

Behold, Believe, and Be Raised

Livin' the Life

John 6:30-40

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We are continuing our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life, looking at Jesus and the life he offers. We are currently in chapter six, Jesus' sermon on the Bread of Life, looking at John 6:30-40, which can be divided into two sections. In verses thirty to thirty-six, the crowd rejects Jesus as the bread of life so that it looks as though Jesus fails in his saving purposes. Then in verses thirty-seven to forty, Jesus shows that despite the crowd's rejection, God's saving purposes are not frustrated but accomplished. In these verses and John's gospel we see two truths communicated. One is God's sovereignty in salvation and human's responsibility. So, let's look at this passage together.

We have seen that the crowd is seeking Jesus for another meal. The bread of life stands in front of them and all they want is another meal. We pick up today in verse thirty, the crowd is reacting to Jesus' challenge to believe him for food that endures to eternal life. The crowd is asking for another sign, pointing to Moses who gave their ancestors manna from heaven (30-31). The implication is, here is what Moses did, what are you going to do? The irony is that he has already performed several miracles! They do not really want to believe him, actually refusing to believe in him, but want their sinful desires fulfilled. They are very religious but they are spiritually lost.

Jesus corrects them saying, truly, truly, it was not Moses who gave you manna from heaven but my Father who is giving you the true bread from heaven (32). He starts with truly, truly, meaning, I am speaking authoritatively for God as God and then goes on to point the crowd to himself. Right here we see that Jesus is not just some spiritual teacher, some wise sage. He is God and the only one who can give eternal life. All the great religious teachers point us to God, Jesus points us to himself because he is God. Jesus has been saying that all along, look to me, come to me, believe in me. Then Jesus becomes more specific, the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (33). So, first, he is claiming God as his Father. Second, the manna in the wilderness was not the main point of that miracle but pointed to the true bread from heaven, Jesus. The manna was a sign that pointed to and is fulfilled in Christ, the true bread from heaven that gives life to the world. Now the true bread of God is given not just to the Jews but to the world. God gave the Son, sent the Son, so that all the nations behold and believe in the Son.

So, what is their response? They ask for another meal, Sir give us this bread always (34; see 4:15). The True bread from heaven is standing in front of them and offering himself again and again and all they want is another meal. Now Jesus gives the clearest and most direct statement of his identity so far in the gospel. I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst (35). But they do not behold so do not believe. They reject the bread of life and the gift of eternal life (36). Are God's purposes in Jesus as the Savior of the world frustrated? Well, we find that out in verses thirty-seven to forty. So, we could say that these verses give us the human perspective, what we see when the gospel is preached and the rest of the verses give us God's perspective.

First, Jesus says, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever will come to me I will never cast out (37). God the Father gives people to Jesus (37, 39, 65, and similarly, 44). Second, those who are given to Jesus, come to Jesus. Jesus is saying that it is impossible for a person to come to him apart from the Father giving them (see also 6:44-45). The crowd is not coming to Jesus because they refuse to do so. They do not see the glory of Jesus, they do not desire Jesus in any significant way, and they do not want to believe in him. But those the Father gives to Jesus come to Jesus. And third, whoever comes to Jesus, are kept by Jesus, he will never cast out. The Father gives so they come to the Son and the Son keeps those given to him by the Father. The Father is sovereign over the giving and the Son is sovereign over the keeping. Those given come to Jesus

and it is impossible for them to be cast out, that is, they will be received by Jesus and never perish (see Rom 8:30).

Then Jesus gives the ground or basis why he will not cast anyone out who comes to him. Jesus has come not to do his own will but to do the will of the Father who sent him (38). Then he gets more specific about God's will. God the Father's will is that Jesus should lose not a single one of all who the Father has given him but will raise them up on the last day (39). So, the Father is sovereign over whom he gives and Jesus is sovereign over not losing any of those given to him but keeps them. What the Father wills for the Son, the Son will always accomplish. But he goes one step further, not only does Jesus promise to keep his own but he will raise them up on the last day. That is, his own are secure until he resurrects them. Then he summarizes his whole point, this is the Father's will, that everyone who looks on the Son, that is, those who believe on him, should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day (40).

Believing in Jesus is the way to eternal life. Only those who believe have eternal life so it is critical that we understand what believing means. Believing is not just saying a prayer, accepting some doctrinal truth and then living the way you want, with no interest in or appetite for Jesus and having no desire to obey him. If you believe that, you have a false assurance. That is not genuine saving faith. So, let me explain from this passage what Jesus is saying when he says believe in me. Look at verse thirty-five, whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall not thirst. Now look at verse forty, whoever looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life (40). John wants us to understand that believing is beholding Jesus as the bread of life and believing is a coming to Jesus as the bread of life. Believing is a miracle of new birth in the human heart in which our eyes are opened to the beauty, preciousness, glory of Jesus. Corresponding with beholding Jesus in a new way is the creation of desires and appetites for Jesus, that leads us to freely turn away from your sin that you have treasured and a turning toward Jesus with the intent on following him. Genuine saving faith produce a life of obedience, not a perfect life but a desire and willingness to obey Jesus. So, Jesus is teaching that beholding Jesus for who he is leads to believing in him, and eternal life and being raised by him.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why is the crowd seeking Jesus?
2. How would you describe why you are seeking Jesus?
3. Why does Jesus use the metaphor that he is the bread of life, the true bread from Heaven?
4. What is Father's will for Jesus?
5. How can Jesus promise that he keeps us eternally safe and secure?
6. What does it mean to believe as David described (35, 40)?
7. Is it possible to believe in Jesus but not genuinely believe or to follow Jesus but not genuinely follow? What is the difference?
8. How is God peaking to you this week from this message? How do you respond?