

John 6:41-51
“Why Some People Do Not Come To Jesus”

41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.

44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

48 "I am the bread of life.

49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

You know its funny, but in all the years that I've been asking people who don't go to church to come to church, I've never once had someone who really didn't want to go simply say to me. *No, I'm not going to go because I don't want to.* Instead, I always get either:

- 1) **“Oh ok, I'll go.”** And then they don't show up.
- 2) **“Ok some day soon I'll go.”** And then some day soon never comes.
- 3) **“I can't go to church this week because...”** insert some excuse here. And I've heard some doozies. For instance, and I'm not making this one up. ***“My son is sick and has a baseball game that day, and I don't think he'll be up to it.”***

But what I never hear is *No, the truth is that there's something about church that scares and repulses me or if I go, I know I'm going to feel bad about what I've been doing, or I'll just feel bored and awkward and I don't want that*. But people will seldom even admit that to themselves, much less to you. I'm sure that a goodly percentage of the "*Ok someday soon I'll go*" people are telling themselves that someday they will go, that the perfect church day will arrive, but it never does and sometimes I wonder if the excuses are more for me or for the sake of their own consciences.

The truth is that these people don't have a physical inability to come to church, they aren't suddenly struck with a mysterious paralysis lasting from 10:45 to 12:00 PM every Sunday Morning. Their problem is one of volition, of the will. They don't *want* to come. It is not true that they would come if they could. It is true that they could come if they would.

But it isn't just not wanting to go to church that men make excuses for. They are just as prone to make excuses for not wanting to come to the *head of the Church*, Jesus. Which is in a very real sense, exactly what is going on in these verses.

Why is it that these men who are hearing the preaching of Christ will not come to Him, which is a euphemism for believing in Him - Trusting in Him for Salvation?

Well as we've seen the problem is NOT a lack of evidence that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God. John the Baptist, who they acknowledged was a prophet sent by God had said *I'm not the Messiah, He's the Messiah*. He had pointed at Jesus and said "Behold the Lamb of God Who Takes Away the Sins of the World."

And then there was the miracles, the things that no man had done before. He had healed the sick, raised the dead, given sight to the blind. This very crowd had just experienced the miraculous feeding of the 5,000. How had He arrived in Capernaum to deliver this sermon? He'd walked there over a lake.

But instead of believing, they were *looking for excuses to justify their not believing He was the Messiah*. How can he have come down from heaven, they asked, he's a local boy!? We know his family! They are poor people. The Messiah, he'll be a grand king, live in a palace, have a mighty army. The idea that the Son of God would be born in a stable, born into the humblest of families, that doesn't meet the natural man's expectations. If he's going to bow, it better be to a mighty man, shrouded in awesome splendor, not this humble Galilean. So that's the reason they won't come to Him they say to themselves.

But that isn't the reason, the reason is that they are spiritually dead, blind and deaf, and all the evidence and persuasive arguments in the world won't change that. Jesus says in verse 44 the only way that situation *can* change is if the Father himself changes it. NO ONE can come otherwise.

The Bible generally, and the gospel of John in particular set before us two grand and equally important truths, God's Sovereignty 1st) the fact that in order for a spiritually dead person to hear, see, and enter the kingdom of God, then God must first do a regenerating work in their hearts.

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Human Responsibility 2nd) that all men everywhere have a responsibility to respond to the call to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if they do not, and perish in their sins, then it will be their own fault.

Whether or not men respond in faith is the way we can see whether or not God has worked in their lives, changed their wills and changed their hearts thus enabling them to come to Christ. Many, and I hope most of you have experienced that, the amazing change of will, change of desire, change of heart. In the new members class this past week we were relating the moments in our own individual lives when the scales fell from our eyes, when we were caused to see our own sinfulness, and hear the call to come to Christ and how we rejoiced.

Christ talks about that in verse 45 using language and imagery from the Old Testament where God had promised that He would do that regenerating

work. You see, part of the promise of the New Covenant is that God will teach his people Himself, he will teach them in their hearts. He says again and again that he will take those stony hearts that men are born with, and will be their teacher:

Ezek. 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Jer. 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

There will be undeniable evidences of this change when it happens in a human heart, *love to Christ and love to his people* being obvious ones.

That is why Paul can write to the Thessalonians saying

1 Thess. 4:9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

And later Christ Himself will say in John 13:35 ***"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."***

So when someone has been cleansed and given a new heart by the Lord, you see three absolute evidences of that, three loves: ***1) They love the Lord, and they run to Him 2) They Love his commandments and they strive to know and do them, 3) and they love one another.*** If someone says to you, I'm a

Christian, but they are missing the mark of these three loves, then you can be reasonably certain their profession is false.

Christ stresses in verse 46 you can't know the father without coming to the Son. He will put this even more plainly to Thomas in John 14:6 "***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."***" Now that claim offended not only the Jews of Christ's day, it has offended countless others since. I noticed for instance, that the Episcopal Rector who officiated at President Gerald Ford's Funeral sliced off the end of that verse not repeating the words "***No one comes to the Father except through me***" Why? Because those words mean that there is only one way to the Father, one mediator between man and God, and that therefore all of those spiritual men who, like Muhammad, have claimed to know the father and to have learned from Him or seen Him without Christ were lying. And while unbelieving men may be able to stomach Jesus as ***a way to Heaven***, they absolutely will not stand for His own declaration that He is ***THE way to heaven***.

He is the Bread of Heaven that Came Down to Give Men Life. He is standing right there before them, offering them life, if they will but come to him. But they will not, because their hearts are hopelessly inclined against him, and will never cease to work out excuses. You can find the brightest people suddenly turning to the dopest excuses in order to justify that decision not to believe. For instance I was just reading the arguments of second century opponent of Christianity, a Greek philosopher by the name of Celsus, he didn't deny that Jesus performed miracles (in fact most of the early opponents of Christianity didn't take that tack) instead because he knew that Jesus had been taken to Egypt when he was young, and that there were magicians in Egypt, he concluded that he must have learned certain magical powers while he was there and used them to fool people into believing He was the son of God. Now why would a bright man have come up with such a ridiculous and totally baseless explanation? Because Celsus ***wouldn't*** believe that Jesus was the Son of God. The Father had not drawn Him, so even the silliest excuse would always be preferable to believing. The Pharisees saw his miracles for themselves, couldn't deny them, so they said "He must be doing these things by the power of the Devil"

Jesus says then to this unbelieving crowd. You asked for manna, but the manna that came down in the desert did not give anyone eternal life, that is what I have come to do. If you want this life, you need to eat the bread of heaven, and to eat the bread of heaven, is to come to Christ as the alone source of eternal life.

That is why you cannot truly eat the Lord's Supper until you have truly come to Him by Faith. The only way we can partake of his benefits and commune with him is by faith. And without faith, all you are doing is eating earthly bread, but in coming to the table without faith, coming in unbelief, coming denying that Jesus is the Son of God, you are calling down God's judgment and not blessings. As a Christians come to the Lord's Supper they are symbolically repeating that initial act of covenanting with Christ, reaffirming that they know and believe that He Alone is the Bread of Heaven and that it was by His once for all Sacrifice of His Flesh on the Cross, that brought us salvation from our sins.

Two Applications:

1) **The benefit of this for your assurance:** Christians I hope you are putting this together in your head. If only those whom the father brings to Christ can come to Him, and if of all those who come to Him he will lose none, then if you have truly believed in Christ, and now matter how weak your faith you have those marks of love that show his renewing work in your hearts, love to the Lord, love of His Commands and love of one another. Then you know that is because you were regenerated, given a new heart, and brought to Christ. You have been saved and you will never be lost. You can know you have eternal life here and now and forever **47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.**

That will be of more use to you than looking to your own feeble works. You may doubt yourself, but you know that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of faith. How many saints have been carried through the waters of death, and the final assaults of the devil by that simple knowledge. ***"I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep***

what I have committed to Him until that Day.” Brothers and Sisters you cannot become unregenerated again, you hearts cannot be untaught and unwashed and turned back to stone. If that were possible, believe me it would happen to every Christian because none of us is strong enough to be the finisher his own faith. Oliver Cromwell as he was dying turned to his chaplain and whispered, "Tell me, is it possible to fall from grace?" "It is not," he answered. "Then, I am safe, for I know I was once in grace."

2) But if you are still making excuses for not Coming know this, it is not because there is not enough evidence, it is only because you don't desire to come and if you will not come your blood will be on your own head. As Ryle put it, ***“One thing at any rate is abundantly clear, and that is--man's responsibility for his own soul. His inability to come to Christ does not make an end of his accountableness. Both things are equally true. If lost at last, it will prove to have been his own fault. His blood will be on his own head. Christ would have saved him, but he would not be saved. He would not come to Christ, that he might have life.”***

You have come this day, maybe for the last time to that place where God asks through his messengers for you to chose whom you will serve. Whom is it?