



Unit .25

Session .03

Jesus Teaches Difficult Truths

Scripture



John 6:52-69

52 At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” **53** So Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. **54** The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, **55** because my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. **56** The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. **57** Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. **58** This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your ancestors ate—and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.” **59** He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. **60** Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

61 Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were complaining about this, asked them, “Does this offend you? **62** Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? **63** The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. **64** But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.) **65** He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.” **66** From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. **67** So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?” **68** Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. **69** We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

In what ways are you sometimes tempted to trust in your good efforts for assurance of salvation?

Why do we find it so offensive to hear that we don't have what it takes to save ourselves?



99 Essential Doctrines

God is Truthful

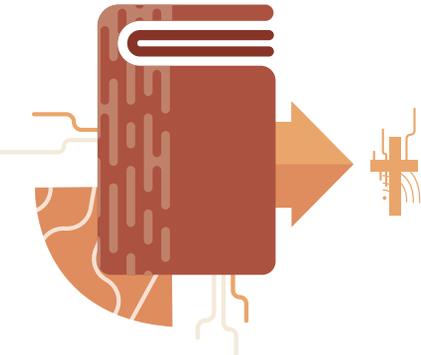
The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be trusted because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. The call for humans to be honest and not to bear false witness is rooted in the utter truthfulness of our Creator. Telling the truth is one way we bear the image of God, whose Son is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Main Point

Jesus offers words of eternal life.

If salvation is purely a gift of grace, how should this affect our treatment of those who don't know Jesus?

What in your life tempts you as a rival of Christ for your affections and attention?



Christ Connection

Jesus' teachings about eating His flesh and drinking His blood were difficult to understand. Many turned away from Jesus because of these words, but it is in them that we find eternal life made known to us in Jesus' death and resurrection.

How would you reply if someone asked you why following Jesus is worth it, even if you lose everything else in this life as a result?

In Defense



“Even Jesus’s disciples were offended by such talk. But Jesus explained that he was talking spiritually. Unaided by the Spirit, human reason cannot discern spiritual truth. The Jews wrongly believed study of Scripture (see 5:39) and doing “works of God” (see 6:27-29) were sufficient for spiritual understanding ... Many of Jesus’s disciples turned from him at this point, which is a watershed in John’s Gospel. But Jesus was not surprised by the defection.”—Andreas Köstenberger, “John,” *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1679.



Head

How does this account challenge the world's perspective that one can get to God in different ways?

What are some verses we can use to lovingly communicate to others the fact that Jesus is the only way to God?



Heart

How does this account teach us to think about salvation as a gift from God and not something given because of good works?

Why is salvation by grace through faith better news than salvation by works?



Hands

What is your greatest fear in sharing the gospel with others, and what do you think is a good biblical antidote for that fear?

How can we encourage each other to share more often the truth of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done?

Daily Devotions



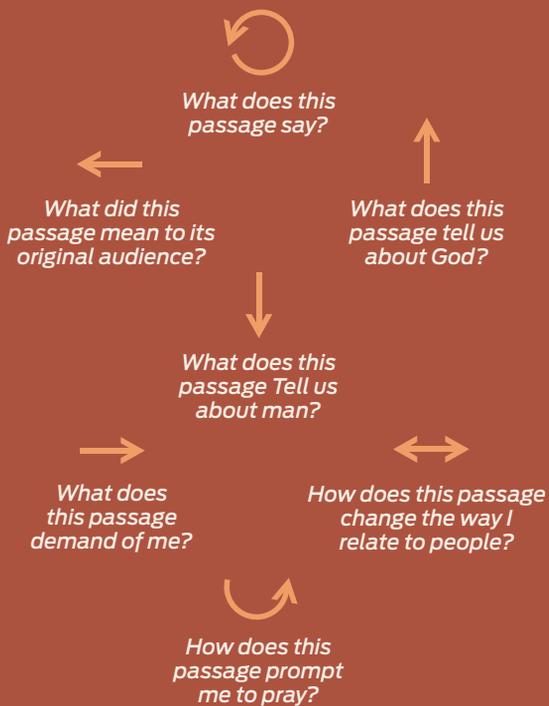
Day 1

John 6:22-40

Jesus cautioned His hearers not to merely work for food that will not last but to pursue the Bread of eternal life (Himself). The cares of the world, however, swallow us whole each day. The pressures and priorities of our ordinary lives crowd our attention to God and His Word. We spend most of our lives focused on things that ultimately won't matter. They may be important. They may be necessary. But if they are the heart of our pursuit of meaning, if they are the whole of our affections, we miss out on investing in things that last. Nobody on their deathbed wishes they'd spent more time chasing more money, bigger stuff, and other temporary cares.

Eternity matters in each moment of every day. Do our thoughts, interests, and pursuits reflect that?

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



What can you do this week, even today, to invest in eternity?

John 6:41-51

What would change your life entirely? If you asked this question to any random person on the street, you might find a variety of answers that all amount to roughly the same thing: an improved set of circumstances. However, Jesus was always pointing us to a deeper and more eternal perspective.

Jesus has not come primarily to make our lives better, but to give us real life! He has come that we might in fact live forever, conquering death and enjoying His presence in the unending paradise of the new heaven and new earth. If you're a Christian, this gift is already yours. The most important things about you have now been settled. Your sins are forever forgiven, your life belongs to Jesus, and you will be raised in a resurrection body to enjoy eternal life.

How does knowing you have eternal life impact your worries or complaints today?

John 6:52-59

Everywhere He went, Jesus was centering everything on Himself. On the road to Emmaus, after His resurrection, for instance, He told the two disciples that the whole Old Testament is about Him (Luke 24:44-47). He told others that He's the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). In this passage, He said that unless someone lives in Him, they would die (6:53,58).

Jesus compares how we need Him with how we need food. If you and I don't eat, we will die. We will get malnourished and emaciated, and eventually our bodies will shut down. Jesus made the parallel point about belief in Him. He's not an option. He's not an add-on. Just like not eating food means we will die, not trusting in Him means we will die the second death (Rev. 21:8).

What are some practical ways that you can "feed on Jesus" today?

John 6:60-65

When Jesus was being literal with His disciples, they took Him metaphorically. When He was being metaphorical, they took Him literally. They always seemed to be a few steps behind.

Like the disciples, our ignorance is no hindrance to God. Our spiritual lacking seems to be a prerequisite for His awakening grace. In this passage, Jesus taught that it was the Spirit who enlightens sinners to know and believe in the gospel. Our blindness is no difficulty for God.

We must really be loved by God! If He gave us this gift apart from our efforts and despite our blindness, He must really want us and care for us.

The greatest proof of God's love is the giving of His own Son to die for us on the cross, but what are some other evidences that God loves you?

John 6:66-71

Jesus knew full well Peter would later deny Him. He even told Peter that this was going to happen, which Peter denied (Matt. 26:30-35). Jesus said elsewhere that anyone who denied Him before men He would also deny before the Father. So denying Him is no little sin.

In this passage, however, Jesus appears to have commended Peter's words and hints at condemnation for Judas. Later He would forgive Peter and restore him, whereas Judas carried out his betrayal and ended up taking his own life.

So what makes the difference between Peter and Judas? The difference appears to be repentance. Peter repented of his sin. Judas seemed merely to regret it. Peter faced Jesus with godly sorrow and humility. Judas turned his back, his sorrow being worldly. Repentance isn't feeling sorry you got caught or simply wanting to be free of guilt. Repentance is a despair of your own sin and a desire to be in fellowship with Jesus.

Since the life of following Jesus means repenting daily, what areas of your life—behaviors, thoughts, and words—do you need to turn over to Jesus right now?