

John 6:41-51  
The Bread That Gives Life

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup> They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> 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— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> 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.”

Intro.

There are some things in our world that can have a powerful effect on people, some good and some bad. A good effect can be seen in the discovery of certain healing drugs.

For example, in 1928 Alexander Fleming is given credit for rather accidentally discovering penicillin, the first antibiotic developed for treating bacterial infections such as pneumonia and certain venereal diseases. This drug has saved millions of lives since it began to be used.

But today I want us to consider the powerful effect on humanity of not a medicine, but a person, the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

As we saw last week in the message from the previous passage, John 6:22-40, ***Jesus is the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life to those who believe in him.***

Today our **Main Idea is a related one: Jesus is the Bread from heaven who gives life to the world.** You remember from last week that the ancestors of the Jews ate something called “manna” during their 40 years of wilderness wanderings after God had delivered them from Egyptian slavery. This manna would appear every morning like dew on the grass and they would gather it up and cook it in various ways.

This manna was a temporary type of bread that sustained the Jewish people for a time. But we saw last week that Jesus had been telling them that he was not a temporary bread but the true Bread from heaven.

He said in v. 35, “*I am the bread of life; <sup>(AQ)</sup> whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*” Jesus had been telling the people that he is the “bread of life.” He was likening himself to the staple of life for those who lived in ancient Palestine at that time— their staple of life was bread, common bread made from wheat or barley. It was the basis of their diet. And Jesus was saying that in a similar but spiritual way,

he himself is the person who satisfies not physical hunger, but spiritual hunger. He is what keeps those who believe in him alive spiritually. Those who believe in Jesus have life, true spiritual life, life that will never end. They are kept alive and nourished by this living Bread, this true bread from heaven, this Bread is the Lord Jesus Christ. By believing in him as their Lord and Savior they receive eternal life, life that will not end.

The averages life span in America now is 77.28 years. Back in 1960 it was about 70 years. Better health practices have led to a longer lifespan. But in the end, death still gets everybody. It's 7 years later than it was in 1960, but death still wins. It gets everybody. It will get you and me.

But there is a way out. There is an escape route – it is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After her brother Lazarus had died, Jesus told his to sister Martha in John 11:25-26: “I am the resurrection and the life.<sup>[d]</sup> Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?<sup>27</sup> She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” Let me ask you, congregation, do you believe this?

Our passage today is telling us that Jesus is the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life to those who believe in him. Today we will see that...

The Bread that gives life is...

- I. ... heaven sent but earthly connected.**
- II. ... given to those whom the Father draws to the Son.**
- III. ... must be believed and eaten.**
- IV. ... cancels the power of death.**
- V. ... is the flesh of Jesus Christ.**

The Bread that gives life is...

### I. Incarnation

#### **A. ...heaven- sent but earthly connected.**

**Verse 41 says, <sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”**

So we see that Jesus came down from a high place. He came down from heaven itself. You cannot come down from any higher place.

What is heaven? It is the place where God dwells. It is the place of God's presence. It is the place where God has always been. There never was a time when God did not exist, when he was not alive in heaven. God had no beginning and he will have to ending. As Psalm 90 says, “From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.” (verse 2). Man's average existence is 77.28 years. God's existence is unlimited, it is infinite. It is so everlasting that we cannot fully grasp its everlasting, never ending, always vibrant, always life-giving life.

Let's read a bit about heaven.

John 1:1-3: **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The "Word" here, as we know, is a reference to the second person of the triune God, the Son of God, the one who makes God know to humanity. He was always with God and in fact, was God also. In heaven there was God the Father and God the Son, and although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in these verses, he was there also. In heaven where Jesus came down from there was the three persons of the one God living and existing in perfect fellowship and love and rule and authority.

But then something happened. The Son came down from heaven. How did this happened? Look at

John 1:14 ***14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.."***

The statement that Jesus "came down from heaven" carries a lot of meaning. Heaven is place of perfect harmony and light and love and truth. But earth is a place of disharmony and darkness and hatred and lies. In other words, Jesus came down from a place of perfection and beauty to a place of corruption and ugliness and sin. He came from a place where there was not a spot of evil to a place that was inundated in evil. So it was no light matter, the very fact that Jesus was willing to do this, that he, in fact, did to this. It was a great act of condescension – that is, of his willingness to lay aside his heavenly glory and take upon himself a human body and live among sinners. It was a great act of humility. It was like you or I willing to humble ourselves and became a little ant, a little insect who crawls on the ground and will get into your picnic lunch if you're not careful, as if you agreed to become an ant and among ants and live in a little hole in the ground and spend your days looking for food and carrying it back to the ant colony.

Jesus did not have to come down to earth, but he did.

**Gal. 4:4** - <sup>(A)</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, <sup>(B)</sup>born <sup>(C)</sup>of woman, born <sup>(D)</sup>under the law...

So Christ is heaven-sent. But that is not all. He is earthly-connected. What do I mean by that? It means just as much as he was the eternal Son, the Word, in heaven, do when he came to earth he took upon himself our full humanity so in the same way he was heaven-sent he was earthly connected. In other words, he left heaven to come to earth and was fully connected to us because he took upon himself our exact human nature, exactly like us but without the infection of sin that all of us people are born with. But origin in coming to earth was different from ours because his mother became pregnant not by a man, not by

Joseph her husband, but by the Holy Spirit. We read about the angel Gabriel's visit to her in...

Luke 1:35 - <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, <sup>(BN)</sup>“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of <sup>(BO)</sup>the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born<sup>(E)</sup> will be called <sup>(BP)</sup>holy—<sup>(BO)</sup>the Son of God.

What was happening here? We read in...

**1 John 4:9** - <sup>(A)</sup>God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

1 Tim. 3:16 - <sup>16</sup>Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

***<sup>(A)</sup>He<sup>[a]</sup> was manifested in the flesh...***

What was happening here? We read in John 3:16:

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world,<sup>[a]</sup> that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 6 is an expanded elaboration on John 3:16

### **Jesus was the heaven-sent but Earthly connected Bread.**

Connected to his mother Mary in her womb through his umbilical cord and received life and nourishment from her. Can you imagine the humiltlity of the eternal Word of God humbling himself to this state. He had become a full human being so that the only thing that kept him alive was the umbilical cord that connected him to his mother's body. Here's a true picture of the extent of Jesus' humiliation of full deity to full humanity.

But as we often remind you, in becoming a man Jesus did not lose a single once of his deity. He was 100% God and 100% man. This is the mystery of the incarnation, the great Christian doctrine of the incarnation. There is no other religion on earth that has this doctrine, this reality. It is unique to Christianity because Jesus is unique. In him alone is salvation, there is no other name given under heaven by which a person can be saved from their sins except in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let me remind you what Heb. 2:14 says, - <sup>4</sup>Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

Who is this Jesus Christ, He **is heaven sent but earthly connected.**

But let's read on in John 6, verses 43-45:

***?”<sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last***

***day.*** <sup>45</sup> ***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...***

The second thing I want to point out to us today is that Jesus, the Bread that gives life

## **II. ...is given to those whom the Father draws to his Son.**

I want us to notice a couple of things here.

First, of all, Jesus says in verse 44 that “no one can come to me unless the Father ...draws him.”

Jesus is saying that no one born on earth can come to him, he does not have the ability to come do him. Why is this? It is because all of us are alive physically but we are born spiritually dead. That is we are alive physically, we are living and breathing and walking and talking, but in our inner being, in our hearts, we are dead spiritually – we are separated from God, we do not have the life of God within us. We have human life, but not God’s life.

We do not have the desire or ability to come to God, to turn from our sins, to believe in him, unless God awakens us spiritually and gives us that ability. Why does one person believe the Gospel and another person does not? It’s because the one who believes has been awakened from their spiritual death and given spiritual life. This is an invisible work of the Holy Spirit.

It happens to those whom the Father draws to the Son. This drawing work of the Father is done by the Holy Spirit.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations as how essential the drawing work of the Father is:

A baby in a baby bed cannot come up into his fathers’ arms unless the father reaches down and picks him up, draws him up to himself.

A man who’s fallen overboard off a large ship in a storm cannot climb up the side of the ship’s hull to save himself. When he tries, he just falls back into the water. The ship’s hull is too steep and slippery. A life buoy must be thrown to him so he can be pulled up to safety. He must be drawn up by those hefting him up. Otherwise, he’ll perish.

Unless the Father draws a person to Jesus Christ he or she will never come.

Jesus repeats this reality in v. 65 - <sup>65</sup> *And he said, “This is why I told you <sup>(L)</sup>that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”*

Now if we have come to Christ, if we believe in him, there’s only one way to explain how this happened. The Father drew us to Christ. He pulled us out of our captivity to sin and

Satan, out of the stormy seas that we were drowning in, and he set our feet squarely on the strong deck of the Ship of Salvation. There's an old Gospel song that goes like this, if I remember the words:

*I am saved, saved, saved  
From this world of sin.  
Bought by the blood of Jesus,  
I've been born again, hallelujah!  
I'm so glad that I found out,  
He would bring me out, but his saving power.*

This is right; he has to bring us out, we don't bring ourselves out. We call this the doctrine of Effectual Calling. It means the call of the Spirit, which issues forth from the drawing of the Father, is always effective, it always accomplished its goal in the life of every person that the Father draws to his Son. When the Father draws a person and calls him or her by the Spirit, that person will always come. It is the invisible work of God in the life of a human being.

There is a general call that goes out to humanity when the Gospel is preached. But then there is an invisible call of the Holy Spirit working within this general call. Matthew Barrett describes the general call and the effectual call like this:

"The calling of God is both general, the gospel call that goes out indiscriminately to all, and particular, the effectual, spiritual call wherein the Father calls the elect to the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit...It is simultaneous with regeneration."

The effectual call of God never fails to accomplish its purpose. We can see this illustrated in a physical, visible way when Jesus called his disciples to follow him.

**Mark 1:16-20 - <sup>16</sup> *Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."<sup>[1]</sup> <sup>18</sup> And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup> And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup> And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.***

This calling in time is related to the plan of God before creation of the world:

Rom. 8:30 - <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also <sup>(w)</sup>justified, and those whom he justified he also <sup>(w)</sup>glorified.

**III. The Bread that gives life ...must be believed and eaten.** *Salvation by faith with personal commitment*

**<sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>**

**<sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.**

How do we eat? We respond with our total being:

Acts 2:38 - **Repent** and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is a chief way we respond, we eat...

<sup>4</sup>But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:3-5

This eating is result of regenerating work of HS.

1 Thess. 1:2-5 - <sup>2</sup>(D)We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>(E)</sup>mentioning you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering before <sup>(E)</sup>our God and Father <sup>(G)</sup>your work of faith and labor of <sup>(H)</sup>love and <sup>(I)</sup>steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, <sup>(J)</sup>brothers<sup>[b]</sup> loved by God, <sup>(K)</sup>that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because <sup>(L)</sup>our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and <sup>(M)</sup>in the Holy Spirit and with full <sup>(N)</sup>conviction.

Phil. 2:12-13 - <sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**IV. The Bread that gives life ...cancels the power of death.** *Substitutionary atonement v.51 - . **And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.***

Heb. 10:10 - And by that will we have been sanctified **through the** offering of **the body** of Jesus Christ once for all.

Col. 1:22 - <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled <sup>(BD)</sup>in his body of flesh by his death, <sup>(BE)</sup>in order to present you holy and blameless and <sup>(BF)</sup>above reproach before him,

2 Tim. 1:10 <sup>(G)</sup>the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, <sup>(H)</sup>who abolished death and <sup>(I)</sup>brought life and <sup>(J)</sup>immortality to light through the gospel,

*Isa. 25:8* - <sup>(A)</sup>He will swallow up death forever;  
and <sup>(B)</sup>the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,

1 Cor. 15:54-56

<sup>(BR)</sup>“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

<sup>55 (BS)</sup>“O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and <sup>(BT)</sup>the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, <sup>(BU)</sup>who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bread that gives life:

41-42,46 ...is heaven sent but earthly connected.      *Incarnation*

44-45 ...is given to those in whom the Father draws.      *Effectual calling*

46-50 ...must be believed and eaten.      *Salvation by faith with commitment*

51 ...produces life through Jesus' death.      *Necessity of Christ's atoning death*

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