

I Am the Bread of Life – Part 3

John 6:41-51

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I ask you to turn in your Bibles to John 6 this morning. John 6, Verses 41-51 will be our passage. We looked the last couple of Sundays at the pronouncement of Jesus, and the disclosure of His glorious sufficiency when He said, “I am the Bread of Life.” We’re going to see that echoed again in the passage we’re going to read this morning. He is showing the Jewish people, through the miracle that He did by multiplying the loaves and the fishes to feed upwards of 20,000 total people. He fed 5,000 men, 20,000 or more people, with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. That as a starting point for the people then to understand that He was the One Who is the Bread of Life. That He Himself, in His person and work, is the One Who gives true life. But as we follow the flow of the passage from beginning to end, we see that the reality of Jewish unbelief is staggering. In the face of so much glory, they will not believe. And in that we see that particular warning for religious people, because in the 1st Century the most religious people, the people that were closest to the truth, was the Nation of Israel. The religious leaders who had been studying the Old Testament scriptures, who had the temple service as a regular testimony. The calendar, the feast days—all of these things pointing them to Christ. Those who were the most religious were the ones who missed the Messiah. The people in this passage not only had been exposed to the Old Testament scriptures, but they saw His glory with their own eyes. The people that He’s addressing in this passage, many of them had been there and eaten the bread the previous day. They had not only seen it with their own eyes, they tasted it with their own mouths. They had had profound religious experiences and yet they were lost.

We see this pattern throughout the Gospel of John. He told us in John 2 that there are crowds at the first Passover of Jesus, after His ministry had begun. He goes to Jerusalem for the Passover, and He did many signs there so that many believed in Him. Yet it says that Jesus was not disclosing Himself to them for He knew what was in the heart of man, and the idea is that they believed in Him in a superficial, surface sort of way. They had had an experience of His glory. A real, tangible experience of seeing His miracles. Can you imagine that? With their own eyes, and yet they were unsaved. That’s a very important warning for evangelicalism today because there is this idea that if you’ve had a religious experience, then you’re saved. If you’ve had a moving moment with God in your past and you remember going to the front of a church and praying a prayer, then you’re saved. “Never let

anybody tell you to doubt it.” That’s what people tell you. Counselors counseling salvation do that and it’s a complete unbiblical way to counsel people regarding salvation. Salvation is free. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It happens at a moment in time when you truly repent and believe in Christ, and nothing can change that. It’s forever. But there are many who superficially believe who don’t really believe. Jesus said:

Matthew 7:22 ~ Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’

There was never a real relationship with Christ. So it’s the possibility of being around the things of God, being religious like the Jews of the 1st Century in Judea and Galilee. They were around the things of God, seeing firsthand evidence of God’s power, and yet not being saved. The overwhelming majority of the people in this chapter do not come to truly partake of Christ. In fact, we’re seeing this idea in John 5, the last chapter we saw in Judea, Judean Jewish unbelief. Then at Galilee, which was the other major area where Jews lived in Palestine. Now we see the Galileans rejecting Christ. In that is a great warning for us because we who are in evangelicalism, those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God, we need to be sure that we’re not around the things of God, around evidences and displays of His glory, and remain unaffected personally. What a horrible thing to be in a hand’s reach of bread, the Bread of Life, and not to receive. This is what this passage warns us about. All of us need to take heed from it.

We’re going to read John 6, Verses 41-51.

John 6:41 ~ Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out of heaven.” 42 They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven’?” 43 Jesus answered and said to them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who

believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

Let's pray.

Father, we bow before Your Word, and we ask that You might, by Your Spirit, truly open our hearts and mind. That we might not be just around the things of God, but that we will be truly partakers, even this morning. Partakers, for those who've already come to know Christ. Partakers in a deeper way of Him. Those who have not yet become real partakers, Lord, that we might help them today to come to Jesus, in truth. We pray this in His marvelous Name, Amen.

The crowd was certainly emotionally stirred by all that had happened. Many of them had traveled around the sea, across the sea, to follow Jesus from where He had been on the previous day, where He fed the 5,000 on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. Now they followed to the northwest shore, to Capernaum. Apparently this dialogue is taking place in the synagogue in Capernaum, as we see as we come to the end of the chapter. They want to know more about Jesus. They have seen His miracles. They have sensed that He has extraordinary power. That He must be from God. In fact, they have conferred upon Him in the immediate aftermath of the feeding of the 5,000. When they saw that miracle, John tells us that they were convinced that He was truly the prophet who had come into the world. They were convinced that Jesus was the unique Messiah. They came that close and yet they did not believe. They believed they had seen signs, they ate of the bread and the fishes, they knew He was in an exalted position among men. He was the first among equals. Out of all of the prophets, He's the best. The Messiah. Yet, in this passage, what we see, what Jesus does, is show them that that kind of faith is not saving. For you to truly be saved, you have to come to see the supremacy of Christ. You have to come to see that He is far exalted above every other man who has ever lived. That He is so highly exalted that it radically affects you personally. And not just in a theoretical way. You believe that He is God, but you also believe He is *your* Lord, and *your* God.

So, Jesus is not content just to accept the acclaim of the crowd. He's the Messiah. He is calling on them to understand His true, glorious identity, because He knows that it is a matter of life and death spiritually for the crowd. They must become

partakers of the truth of Who Jesus is. But the problem is that they are unbelieving and they're grumbling. In fact, there is an outline I want us to follow this morning, as we look at how we become truly partakers of Christ. We have to understand first of all, the symptom of unbelief, and then the remedy for unbelief. We're going to see that the remedy of unbelief is seeing the glory of Christ.

1) The Symptom of Unbelief: Grumbling

The grumbling that we have in Verse 41:

John 6:41 ~ Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

In fact, the word grumbling occurs three times in this passage. Those two I just read to you and also Verse 61. And it's instructive because this word 'grumbling', the Greek word 'goggyzō' only occurs 13 times in all of the New Testament, three of them here in this passage. The Old Testament, remember, was originally written in Hebrew but was translated into Greek. It was called the Septuagint, and we understand that John is writing to a Hellenistic, Jewish audience primarily. He is writing to Jewish proselytes, to those who know the Old Testament, who know the background of the Old Testament, but they speak Greek. They don't know some of the things about Israel. They are not familiar with it. He's writing to them to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah. Well, they have a background in the Septuagint, so when they hear the word grumbling, it sounded just like it did to you if you were listening carefully when we read earlier from Exodus 16.

Do you remember how many times the word grumble and grumbling occurred? Actually, 9 times in our reading from Exodus 15-16. The word grumbling, *goggyzō*, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, occurs 20 times. 19 of them occur in six chapters: Exodus 15, 16, 17, and Numbers 14, 16, 17. All 19 of those times refer to one group of people, the Nation of Israel, after they've come out of the Promised Land. The immediate aftermath of that, and their journey, up to the point right after they reject God going into the Promised Land.

This word grumbling is a key theological word, and those who knew the Old Testament would remember it. Now, the word *goggyzō* is an onomatopoeic word. It was a word that sounds like what it means. That's the way the English word grumbling is a pretty good translation. The word grumble. Onomatopoeia, you

know, that's when you have a word that sounds like what it means. What does a bee do? It buzzes. Onomatopoeia, right? Grumble. Murmuring. Muttering. Those are good onomatopoeic words, and this word is that way too. It's the sound of people.

It's what was going on, the Jews were hearing Jesus say He was the Bread of Life and that He'd come down out of Heaven. They're over there muttering among themselves. They're not asking questions to Him, and this is the problem. They should be asking Him, "How is it that You say You came down out of Heaven? Do we not know Your Father? Lord, teach us." They didn't do that. They're over there, in fact, the tense of the verb grumbling in Verse 41 means its imperfect. It means an ongoing action in past time. They were continually grumbling. There is this grumble, murmuring going on over to the side. They were saying, as they're grumbling. That's the same tense. The imperfect. They were saying, "Is not this Jesus among us the Son of Joseph whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I've come down out of Heaven.?'?" Rather than asking Him, it's a picture of willful rebellion. In fact, that's what the Hebrew word, when you look at it in all its contexts is, that the people were muttering, they were grumbling between themselves, but they were rebelling against God. They were being unmoved. In fact, the root of the word in Hebrew, 'toluna', is from a word which means to abide. I think the idea that etymology developed was they were remaining unmoved by the works that God did. They saw His glory, and yet they're recalcitrant, they are determined not to be moved by it. Resistant. They won't give God the glory that He ought to have.

Think about that. Let's just go back and review that a little bit. Imagine, and I think this word is chosen to capture that essence, the Jews in the face of Jesus' miracle are grumbling. They had just gotten bread out of Heaven, in a sense, haven't they? And He's been saying, "I am the Bread out of Heaven." He's been talking about Moses. We saw how the passage started in John 6, where John tells us that the Passover was at hand. Passover, manna, bread—all of that setting the context for this discussion. Then the word grumbling, chosen by John to show that the Jews in Jesus' day are just like the Jews in Moses' day. Sometimes things change, but really nothing of consequence really changes. Man is still sinful and rebellious just like he has always been.

Think about the story of the Exodus, and what must it have been like to have been delivered from the mightiest nation on the face of the earth: The Egyptians. With all of the splendor of the Egyptian palaces, the pyramids, all of the glory of Egypt. The military might. This little band of Hebrews, Jews, is delivered by the mighty

hand of God. When they come out, they've been delivered by the hand of God. They go through the Red Sea, He parts the Red Sea, and then He drowns the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. They come through on dry land, and the whole Egyptian army is defeated. Egypt is in virtual ruins. It's going to take a long time to recover from the damage that has happened. When you look at all the effects of those plagues, and the destruction of the army, God has laid in waste. They've seen God's mighty hand and they get out, there are about 2 or 3 million of them, we calculate, from knowing there are about 600,000 men. There are probably upwards of 3 million. That's a lot of people to feed, and so they go out and they are laden down with supplies. The Egyptians have been giving them all kinds of stuff. They've got their flocks. They go out on a three-day journey. After the Red Sea, they've got no water. What's the first thing they do? The first thing they do is they grumble. "Why did you bring us out here to kill us in the desert?" They think they are grumbling at Moses. That's the foolishness of men, we like to complain about people when our real anger is at God. Our rage is at Him. Moses begins to tell them, "You're not grumbling at us. Who are we that you are grumbling against us? You are grumbling against the Lord." So they don't have water, well the Lord gives them water.

At Marah, they have a miracle happen, another miracle. There was water, but it was bitter water, it was unfit to drink. Moses does what the Lord tells him to do and throws a stick in the water, and it becomes sweet and they drink. They're okay. They've got water and they fill their canteens, or their pouches, whatever they have to carry the water, and they're off for about a month. By this time, they've eaten up all their provisions and the Lord is a little bit late, in their view, of providing food. Their stomachs are hurting with hunger. We don't know what that's like in America, but the power of hunger is profound, and they're hungry. But what do they do in their hunger? They rail against God, they grumble against Him. This is when they say, "You brought us out here to kill us in the wilderness. Oh, that we were back in Egypt by the pots of meat. We had plenty of food back in Egypt." How incredible! "Oh, that we were slaves in Egypt again." Amazing, grumbling like that against God, and God then fills their bellies that day with quail, and then the manna that we saw in the passage we read. What is it? He makes bread fall out of Heaven. Astonishing! He feeds them, and right after that, they don't have water again, and they grumble again in Chapter 17. You would think, wait a minute, picture: "God brings us to the end of our resources, we grumble, He provides. He's always going to provide, why don't we stop grumbling?" It should be, "Wow, we've got no water. Moses, you need to talk to the Lord about this. We've got no water." Not, "Why have you done this, Moses? You want to kill us."

In fact, Deuteronomy 8 makes it clear why the Lord chose to do it. Have you ever thought about this? Why did God put them in Egypt in the first place? I mean, if He's going to make a great nation, why didn't He just make a great nation? That's how I would do it. I would just make a great nation if I was making up my own story here. And of course, my story would be stupid and inadequate. But that's what I would do, and that's probably what you would do. If you were going to give them the land of Canaan, why not go in there with a nuclear fallout. It doesn't have to be nuclear fallout, because God can do it without nuclear fallout and just annihilate the Canaanites, or move them. Send them into outer space. And now you're there, and Israel, go on in, you've got all their stuff there, take it. But the Lord doesn't do that. He lets them be in Egypt and have to be delivered from slavery. Why? So that they can cry out to God in their affliction.

The Lord is about our hearts. He loves us too much to give us what we want. We would like to have an easy life. That is our agenda, it's my default agenda every day. I want everything to go well today. I don't say it out loud, but that's what I'm thinking. I don't know if you were in Sunday school this morning but my car alarm was going off, because we had a malfunction of our window. Our window won't roll up. I thought to myself, "What amazing timing of the Lord." I mean, talking about grumbling today. Why is my window broken? What if it rains tomorrow? I have to get that fixed right away.

Why does the Lord do these things? After man fell, man's biggest problem is that man doesn't know what his problem is. Man's biggest problem is that he doesn't know that he is dying spiritually. That he's actually dead spiritually, and that if he dies physically apart from Christ, he will spend eternity in spiritual death. He doesn't know that in the best of this life, in the best that this physical life can give, he is in abject misery in his soul, because he was created to know the living God. He was created to stand in the presence of God, to see His glory. To glory in God above all things. To boast in Him because He is the One Who is supremely excellent. Everything about Him is more wonderful than our minds can conceive. Everything that we glory in in this world, the very best of this world, are just little drops and tastes, the faint aromas of the glory that will flood our souls when our eyes behold Him. The Lord knows that. He knows that what we need, above all else, is Him. He is so good, and so kind, that He sets out every day to make us know how much we need Him. But He does it in measured doses. He knows He can't overwhelm us with it at once. He gently leads us.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 tells us the reason the Lord fed you with manna from Heaven. Why did the Lord lead you out in the wilderness? Again, ask yourself why? I

mean, that's a good question. Why did God take them out in the wilderness? There didn't have to be a desert between Egypt and Canaan. There could have been a nice, fertile garden-rich area to walk through. They walk through the gardens. They eat as they go. Isn't it great following the Lord? And they get into Canaan and the keys are still in the car. Everything is there just like they need it. They walk right in. Isn't this wonderful? God could have done that, that's not too hard for Him. Deuteronomy 8 says: "The reason that the Lord led you through a wilderness and fed you manna from Heaven is so that you might know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." That you might know that what you really need above everything else is to hear the Word of God which has the power to address your deepest need, which is to bring you back into fellowship with God so that you can have God revealed to you. You're dark eyes, your blind eyes, our blind eyes, can be made to see what He created us to see: The radiance of His glory. So the Lord orchestrated the circumstances so that His people would know how utterly dependent they were upon Him.

Isn't it just a fact that we are so forgetful? We don't think about the Lord when things are good. The song we read earlier, "O Thou Whose presence. My soul takes to light. On Whom in affliction I call." When do you call on God? In affliction. If I need God, I must need affliction. And the people of God throughout history have come to know that. David said, "It was good that I was afflicted." We need a perpetual wakeup call and to be saved, you need to come to understand that everything that you're living for is not worth living for. That all that you should live for is to know Christ. Then once you come to know Him it's a continual, deeper learning of that same truth. "That's what I need today, more than anything else, is to know the Lord. I need to drink from the fountain of His glory, and His majesty, and His goodness, and His wisdom, and His holiness, and His wrath, and His love, and His mercy, and His grace. I need to drink deeply from that, and that's what will satisfy my soul. And anything that makes me drink deeply from that, Lord, please bring it, because that's what I need. I need more of You."

Psalm 73:25 ~ Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

So the Lord sets out to teach His people that. "You need Me. You don't need the things of this world." You need those at some level, but it's a picture of the great need of your soul. "It's a billion times greater to know Me, the Living God." So the Lord leads them, fairly shortly, just a few months, and they come to the border of Canaan. Actually, over a year. Within a couple of years they are at the border of

Canaan, ready to go in. Remember? The Lord sent spies in. And knowing the story, I would recommend, “Hey, Lord, I don’t think You need to send the spies in.” You know the story, that ten spies give a bad report. Why did they send spies in in the first place? If He’s going to give it to them, why did He send spies in? Because He wanted them to know how difficult it was going to be. He wanted them to have people come back and say, “Man, they’ve got cities that the walls stretch up to the Heaven.” “There are giants in there. There are people that are so tall that it makes us look like grasshoppers.” Now that certainly had to be an exaggeration. We know that Goliath was nine and a half feet tall, and I guess you might feel like a grasshopper next to him, but not quite. But the Lord did that to test them. He was testing them. He was leading them to Himself when they had no bread, when they had no water. When they had no energy, no power, no weapons, no military training, and they’ve got to go in and take these walled cities, humanly speaking, it didn’t make sense. But the Lord was teaching them, “Stop measuring by human thinking, and behold Your God. I am the Lord!”

So Joshua and Caleb said, “It doesn’t matter. Yeah, there are walled cities. Yeah, there are giants in there. But the Lord has told us He’s with us. Let us go up into the land. That’s what God calls us to do.” So the Lord puts us in situations where we come to our end. We can’t understand. We can’t comprehend. He does that so that we will then look to Him and fall on our knees, and ask Him, “Teach me, Lord. Show me what I should do. We need you, Lord.” The Lord glories in those moments. Jesus says, ***“My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”*** (2 Corinthians 12:9) And Paul, understanding the whole heart of all of scriptures says, “Therefore, I glory in my weaknesses. For when I am weak, then I am strong. When I am weak, when I’m at the end of myself, I find help.” That’s how amazingly, gloriously sufficient Jesus is.

Corrie Ten Boom was a woman who helped Jewish people escape Nazi tyranny in their homeland of Holland, she and her sister and father. The movie “The Hiding Place”, and the book, chronicle her real-life experiences. She was a Christian, and her dad and sister as well, and they felt duty-bound to help the innocent who were being viciously treated by Hitler, and the horrors of the Nazis. They hid them in their house, and finally they were caught, and these three Christians were put in the concentration camp. Corrie’s father and sister died, and she lived for years in the horror of that miserable life experience. And she saw the people around her questioning God, wondering. Those days were terrible, awful, and wicked, but God is sovereign. He allowed it for a purpose, and there are many souls that will be in Heaven because of even that. I would never ask for that. I would never hope that that ever happens again, but God is wise and His knows what’s best. The reality is,

we all deserve hell anyway. It's only mercy. But Corrie Ten Boom, in the Nazi concentration camp, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those Jewish people with her.

She said that one of the things that she came to understand through living through the day-to-day misery and the torment, is that no matter how deep the pit you find yourself in, Jesus is deeper still. That is the reality. And if you don't need Him, you'll never know how wonderfully sufficient He is. God is good enough, so good, that He would help us to have the need so that we might then find the fulfillment of the need. If He didn't do that, we never would look for Him. If things went the way you and I wanted, if everything went great, we would just go through our lives and finally die and wake up in hell. But our God is a God of mercy, and we see that even in what He's doing with the Jewish people back in John 6. They've got things to grumble about in their lives. They don't say it this way, because their pride won't allow them, but they feel like they're slaves of Rome. They feel like their great problem is social injustice. They feel like their great need is a military conqueror, a deliverer, to bring righteousness back into their social world. They want the shalom of God, and the blessing that comes from peace. They don't understand that their greatest need is that their soul is in a real peril that dwarfs any of their problems, and that they are headed for hell and they need a Savior from their own sins. Their real problem is the wickedness that is in their own hearts, not the wickedness that is out there. They cannot see it, and Jesus is trying to show them. Even in this passage in the face of their unbelief, He is unveiling more of His glory. When they're grumbling, He says, ***“Do not grumble among yourselves,”*** in Verse 43. He then begins at this point to unveil His glory, and to show them that what they need to see in the midst of their problem is they need to look and see the Lord. We covered the first point. I don't know if I gave you a warning, but we did. The first point was: The symptom of unbelief: Grumbling.

2) The Remedy for Unbelief: Glory—The Glory of Christ

These people were ready to acknowledge Him as Messiah. They saw His uniqueness, but they had no idea of His supreme majesty. They were ready to follow Him as long as He went where they wanted Him to go. But you don't come to God like that. God doesn't take orders. He takes charge. So they need to understand that when they come to Him, they come to the Lord of glory. So we see in this passage that the remedy for unbelief is to see more glory, because if they really saw Him as He is, if God opened their eyes and they could really see Him as He is, and had eyes to see and ears to hear, they would fall on their faces and

acknowledge that He is everything they need, and that life with Him is all they desire.

There are four sub points under The Remedy for Unbelief—Glory. Three of them relate to the supremacy of Christ, and one of them relates to the misery of man.

a) The Supremacy of His Person:

To come to Jesus, you have to see the supremacy of His person. This is exactly what they're grumbling at.

John 6:41-42 ~ Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

He is claiming to have a unique origin. He's claiming to have come from Heaven. That is a key phrase in the passage. Nine times in John 6, you have the phrase 'out of heaven' and one time 'from Heaven'. It's an important concept in the passage. Jesus is articulating that He is the one who has come down out of Heaven. He starts in Verse 32:

John 6:32 ~ Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

Then He's saying, "I Am the Bread that has come down from Heaven."

John 6:35 ~ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

The first thing that jumped out at them is that He came out of Heaven, and they're contemplating, "We know these are Galileans." They know Mary and Joseph. Apparently Joseph and Mary had moved to Capernaum after Nazareth. It's kind of Jesus' home base in Galilee. They know Mary and they knew his father. His father is probably dead now, but they knew him. "We know His parents. How can He say He came down out of heaven?"

John 6:42 ~ They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven’?”

Again, it’s humanly impossible. Just like the things the Jews grumbled at after the Exodus. “We’ve got 3 million people, and we’ve got no water. It’s impossible. We’ve got 3 million people, and we’ve got no food. We’ve got no time to grow wheat. We’ve got to take a land, yet we don’t have the weapons we need, and we don’t have the training we need. It’s humanly impossible.” They grumbled rather than go to God with the impossibility. Here we find the same thing. What they should have done is asked the question not among themselves, muttering, but they should have gone to Him and said, “Lord, we don’t understand. We know Your mother and Your father. How can You say You came down out of Heaven?” The real irony here is they say they know His Father. They don’t know His Father at all. They know Joseph, but they don’t know Jesus’ true Father God. And it’s even ironic that they don’t know His Father, but He knows their father:

John 8:44 ~ You are of your father the devil...

Such is the blindness of fallen man. He is articulating for them in this phrase ‘out of heaven’ which they react to, that His origin is unique and makes Him stand supreme above every human being that has ever lived. He is entirely unique. He stands alone - complete, distinct, and set apart. There has never been one like Jesus. There has never been another man who came down out of Heaven. He shared this with Nicodemus in Chapter 3. Remember when He said, “No man has ascended into heaven but the one who came down from heaven”? “I came down from heaven. I left glory.” He’s articulating the virgin birth here in a muted way, but clearly consistent with Matthew and Luke’s picture. Things are not as they appear to be. Jesus is different. There has never been another person like Jesus. There are many who claim to have knowledge, but Jesus is the only one who came from God.

So in the supremacy of His person, we see that He is fully God to come out of Heaven. He’s not just fully man. They saw a man and said, “He can’t be God.” They saw a man, who according to Isaiah’s prophecy, wasn’t anything that special to be drawn to. He had no stately form or majesty that we should be drawn to Him. Apparently, He looked rather ordinary in His humanity. They looked at a man, they saw a man, they saw Him eat, they felt His flesh, they saw He was a man, they knew His family, and they said, “There is no way He is God.” But the reality is that He was God. And the reality was that everything about Him testified that He

was. Think about all the miracles they'd been seeing. Sign, after sign, after sign. Miracle, after miracle, after miracle. Hearing the words that He spoke, that if they had just listened and humbled themselves before God, when you understand that He is supreme, when you understand that He really came down from Heaven, if they would have understood that, they never would have done what it said they did in Chapter 6:15, where they wanted to come take Him by force and make Him king. See, they thought He was a really special guy, but they didn't think He was God. You don't come and take God by force. You don't even think about it. After He tells them, "Do not grumble among yourselves," He talks about the misery of man—the miserable blindness of man.

b) The Misery of Man:

John 6:44 ~ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

In spite of the fact that the supremacy of His person is on display, in spite of the fact that it's abundantly clear that He is God, that He's walked on the water, that He's multiplied the bread and the fish, that He is the bread out of Heaven, and that He gave them bread out of Heaven, they can't see it. And Jesus, in the face of this unbelief, tells them why they can't see it. Because it is impossible for man to respond to the truth of God. Here you come to a point that may make you want to grumble. This passage is saying, just like a passage we looked at last week said, that if salvation is going to happen, God must do it. You and I can have the truth right before our eyes and reject it.

I saw a video a few years back. You may have seen it too. "Expelled—No Intelligence Allowed". Ben Stein did a pretty good, helpful video about how intelligent design was being forced out of universities and that kind of thing. Basically, science professors had come to accept the concept of intelligent design and that there must be a Maker, there must be a Creator, because there's too much intelligence in the universe and in the way things are made. It doesn't randomly happen like this. Just common sense tells anybody that. It's just obvious. Like next week for our offertory, we're going to bring in a chimpanzee and let the chimpanzee play on the piano. Maybe he'll bring out something special. No, that can't happen. You have to have intelligence to write music and play music. Well the world is much more complex than anything Beethoven ever wrote. It had to be designed, and so scientists are finally coming along and realizing that. Guys at major universities are saying they've studied the cell and it cannot have happened

and evolved over all these millions of years. It's illogical, impossible. God is opening our eyes to see the truth. He's revealing His glory in the smallest of subatomic particles and the way things work. He's revealing His glory, and what man does is keep shutting his eyes. It's more and more obvious, and man keeps resisting.

In that video, he takes on Richard Dawkins, who is kind of the hero of modern Atheism, or one of the heroes. He's the author of the book 'The God Delusion'. He's so smart that he doesn't believe in God. He doesn't know what the Psalm says: *A fool says in his heart there is no God*. But he's so smart he doesn't believe in God, and so he can't allow for the fact that the intelligence is in the universe. He's not superstitious. He doesn't believe in Spiritual reality. He just takes what's there before him. This is kind of the way they articulate their position. Ben Stein basically keeps showing him evidence after evidence for intelligent design, and this brilliant man, one of the most brilliant guys they can put forward, at the end of the video, it's staggering. This is an articulate man. He's obviously brilliant intellectually, but he's still foolish. But Ben Stein is saying, "You can't explain this apart from intelligence. Intelligence is in matter. It's in the workings of the universe. Is that not true?" Richard Dawkins, who is too smart to believe in God, then says, "Well if intelligence is here, it's because aliens put it here." My mouth dropped open. So where did the aliens get their intelligence?? Let's go over to their universe and ask you the same question again? Then the answer would be bigger aliens? That's ridiculous! The fool says in his heart there is no God.

Right there in front of him is the truth that the sovereign Lord is Lord of the universe, and man won't believe it. That's what Romans 1 talks about when it says, "Man, in his unrighteousness and godlessness, suppresses the truth." We suppress the truth. And it happens even in religious circles. The religious people of Jesus' day accepted the fact that there was a Creator. They were okay with that. They were okay with the fact that He had even chosen Israel. They were okay with the fact that He had given the temple system. But when it came down to it, when Jesus came into time and space and came and made Himself known, they were not okay with the fact that the God of the universe wants to be Lord of my life. And when they saw that, they nailed Him to a cross, and said, "I will not submit to You. Everything's in front of me, but I will not obey." And the reality is, you and I can't look at Richard Dawkins with pride. We can't look at the Jewish unbelievers with pride, because but for the grace of God, we would do exactly the same thing.

That's what John 6:44 says. The only way you can come to Jesus is if the Father draws you, literally draws you. This word is used in John 21:6 and 21:11. The word 'draw' here is not just like, 'Hey, come on this way'. The word 'draw' is used in John 21 when it speaks of them dragging the nets into the boat and dragging the nets on shore. It's the same word. That's the sovereignty of God. Man is so miserably blind, so miserably at enmity with God, that he will not obey. The New Testament is filled with this kind of truth. We're dead in trespasses and sins. We don't need just to be made well, but we need to be made alive. So Jesus is unique among all. He is fully God, the deity of Christ clearly displayed. Jesus continually asserts that.

c) The Supremacy of His Knowledge:

The remedy for unbelief is glory. We looked at the supremacy of His person and the misery of mankind. Now we look at the supremacy of His knowledge. Because He is God Himself and has come from Heaven, that's what makes sense out of Verse 45 and 46. Verse 45 is explaining what it means that you have to be drawn by the Father:

John 6:45 ~ It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

The only way that you can come to Me is if God teaches you, if God does something, opens your eyes, and instructs you and makes you able to see. Verse 46 in a nutshell is saying this: Jesus is the one who has supreme knowledge to give. No one has access to the truth like Jesus. In fact, ultimately, no one has access to the truth apart from Jesus. You can't find truth. If somebody says he found some truth in a cave, an angel told him. No, he didn't find truth. There's only one who has truth, and that's Jesus, because only one has seen the Father. His knowledge is unique and supreme. Turn over to John 3. This is where He's talking to Nicodemus. He told him he needs to be born again, and then He says in Verse 11:

John 3:11 ~ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

Do you see He has supreme knowledge? "What I'm telling you is what I know. What I'm telling you is what I have seen. I'm telling you about God and I'm telling you what I know to be true.

John 3:12-13 ~ If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

He's saying, "Because I have come from God, I have supreme knowledge of God." In Verse 32, this is John the Baptist talking about Jesus:

John 3:32 ~ What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

John is saying about Jesus, "When He speaks, He is telling us what He has seen with His eyes and heard with His ears. He's been in the throne room of God, because He is God, and He dwelt with God from the very beginning." When people come and say, "I want to tell you what God is like. I had a mystical experience," they do not know what God is like. Only Jesus Christ speaks authoritatively. The Old Testament was His self-revelation before He came. In the New Testament is the completion of His self-revelation. So if you want to know what God is like, you have to go to Jesus. There is no other avenue for truth. It's not like Mohammad has a little bit of truth, and Confucius has a little bit of truth, and Buddha has a little bit of truth. They've got zero truth. Jesus has all the truth. What they have is the doctrine of demons, Paul says. Demons have taught them stuff. They have stuff that may be supernatural in that sense. Maybe it didn't come out of their own mind, it came from the mind of Satan, but Jesus is the one who has seen God and reveals God. He has complete knowledge of God. He's dwelt with God in the Trinity from eternity and He comes to make known the Father. And in Him, we not only have perfect knowledge of the Father, but we receive perfect knowledge of the Father. It's knowledge He possesses which He then reveals. So if you and I want to know what God is like, we have to go to Jesus.

That's kind of what He's getting across in the Gospel of John. There's no other way to know God except through Jesus Christ, because when you look at Jesus, you see God. I wonder what God is like. Well look at Jesus. In John 14:8, Jesus had just said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that is enough for us." Jesus said, "Have I been so long with you, Philip?" This is His close disciple and he doesn't know. See how hard-hearted we are? How blinded we are? "Have I been so long with you, Philip, and you don't know that he who has seen Me has seen the Father? How can you ask Me something like that?" He told us in John 5 that the only thing that Jesus does is what He sees the Father doing. So if you want to see what the Father is like, look at Jesus. They are exactly the same. It's not that God the Father is ornery and

grouchy, and that Jesus is love. No. Everything that Jesus is is what the Father is. Jesus is also at times grouchy. He's a God of wrath, just like the God of the Old Testament that we see. God is a God of wrath and a God of mercy, a God of love and a God of justice. So if you want to see what God is like, look at Jesus Christ. He reveals Him. If you want to see what God is like, look at Jesus' life. Listen to His words. And if you want to see what God is like ultimately, I said He's a God of wrath and He's a God of love, He's a God of justice and He's a God of mercy, then look at the cross. The cross is the supreme display of the glory of the Father, and in it you see the glory of the Son, and when you see the glory of the Son, you see the glory of the Father. You see the reality of God's wrath and His justice in the cross.

God is a holy God. Yes, He is loving, but He's holy. And in His holiness, He must punish sin. He cannot leave any sin unpunished. It would deny His character. And if you and I are thinking rightly, we should say, "Yes Amen. Lord, don't leave any sin unpunished." Our trouble is that we deserve to be punished, isn't it? He's a God of wrath who will punish sin and chase it down until He punishes it, but He's also a God of mercy, a God of love and grace, who has found a way to pardon sin, not by just overlooking it, but by punishing it in His Son.

So what makes sense of the cross when you see the physical agony that Jesus went through? He had the most painful way to die that has been invented. In fact, the Romans perfected what the Greeks perfected from the Persians. The Persians impaled people. The Greeks took it under Alexander and found a way to make it even more painful and create more anguish and suffering, so that you'd die with the greatest possible suffering. And then the Romans took it one step further. The way you do it is you nail somebody's wrists and their feet to a cross. You make them struggle for breath, gasping for breath for hours and hours and hours in agony, in excruciating pain shooting through all the nerves in their body, struggling for breath until they finally expire. That's the physical death of the cross. And God in His sovereignty allowed Satan to work all of his plans to make something so miserable, something so awful, God governing it, because one day He was going to put His Son there. And not only that, but the Lord was going to allow His Son to be totally and utterly abandoned by those He loved. He was going to allow His Son to have the crowds leave Him. He was going to allow His Son to have the Jewish leaders who should have been falling at His feet, spitting in His face, slapping Him, punching Him. And then He was going to allow His Son to experience what really is the wrath of God, because that's just the start of it. He was going to allow His Son to experience separation from Himself. Somehow, in a profound way, the Father removes His favoring presence from the Son. This is why the God-man Jesus, in the shadow of Calvary and Gethsemane, trembles in agony,

contemplating the reality of being separated from the favoring love of the Father. Unthinkable. And so on the cross, He steps back. God removes His hand and delivers Him over and allows Satan and all of the entities of evil to unleash all of their venom and all of their hatred at His Son, and He steps back and holds back His hand and allows it, until He has paid for every sin that was ever committed by everyone who would ever believe.

All of that wrath was poured out on His Son, because God must punish sin. And understanding that and accepting that makes you marvel at the love of God. What matter of love the Father has given to us that He would punish His Son so that He might make us who were His enemies, His own dear children. And Jesus Christ Himself doesn't go begrudgingly. No, He Himself lays down His life. He came to purchase a bride. And though He despised the shame of the cross, He was looking for the joy that was awaiting Him. Not just the joy of being back with His Father, but the joy of taking His bride to meet His Father, to live with His Father. So for that reason, the triune God offers Himself and experiences His own wrath, so that He can remain just and yet at the same time the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. So the Lord has done all of this. In the supremacy of His person and the supremacy of His knowledge, He reveals God before us in a way that we would never see Him otherwise, and there is no other place that you can find out about the living God but than in Jesus Christ.

Today, that means you can find no other place than the word of God. Don't look for dreams. Don't look for revelation in other ways. This is where you find out about God. The Spirit of God takes the word of God and reveals to you the Living Word of God. Let's not grumble and complain that we wish we had more excitement. No, this is sufficient. That's like saying, "Lord, I wish we had something other than manna today." The only reason they said that is because they were stupid. They had God making their breakfast. They should have gone out every day and said, "It's there again! How amazing that our God has done this for us! In looking beyond the manna, we need You like this, Lord." That's what the word of God is to us today. Let it be our bread. And when we go through circumstances where we question why is the Lord allowing this? Why has God brought this affliction into this person's life? Lord, help them and help us to look to You and see that You are our sufficiency. You've allowed the suffering. You have bruised us, but You will heal us. Our God is a God of great love and mercy, who loves us far too much to give us what we think we want. He gives us what He knows we truly need and truly want, and that is Himself.

Let's go to Him in prayer.

Our Father,

We bow before You, and we acknowledge how great is our unbelief. Fallen men would rather do anything than submit to You and to find in You, when we submit to You, everything that we've ever longed for. We are foolish beyond words. You made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Thee, and yet we run and we flee. There are some here that are running and fleeing today. Help them stop running from You. Help them come to You and find that You are their soul's delight, that You will show them and give them life. Help them repent of their sins and to place their faith in Jesus. And Father, for those of us who already belong to You, we need to stop running in the ways that we run. Help us to have desires for what really matters, to make us so hungry to know and love You. Help us to cultivate more and more of a taste to only stand in Your presence and behold Your glory and to realize that that is the one thing that life is about, and make us more eager every day for Heaven, for in that day, we will stand before You and we will know what the psalmist meant when he said, "In Your presence, O Lord, there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand, there are pleasures forever more." Bring this about in each of our hearts for Your glory. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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