

Who has the right to say hard things to you?

Have you given someone permission to come alongside you and speak truth?

I found myself asking the question recently as I was watching a tragic situation unfold and wondering who would or could step in and say the hard truth.

But then I wondered, am I any better?

How do I respond when I don't like the message?

Do I marginalize or cancel the messenger?

Do I look for someone else to blame or get angry and withdraw when someone says something hard to me?

As we come to the end of John 6, the Jews are grumbling.

They don't like what they have heard.

They don't believe what Jesus is saying.

But Jesus never backs away from addressing hard topics.

He has hard things to say, hard because they're difficult to understand, and hard because of the exclusive nature of the claims.

This is our second week in what some call the Bread of Life discourse.

A crowd followed Jesus for a glimpse of a miracle and they got a meal.

So they followed Jesus for another meal.

And Jesus said, follow me because I am the Bread of Life.

In John 6:41, the attention turns from the crowd to the Jews.

And Jesus will now explain to the Jews that eternal life requires a commitment to Christ.

This isn't to say that salvation is through the work of commitment.

As Jesus illustrates what he is teaching, he uses images and symbols the Jews would have recognized from scripture to explain what faith lived out looks like.

And he is talking to a crowd that understands commitment.

They're committed to their traditions, to their laws, to their rules and religion.

And Jesus is about to challenge their assumptions, their whole basis for existence by speaking hard truth.

Eternal life requires a commitment to Christ.

We will look at John 6:41 through 7:1 in two divisions.

The first division, commitment to the truth, and the second division, commitment to the way.

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So let's start with commitment to the truth in John 6 verses 41 through 59.

And go ahead and open your Bibles to that passage.

We'll start in John 6:41 with the truth that Jesus is from God.

So in John 6:41, the Jews began to grumble about Jesus because he said,

I am the bread of life that came down from heaven.

They didn't like that he would make such a claim.

And when it says they grumbled, picture people actually talking and complaining amongst themselves, unaware that anyone can hear or is listening.

They were actually indignant that he would make such a claim.

To them, he was Joseph and Mary's son and nothing more.

But when Jesus calls out their grumbling, he may have taken them by surprise that he knows their inmost thoughts.

He continues in verse 44,

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them and I will raise them up at the last day.

Jesus knows that to understand the truth,

he is teaching takes a supernatural work of God.



To believe that Jesus is from God and is God isn't a truth that you can make someone believe because belief is more than an intellectual assent to truth.

Jesus doesn't even make this crowd believe it.

Instead, he says that those whom the Father draws will believe this truth and then gives

the assurance that he will raise up all those the Father draws in the last days.

Commitment to Christ has both a human side to commitment.

We'll see that explained as we continue through the text and a supernatural side to commitment.

No one can come to me unless the Father draws them.

Jesus isn't discouraged or defeated by their initial rejection of his origins,

nor does he give up on the conversation.

Instead, he continues by explaining his relationship with the Father.

Jesus is from God and Jesus is God. ✓

That's what verses 45 and 46 tell us.

Jesus identifies himself as the answer to the promise written in the prophets.

They will all be taught by God, everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.

The Jews understand what Jesus is saying.

They don't like it, but they understand what his words mean.

Jesus is saying, if you have a relationship with the Father, you will come to me.

You cannot say that.

You love and trust God and reject Jesus.

You cannot say that you have a relationship with God and reject Jesus.

And that teaching infuriates the Jewish crowd.

From the desire to see a miracle to chasing a meal, the people are now coming face to face with the Messiah.

Jesus establishes that he is from God and he is God. ✓

And even though the crowd is skeptical, he continues with more truth.

Those who believe in Jesus receive eternal life.

Jesus grants eternal life.

In verses 47 through 59, Jesus goes on to explain he is God and he is God. ✓

And eternal life requires a commitment to Christ.

Now Jesus takes them back to something familiar to help them understand.

In verse 49 and 50, your ancestors ate manna and they died.

But Jesus is the bread from heaven which anyone may eat and not die.

And verse 51 goes on.

And Jesus explains the bread is his flesh which he will give for the life of the world.

Jesus is again speaking using ideas rooted in the Old Testament.

Jesus explains he is the substitute.

He will give his life as a substitute.

And unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

But those who do feast on him and will live forever.

How is this possible?

Since Adam's rebellion, all who are born of Adam are born into sin as sinners who deserve death.

Throughout scripture, God introduced a temporary way to address humanity's sin and separation from him through the idea of a substitute.

Through a variety of animals and in a variety of ways, God made provision for a sacrifice to serve as an acceptable offering, though the blood of animals could never actually take away sin.

Jesus now comes along and explains and expands what was foreshadowed in the prophets by saying he is the one who is the substitute for the world.

How can this be?

Why can Jesus make this claim?

He can make this claim because of what he has just taught.

He is from God and he is God. ✓

Jesus isn't like you and me.

He's not just another man.

He is fully human and fully divine.

He is perfect.

Or another way to say that, he is righteous without sin.

Because he is without sin, he does not live under condemnation of death.

What Jesus does as a willing sacrifice is step into mankind's sin problem and serve as the sacrifice of an atonement through his death.

In doing so, he demonstrates his righteousness.

The fact that he can die as a sacrifice of atonement is because he lived as a righteous or sinless life.

But his death alone does not mean that every person will have their sins forgiven and be reconciled to God.

Jesus explains that those who identify with his death, in this case, he uses language like feast on him, will have eternal life.

There are different ways of perceiving eternal life described in the New Testament.

But Jesus is saying that those who take him in, those who are committed to him,

those who derive their life from Jesus, analogous to how we derive our life from food will live forever.

This is a rich theological passage.

Scripture will describe this in other places that through faith in Christ,

Christ's righteousness is imputed or treated as if it belongs to a person.

And the person's sin is then traded as if it belongs to Christ.

In other words, for those who identify with Christ, their sin is placed on Christ and atoned for by his death.

And his righteousness is then placed on believers so that we are viewed righteous in the sight of God.

The truth that Jesus is teaching in this passage is that Jesus secures and sustains eternal life for those who feed on him.

I. Principle, Jesus secures and sustains eternal life for those who feed on him.

To feed on Jesus is to draw your very life from him.

To feed on Jesus is to be sustained by him.

We understand eating and drinking food.

When it comes to your relationship with Jesus, what is your feeding schedule?

Remember, eternal life isn't something that just happens later and we just have to endure now.

It is not just about how long life lasts.

Eternal life is a quality of life.

To have eternal life is to have a new heart, a new spirit, a new identity.

Eternal life changes how you see and experience the world.

Jesus secures and sustains eternal life for those who feed on him.

He is our sustenance in this life.

What is your feeding schedule with Jesus?

B. In our second division, we see Jesus invite many of his disciples to consider their commitment to the way.

their commitment to him, and his invitation produces two different responses.

One group will refuse his teaching and one group will receive it.

The times may have changed, but our responses to Jesus' teaching are still the same today.

Verses 60 through 66 describe one group who heard the teaching and said,

this is hard teaching. Who can accept it?

That is a true statement.

What Jesus was teaching is hard teaching because if what Jesus is saying is true, then every person, every person has a decision to make.

If what Jesus is saying is true, then there are not many ways to eternal life into heaven.

There is only one way.

If what Jesus is saying is true, then every person must grapple with and make a decision about their relationship with Jesus.

If what Jesus is saying is true, then it is a lie to claim that you can believe your truth and I can believe my truth and we will all be okay.

If what Jesus is saying is true, then regardless of who you are or where you live, access to eternal life is through Jesus Christ.

This is a hard teaching and many disciples grumbled and made them angry.

They talked amongst themselves, not to Jesus, but again grumbling.

And again, Jesus confronts their grumbling and he says, does this offend you?

You find this truth to be offensive.

How will you respond to what else is coming?

This is just the beginning.

Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before?

The cross is coming.

The cross proceeds the ascension.

If this teaching is offensive, it's only going to get more offensive.

Jesus continues.

The Spirit gives life. The flesh counts for nothing.

The words I have spoken to you, they are full of the spirit and life. ✓

To believe what Jesus has been teaching is a work of the Spirit.

It is the Spirit that quickens life and our understanding of these truths.

That is why you can tell someone these truths and they may even be able to say them back to you and understand just how offensive they are and they still refuse them.

It is the Spirit who quickens life.

It is the Father who draws and enables belief.

Does this offend you?

How do we respond when we read and hear these words?

From this time, many of his disciples turned back. ☹️

This was a turning point for the people of his day and this has been a turning point for many people throughout time and even in our day.

Pay attention in this passage because it makes a delineation between many of his disciples versus the 12.

When many of his disciples leave, Jesus turns to the 12 and he invites them to respond as well by saying, you do not want to leave me like the others, do you?

In this case, it is Simon Peter who answers and says,

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. ✓

In Peter's answer to Jesus' question, we have such a simple and yet beautifully profound profession of faith.

Peter professes there is nowhere else to go.

There was no one else to turn to.

Jesus is God in the flesh. ✓

Jesus offers eternal life.

There is no other one.

There is no other way.

For those who know Jesus, there is no turning back.

There is no other option.

We are fully in.

We see no other logical or legitimate choice.

As one of my dear friends says,

even when life gets hard and questions outnumber answers in this world,

where else will we go?

For many of you who are listening, you know that confession well.

You have considered all the options.

You have weighed the different views on eternal life and teaching from other religions.

You have looked at even the hard things of life and found that the one sure, steady and true thing in this life is Jesus.

You know that even when life is hard, even when the teaching is hard to understand, there is no other place to go.

There is no one else to turn to.

Peter was there.

He could see no other way to abundant life, no other source of eternal life.

He could see no one else who could sustain or secure life.

There was no other one who can pay the penalty of our sins in our place

because there is no other one who is righteous except Jesus.

Peter believed it.

Jesus was and is the Messiah, the one who secures and sustains eternal life.

And when we believe in Christ's righteousness as our way to eternal life with the Father,

we can drop the need to be perfect.

You see, it's okay to admit our imperfections.

It's good to confess our sin because Christ died for those in our place

so that we could be righteous in the sight of God.

When we don't believe in Christ's righteousness as the way to eternal life,

then we are offended by the truth and we refuse to believe it.

We continue to believe that we know better.

We pick and choose what we want to believe, demonstrating our pride and our self-righteousness.

Jesus asked the 12 the question not to discover the answer for himself.

This whole passage, he has shown that he knows what the people are saying under their breath.

He has shown that he knows what's in the hearts of men.

Jesus asks and allows Peter to confess and acknowledge what is in his mind and heart.

And Jesus replies consistent with what he has been teaching all along.

Have I not chosen you?

Jesus teaches both sides of salvation, God's enabling and man's profession of faith.

They boggle the human mind and they are hard truths, but they are still true.

It's what Jesus taught from the beginning.

God enables and man receives.



But then Jesus gives us a clue of what is to come as he reveals what is in the heart of one of the 12th.

This is yet to be voiced, but Jesus already knows.

One of you is the devil.

And we get our first sense of rejection that is going to come in the form of betrayal.

In the same passage where he has previously explained that he will die for the sins of the world, we begin to get a clue into how that might happen.

Jesus goes to great lengths to teach this crowd this truth.

Receiving Jesus means accepting Jesus and his teaching as the only way.

If you ever have been through a buffet line, when you go through a buffet line, you get to pick and choose the kinds of food that you like, or maybe just what you're in the mood to eat that day.

When Jesus says that we must feast on him, he is not describing a buffet line,

where you can pick and choose the parts of Jesus, the parts of his teaching that are palliative.

He is not describing a buffet line, where you can pick and choose the parts of Jesus, the parts of his teaching that are palatable to you.

When you come to hard teaching, what is your response?

Do you skip over it like you do certain foods on the buffet line?

Do you decide you will ignore that and mingle different beliefs from scripture together instead?

Do you cut those ideas from your belief system?

Do you challenge those ideas in the world?

Do you decide you will accept some teaching, but not others?

You may recall from Genesis 3 that when the devil tempts Eve, he says,

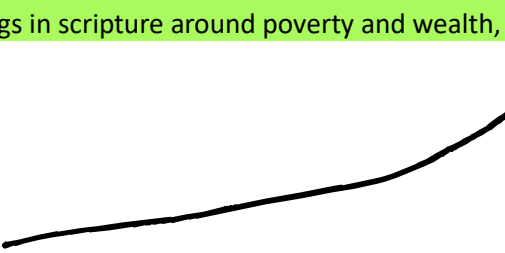
Did God really say?

For many, that suggestion is the narrative of rejection of God and his word today.

Did God really say that?

Which parts of the truth are you passively rejecting by wondering if the Bible really says what it seems to say?

There are all sorts of hard teachings in scripture around poverty and wealth, justice and injustice, sex and sexuality, pride and humility, religion and relationship.



When you go through the scripture, which parts are you tempted to discard by asking, Did God really say?

Because receiving Jesus means accepting Jesus and his teachings as the only way.

This is a hard teaching.

And yet Jesus, the teacher has secured eternal life for all who will feed on him.

And all through this discourse,

the invitation is available to the Jews just as it is available to you today.

Come to Jesus, receive Jesus and live.

This lecture was written and produced by Bible Study Fellowship.

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