

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #31

John 6:41-51

A number of years ago in a church at least four different members informed the pastor that they didn't want him to say anything in his preaching and teaching that offended anybody. This minister was pretty much a straight shooter. The thinking was we just want everyone to come to church and be happy and not be offended by what they hear. One person actually went so far as to say, I don't like to invite visitors because when they come, they may not like what they hear. Rather than these people being concerned that they hear the real truth of God, they were more interested in hearing something that never stepped on their toes. They wanted some nice little, ear tickling verbiage.

That is not however what the Bible is designed to do. This is not the way the Bible is to be handled. Preaching the Word of God is not designed to tickle ears, it is designed to cut open souls. Never is there a hint in the Bible that the Word of God has as its goal not offending the hearers. The purpose of the Word of God is to reveal the truth of God and when the truth of God is revealed to sinners, it is most assuredly going to offend. This is truth from a Holy God.

The teachings of Jesus Christ were **never** designed to tickle ears. The teachings of Jesus Christ were **never** designed to flatter the Jews or the Gentiles. Those teachings were designed to communicate God's truth. Jesus Christ taught with uncompromising directness. **The truth is, the only way to be right with a Holy God is to believe on Jesus Christ and the only way one may believe on Jesus Christ is God the Father must choose the individual and take that person to the Son.** This truth does not make most people very happy, because it takes them completely out of the picture in being able to save themselves. **Salvation is by pure grace and this is pure "truly, truly" truth.** If that offends someone, too bad. If people can't explain it all, tough. It is God's truth. The primary point of this passage is this:

JESUS CHRIST CONTINUALLY TAUGHT THAT FAITH IN HIM WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SALVATION AND THAT GOD THE FATHER CHOOSES WHO BELIEVES IN HIM AND THAT TEACHING CONTINUALLY OFFENDED AND ANGERED THE RELIGIOUS JEWS.

Now for us today, it is the doctrine of election that still causes people to mumble and grumble. When we carefully look at this context, we will discover that it didn't seem to be this doctrine that shocked the religious Jews. The religious Jews believed in election because Israel was the elect nation. The thing that made the Jews so mad is that Jesus told them that He was the only way to be saved and be one of the elect. In this text, Christ teaches very heavy theology.

Just because the Jews were mad about it, and just because it caused them to murmur, did not affect what Christ taught. Just because some didn't like this truth or didn't grasp this truth did not prevent Christ from teaching this truth. John 6 is one of the great passages of Christological teaching. He teaches on deep subjects like election, resurrection, bread of life and eternal life. **His instruction was not designed to appease a disgruntled crowd; it was designed to communicate Divine truth.** Now the text may be broken down into three main responses:

RESPONSE #1 – The response of the Jews . 6:41-42

There is an article “the” before Jews. What this means is the specific Jews to whom Christ is referring were the religious Jewish leaders and Jewish authorities. These were the leading Jews in Galilee who controlled worship. The Jewish authorities in Galilee showed the same . resistance and animosity toward Jesus Christ as the Jews in Jerusalem (i.e. 5:18). **Nearly all religious Jews hated Jesus Christ** because He is taking away their clout. **They want some person to raise armies, fight battles, drive away the Romans, take over cities and give land to Israel. They do not want to listen to someone who says they are sinners who need the Bread of Life for salvation.** When you present truth to one not really interested in knowing truth, the end result is often a bunch of grumbling about you and perhaps even animosity aimed at you.

The Jews were grumbling, murmuring and mumbling about Jesus Christ’s claim that He was the bread of life who came out of heaven. The word “grumbling” (γογγυζω) is one that means to murmur and mutter (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 94). Gerhard Kittel in tracking this word in the Septuagint (used 15 times) (Greek Translation of the O.T.), says that this type of grumbling is not just a dissatisfaction with the fact that something doesn’t happen, **this is a grumbling that is ungodly and always due to the fact that people think that what is just is not being done or claimed** (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 728ff.). In other words, they do not believe that faith in Jesus Christ is really fair or just in being right with God.

So Jesus tells them, I have come out of heaven to give you life. The Greek text literally reads He came “out of the heaven.” The preposition “out of” (εκ) literally means He came out from within heaven. In other words, He was living in heaven and came out of that location to come to this earth. There are those who claim that Jesus was not virgin born, but He implies that right here and these Jews were grumbling. They knew exactly what He was claiming, He is claiming Divine origin. Yet they are just like their ancestors who grumbled about everything God did, including the manna bread God gave during the days of Moses (Exodus 15:24; 16:2, 7, 12; 17:3; Numbers 11:1, 5-6*; 14:2, 27).

The Jews would not accept that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, the only One who could give them life. **However, they really don’t attack His teaching, because they have learned His teaching squares with the Word of God, they attack Him as a Person.** There are basically two arguments they used for rejecting Him:

(Rejection Argument #1) - We do know His parents . 6:42a

The logic is this - how can He be a heavenly being when we know His parents? **The truth is they did not know His Parentage**, even though they should have known Isaiah 7:14, which says the sign God will give when His King/Savior comes to earth is that a virgin will bear a son.

(Rejection Argument #2) - We don’t know how He can claim to be of heavenly origin. 6:42b

One writer observed, these highly religious people have more regard for the voice of Satan than they do the voice of God.

But notice how they operate, instead of going to Him and asking Him for an explanation, they grumble against Him and assume He is lying. **Of course the one big problem they have is all of the signs which He did that proved He was of heavenly origin.** They could not shake His signs. They could not explain them because He actually did them. We need to see an important point here - **just because people don't accept or acknowledge the truth, or just because they cannot figure all of it out, doesn't change the truth.** The truth of God is the truth of God. Dr. H. A. Ironside said great responsibility is upon the man or woman to whom truth is proclaimed (i.e. Hebrews 3:7-12). The book of Proverbs says we are to buy truth and not sell it. These religious leaders rejected truth and they would be held highly accountable.

RESPONSE #2 – The response of Jesus Christ. 6:43

This to me is one interesting response. The Jews are challenging His identity and He does not waste any time trying to convince them they are wrong. He simply tells them to stop their whining and grumbling and then launches into one of the deepest discussions in all of the N.T., which again includes a lecture on the doctrine of election.

Just because these people don't agree with Him or think things are just, does not stop Him from presenting God's Truth to them. He goes on with His business of proclaiming the truth of God. Sometimes the best thing to do with a questioning scoffer is not to answer them, but just keep teaching the real truth. If one is really right with God, one will love and embrace Truth. If not, one will mumble and grumble because the truth opposes the way we think.

RESPONSE #3 – The message of Jesus Christ. 6:44-59

The message of Jesus Christ contains **six elements** which are very deep.

(Element #1) - In order for one to come to Christ, who is God the Son, one must be drawn by God the Father. 6:44a

This very point causes you to either accept God's Word or reject it. This was the big difference between Augustine and Pelagius; Calvin and Arminius; Luther and Erasmus; Whitefield and Wesley. Jesus teaches election, so you either accept it or you don't.

The most active role in our salvation was God, not us. Just because most people were rejecting Jesus Christ did not mean God the Father's program was not working. The truth is, God's program was working perfectly and His will was being accomplished.

Now I do not know what you believe about the doctrine of election, but I am going to be as accurate as I can be with this verse.

- 1) The word "no one" in Greek is the strongest negative there is meaning "not even one."
- 2) The verb "draws" is a very strong word which means to actually drag something against its own will. In no instance is this word used of a nice suggestion which ought to be followed. It is always used of a drawing or a dragging which accomplishes its goal. It was used of dragging a net to a boat (John 21:6, 11); a person to the temple (Acts 21:30); a person to court (James 2:6).

- 3) The verb tense for “draw” is aorist, meaning a one time drawing.
This is a very subjective drawing for an individual with subjective conditions: 1) Misery, 2) Guilt; 3) Depression; 4) Threat of hell.
- 4) The verb “can” means one does not have the power, ability or capability to come to Christ.

Here is the point - like it or not - **nobody can come to Jesus Christ unless the Father drags that person to Jesus Christ apart from his own will.** Talk about not winning popularity contests - Jesus starts teaching these grumbling religious people the doctrine of election and tells them they on their own cannot get into a right relationship with God. Irresistible Grace is not a doctrine that flatters sinners because it takes the sinner completely out of the picture in being right with God.

Sinful man is totally lost. In fact, Isaiah compares him to a sheep that has gone astray (Isaiah 53:6). If a cow, pig, dog, cat, horse, deer or even a pigeon gets lost, it can find its own way back home, but not a sheep. A lost sheep must be found and brought back home. So it is with lost sinners. God must find every one of them and take them to His Son.

I saw a mechanic drop a bolt into a dirty, black, tub of old oil. That bolt instantly sunk out of sight to the bottom of filth. The mechanic took a magnet and drew that dead bolt out of the mire. He cleaned it and then put it to use. That is exactly what God does with sinners. They are deep in sin and cannot get out, so He magnetically draws them to His Son and when they finally come to His Son, He cleans them up and puts them to use.

(Element #2) - The one who does come to Christ will be raised up by Christ on the last day. 6:44b

Now the Apostle John is writing this well into the Church Age and the “last day” he is thinking about is the last day of the Church Age that will feature an “in Christ resurrection” and “rapture.”

In order for Jesus Christ to raise you to the resurrection of life, you must have come to Him and in order for you to get to Him, the Father must have drawn you. Pure and simple. Eschatological truth informs us that every person will be raised one day: 1) Either to be saved by Him; or 2) Sentenced to the Lake of Fire by Him.

(Element #3) - It was prophetically predicted in the O.T. that God the Father would bring understanding to those who have been brought to Christ. 6:45

How does God bring people to His Son? He does so through those called to teach His truth. In other words, the process of getting a sinner to the Son is the communication of God’s Word. Jesus cites Isaiah 54:13, which is an O.T. text that reveals two important truths:

Truth #1 - Being able to understand God’s truth is a work of God in the written Word. 6:45a

To be taught by God means you must be taught His written Word. Certainly the nation Israel had great access to the Word and had all heard about God. The problem wasn’t really hearing about God, it was believing the truth.

Truth #2 - Those who do understand God's truth come to Christ. 6:45b.

There is a major difference between "hearing" and "learning." The two do go hand in hand. However, Israel heard truth, but didn't learn or believe what she heard. Jesus is teaching that those who truly hear and learn will come to Him. **God leads people to His Son through His written Word.** If you are being drawn to Christ, you will be drawn to God's Word and God's Word will lead you straight to Jesus Christ. God elects people through His Word. If you don't like God's written Word or don't want to respond to truth, you have a serious problem, not with me but with God.

(Element #4) - No man has seen God the Father, only One from God has seen the Father. 6:46

There is a fundamental doctrine which teaches that **no mere sinful, finite man, can look upon the Absolute, Holy, Deity of God the Father and live.**

Jesus would certainly not please anyone with this message - He claims I am the only one who has even seen God the Father. They are questioning His heavenly origin and Christ says - I am the only Person who has ever even seen God the Father, none of you ever have. This truly lays claim to His Deity.

(Element #5) - The person who believes in Christ has eternal life. 6:47

This is the very verse that freed the great music director for D. L. Moody, Ira Sankey. Sankey was at a meeting in San Francisco and when reading this verse said, "Lord I believe, I dare to take thee at Thy word." He was saved and his great music ministry began because of John 6:47.

This is a "truly, truly" statement - meaning Christ is stressing dogmatic certainty. This is the only way to have eternal life. What is very interesting to me is the verb tense "believe." It is a present tense participle. **What this means is the one who continually believes that Jesus Christ is the only One who can give eternal life to a person, is the one who has eternal life.** Some may emotionally respond to truth about Jesus Christ but that does not mean they have eternal life. It is the one who continually trusts in Jesus Christ as Savior who does have eternal life. One who does not continually trust in Him, doesn't have it. **You may check yourself right now to see if you have eternal life by asking and honestly answering one simple question - "What do you continually trust in to take you to heaven?"** The salvation answer is "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

(Element #6) - Jesus is the bread of life. 6:48-51

We will spend a great deal of time developing this idea next time. But for now, what I want you to see is:

(Fact #1) - Jesus stresses that He and He alone is the bread of the life. 6:48

Most people would rather eat the spoiled philosophies of men or the putrid works of self rather than the bread of life. Jesus Christ is the only bread you need for eternal life. He is all you need. He is the bread of life. You aren't. I am not. Church membership isn't. Water baptism isn't. Money isn't. **Jesus is the bread of life. Eat this bread and you have life.**

(Fact #2) - Jesus emphasizes that the manna bread eaten by Israel sustained physical life but did not give everlasting life. 6:49

Just as many of these people had eaten the bread and the fish physically, so their Jewish fathers ate of the manna physically. That did not mean they were in a right relationship with God.

(Fact #3) - There is a bread that comes out of heaven that can give eternal life. 6:50

There is some type of bread that people may in some way eat that enables them not to die. What kind of bread can give this kind of life?

(Fact #4) - Jesus Christ is this living bread that came out of Heaven and He can give life through some sacrificial act which will actually involved His flesh. 6:51

The preposition “for” in “for the life of the world” is *hyper* (ὑπερ) which means Christ came to offer Himself in the place of and as a substitute for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ came to give life to anyone in the world who will believe on Him.

Now the question comes, how do you partake of this bread of life? Verse 47 says all you must do is believe.

People need to stop grumbling about election and predestination and start believing on Jesus Christ. He is the Bread of Life, who can give Eternal Life. Obstinate resistance to truth can actually move God to stop speaking to an individual anymore.

Here is the question of this passage. What do you continually believe will enable you to go to heaven?