesus said, *"I am that bread of life."* Now this is one of the well-known "I Am" statements in the Gospel of John. We mentioned that back in verse 35, when Jesus said to them, *"I am the bread of life."*

There are seven "I Am" statements in the gospel of John. This is the first one: *"I am the bread of life"* here in John 6. The second is, *"I am the light of the world"* in John 8. Third, *"I am the door"* in John 10. Fourth, *"I am the good shepherd"* in John 10. Fifth, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* in John 11. Sixth, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* in John 14. And finally, number seven, *"I am the vine"* in John 15.

Isn't the structure of this Gospel interesting? In the structure of the Gospel of John we have seven sign miracles, we have seven "I Am" statements with a predicate, and we have seven "I Am" statements without a predicate. Examples of what we mean by **with** a predicate" are: *"I am the bread"...* *"I am the door,"* and so forth. The seven "I am" statements **without** the predicate are just "I Am" statements. For example, in John 8:58, *"Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'" "I AM" is the title of deity! That claim to deity is made seven times throughout the Gospel of John. It's very interesting to see this structure in the Gospel of John, with the overall theme being the deity of Christ! The purpose for the Gospel is to show that Jesus was truly and fully God.*

In verses 48-51 the Lord Jesus said, *"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* This is why God draws a person to Christ for salvation. The emphasis is that they will not die, that they will live forever. God doesn't draw a person to Christ to make him wealthy, or to give him unlimited good health, or to make our lives easy – He draws us to Christ for **salvation!**

Of course God is interested in other aspects of our lives -- for sure! He's interested in our welfare, our well-being, and our health, but we must recognize, as the Lord said in His Bread of Life discourse, that God draws a person to Christ for salvation - - so that we will not die, and we will live forever. Without Christ we are lost – we will die in our sins and be eternally separated from God. That is what "to die" means here. It is not talking about physical death -- it means **eternal separation from God**. We must partake of the Bread of Life. God draws a person to Christ for the purpose of salvation.

Practical Application

Have you partaken of the Bread of Life?

Once again, verse 51: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

What does it mean to partake, or eat, of the Bread of Life? Is the Lord talking here about partaking of communion or the Lord's Supper? **No!** -- a resounding **no!** He is **not** talking about communion -- He is talking about **salvation**. To "eat the Bread of Life" means to receive Christ as Savior.

Up to verse 51 in the Bread of Life discourse, the Lord was referring to His incarnation when He spoke of Himself as the living Bread that came down from heaven. In verse 51 there is a transition: He began to speak of His substitutionary death. Look at the last part of verse 51 once again, "*...and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*" Note that the Lord is speaking in the future tense here: "*The bread that I shall give is my flesh.*" He had already come as the living Bread from heaven -- that was His incarnation. But He still had to give His body in death. He was moving on in the discourse to teaching about His substitutionary work on the Cross. His work of atonement is in view here.

Note the substitutionary nature of His death in verse 51: "*...which I will give for the life of the world.*" Now that's a doctrinal point, but the practical application is obvious. Have you partaken of the bread of life? The question is not "Have you taken communion?" The question is not "Have you recognized that Jesus is the living Bread from heaven?" And the question is not even "Do you acknowledge that Jesus is the Bread of Life?" The question is "Have you **partaken** of the Bread of Life -- that is, have you received Christ as the one who gave His life for you?"

The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute -- He died for your sins and for my sins. Have you partaken of the Bread of Life?