

Lesson 10 Notes

John 6:41-71


Focus Verse

"Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.'" (John 6:68-69)

Outline

- Jesus: The Son of God – John 6:41-59
- Jesus: The Decision – John 6:60-71

Engage

Have you ever felt like the only one who believes something you know is true? When you express what you believe, you may be marginalized, criticized, or left out. Christians often experience this. **Standing on biblical truth can cost us friendships, credibility, or even the freedom to voice our convictions.** Does opposition cause you to question what God has declared to be true? How much weight do you give to popular opinion when even foundational biblical truths become unpopular? **What does it take to withstand attacks against God's truth?** Take courage. **God anchors believers with His Word and His Spirit to uphold His truth in this world.** 

When Jesus frankly shared His divine mission as humanity's Savior, many of His so-called "disciples" turned away. Jesus was not the Messiah they had imagined. His forthright teaching—that He came as heaven's Living Bread—became too difficult to accept. However, among the quickly departing crowd remained the faithful. **A minority saw, believed, and followed Jesus—the way, the truth, the life.**¹ Within the mystery of faith, Jesus's true followers find an immovable foundation that dispels the confusion surrounding them. **We will not understand everything about Jesus on this side of heaven. However, He has revealed enough to make our faith in Him firm.** We believe in Jesus and follow Him—that matters most. **Eternal life requires a commitment to Christ.**

1. The way: John 14:6-7

✦ Jesus: The Son of God – John 6:41-59

In the previous lesson, Jesus declared Himself the Bread of Life. The Father sent His Son from heaven to give eternal life to all who come to Him. **The people following Jesus eagerly desired that Jesus satisfy their physical hunger. They even wanted to make Jesus their king. However, the Lord had so much more to offer than they realized. Only Jesus, the Bread of Life, can satisfy spiritual hunger.** The people resisted this glorious truth and **chose to ignore what they truly**

needed. Jesus's honest statement initiated a significant shift in the crowd's demeanor toward Him. When Jesus did not give what they desperately wanted, the crowd began to build a case against the One who came to save them.

The Divinity of Jesus – 6:41-51

The Jews' Lament – 6:41-42

John referred to Jesus's hardened opponents as "the Jews," meaning the Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus's clear claim to be God's Son and the source of eternal life. What the leaders thought they knew about Jesus overshadowed what Jesus called them to believe. They knew the earthly definition of Jesus's parents as Joseph and Mary. They also knew Jesus grew up in Nazareth. From their perspective, Jesus's claim of any origin beyond a merely human one was blasphemous. At that point, people did not know the intimate details of Jesus's miraculous conception or the supernatural events surrounding His birth.¹ Still, those who scoffed at Jesus were responsible for their unbelief.

Jesus offered ample proof of His heavenly authority. His sinless life,² along with His powerful words and works,³ attested to His equality with the Father.⁴ Any open, sincere, and unprejudiced person would have honestly considered His claims. Jesus Christ is who He said He is—the incarnate Son of the eternal God.

Jesus's Reply – 6:43-51

"Stop Grumbling" – 6:43

Jesus heard the grumblers and knew their hearts. Jesus did not explain His genealogy or the virgin birth. He did not soften His claims but reaffirmed the truth that human opinion could not erase. Jesus confronted the opposing remarks with declarations of truth about Himself and salvation.

The Drawing of God's Spirit – 6:44-47

Jesus began His answer with, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day." Each believer represents a precious gift from the Father to His Son. The same Heavenly Father who sent Jesus draws people to Him. No person understands the depth of their sin or seeks salvation in Christ without the Holy Spirit's illumination and intervention.⁵

The truth Jesus explained that day speaks to us today. In love, compassion, and grace, the Father draws people to believe in His Son. God regenerates dead hearts with spiritual life that rolls forward until believers experience the glorious consummation of their salvation on the "last day." The eternal life that God ignites within His children brings a new quality of life that begins immediately, never ends, and cannot be taken away.⁶

1. Divine birth: Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-12; John 1:14; 7:41-42

2. Sinless life: John 8:46

3. Jesus's heavenly authority: Mark 1:17-28; John 8:14-15

4. Equality with the Father: John 10:25-30; Philippians 2:6

5. Inability to seek God: Romans 3:11

6. Eternal security: John 6:40, 44; 10:28; Romans 8:30, 38-39

Paraphrasing the prophet Isaiah, Jesus said of His people, “They will all be taught by God.”⁷ These words also point to the New Covenant **which provides forgiveness of sins and God’s laws written on human hearts.**⁸ Although this prophecy awaits complete fulfillment, Jesus emphasized, “Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to me.” All who answer God’s call to faith and come to Jesus discover truth taught by God’s Spirit. **Belief in Jesus opens hearts and minds to understand God and His Word.** ←

Indwelt, empowered, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit,⁹ believers enter a lifelong process that draws them closer to Jesus as they walk toward eternity. Belief opens our hearts and minds to understand many Bible passages that formerly seemed obscure. **The Holy Spirit always leads God’s children to Jesus when they receive and act on His truth.**

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God holds human beings responsible for their response to Jesus. The grumbling people listening to Jesus closed their hearts and minds and refused to be drawn to God’s Son.¹⁰ **Their refusal to believe Him actually revealed hostility toward Almighty God and unbelief in the Old Testament prophets.** Jesus highlighted the necessity of God’s work within a human heart as He calls **sinners to salvation.** With unrelenting grace, Jesus restated His offer of eternal life from verse 40. Jesus receives all who come to Him in faith.

The Promise of Everlasting Life – 6:48-50

Jesus refused to back down from the claims that caused His listeners to grumble. He continued to restate unalterable truth. In the days of Moses and in the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, manna from heaven **temporarily** sustained God’s people in the wilderness. The Israelites ate, yet they died physically.

Jesus again explained that He Himself is the Bread of Life who came down from heaven to provide eternal life for all who believe.¹¹ **To believe, trust, and commit your life to Jesus is to possess eternal life immediately and forever.** Those who die in Christ never “see” death. When believers die, they see only the Lord, who takes them to be with Him forever.¹² ↩

Jesus’s Willing Sacrifice of His Life – 6:51

Jesus added deeper meaning as He pointed to His imminent death. He explained **that the bread of life He offered is His flesh—His human life.** At the cross, Jesus would give His life for the life of the world. Jesus said, **“everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life.”**¹³ **Jesus’s meaning is clear: He is the object of true faith.** Here, Jesus revealed how “those who look to Him” in faith spiritually “eat” the bread of His “flesh” and receive His everlasting life.

Like the previous day’s miracle, Jesus offered His bold statement against the backdrop of the **Passover Feast.**¹⁴ Jesus’s words prophesied His sacrificial death on the cross at the next year’s Passover.¹⁵ **Both the Passover lamb and Jesus’s giving of His flesh to give life to the world point to the cross.** There, the Lamb of God would die on behalf of sinful people as our substitute.¹⁶


7. **Taught by God:** Isaiah 54:13
8. **New Covenant:** Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 34-36; Hebrews 8:8-13
9. **Holy Spirit’s teaching:** John 16:12-13; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 14; 1 John 2:20, 27
10. **Closed minds and hardened hearts:** John 5:37-44; 8:23
11. **Bread of Life:** John 6:35
12. **Life after death:** John 8:51; 11:26; Acts 7:55-60; Philippians 1:21-23
13. **Eternal life:** John 3:14-15; 6:40
14. **Passover:** John 6:4
15. **Jesus’s sacrifice:** Isaiah 53:5-6; Matthew 26:28; 1 Peter 2:24
16. **Lamb:** Exodus 12:3-13; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7

Believers “eat” spiritually of Jesus as they open themselves to receive and live by the fact that Jesus died to give them a truly new life. Jesus gave up heaven’s glory and died the death we deserve to pay for our sins. He did this not to merely offer a better life now but to make His people a new humanity. By the Holy Spirit’s power, believers live out Jesus’s own life in this world.¹⁷


The Flesh and Blood of Jesus – 6:52-59

Jesus’s Blood

Deeply troubled by Jesus’s statements, the Jews’ grumbling devolved into argument. Failing to understand the symbolism of Jesus’s words, they remained repulsed and angered. Jesus did not let up. His challenge escalated as He used physical imagery to teach spiritual truth.


In the law of Moses, God forbade drinking blood or eating meat with blood remaining in it. Blood represents the source of life designed by God to be precious and valuable. The only permissible use for blood in the Old Testament was to make atonement for sin.¹⁸ Because of this law, Orthodox Jews today still drain all blood from meat before cooking it. Yet Jesus now said, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” This shocked and deeply offended the people, who refused to acknowledge the spiritual meaning of His words. 

Jesus described Himself as the Passover Lamb. Jesus’s flesh and blood provide everlasting life. John the Baptist announced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.¹⁹ Jesus would later proclaim this same truth at His Last Supper.²⁰

Because shedding blood points to death, to “drink” Jesus’s blood is to participate personally and spiritually in His death. This means trusting that Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins.²¹ 

Jesus’s blood also delivers believers from sin’s power.²² In faith, to “drink Christ’s blood” means counting oneself as having died with Him to the old sinful nature within. Jesus, not sin, becomes your master. Jesus’s graphic imagery was challenging and offensive to His listeners but shows how only Jesus sustains spiritually.

Jesus’s Flesh

Jesus’s flesh represents the human life God intended for every person. Jesus sacrificed His human flesh to offer believers a newness of life—a new humanity. When we receive Christ by faith, we “eat” or share in His nature. His Holy Spirit dwells in us and gives us the power to live a new life. 

Only Jesus Christ lived without sin in His total human nature—emotions, intellect, and will. In every situation, Jesus’s human responses always reflected the holy, perfect character of God Himself. Fallen human nature, also called “flesh,” manifests the old humanity; Jesus’s “flesh” represents the new humanity. In faith, believers participate in the divine nature of Jesus.²³

17. Christlike life: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:15-22; Philippians 2:1-5

18. Sacredness of blood: Leviticus 3:17; 7:27; 17:10-14

19. Lamb of God: John 1:29

20. Last Supper: Matthew 26:28

21. Forgiveness of sins: Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24

22. Freedom from sin’s power: Matthew 1:21; Romans 6:7-8

23. Sharing Christ’s divine nature: 2 Peter 1:3-4

“Rightness” Before God

The Doctrine of Righteousness

Righteousness refers to the perfect and unblemished “rightness” of all God is and does.

God’s perfect righteousness means that He cannot tolerate sin. Jesus Christ is the only person who has lived a perfectly sinless life.¹ Everyone else has sinned and continues to sin.² When Jesus offered His followers Living Bread, He offered them Himself. Through Jesus’s achievement and not their own, those who believe in God’s Son receive eternal life.

Believers continue to sin like all other humans, but Jesus’s blood and righteousness cover their sins. **People who believe in Jesus are justified—declared right with God and thus able to have eternal life in His kingdom.** The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers believers to recognize and repent from sin. Through this ongoing process, called sanctification, the Holy Spirit imparts practical righteousness as God’s children grow to be more like Jesus.

People often fail to recognize the seriousness of their own lack of true righteousness.

Comparing themselves to others and not God, they feel satisfied if they deem themselves better than someone else. No one realizes their need of Jesus as Savior without first acknowledging their inability to live up to God’s righteous standards. This serious matter should not be deflected or ignored.

In love and grace, God sent His own Son to rescue us from our desperate state. Jesus paid sin’s penalty on behalf of all who put their faith in Him.³ The Holy Spirit awakens dead hearts to recognize their debt of sin and turn to Jesus for salvation.⁴ Through Jesus, believers gain right standing with God, not because of what they offer, but based on Jesus’s perfect righteousness. **In Jesus, God provided the righteousness He requires that we could not offer.** For eternity, God’s people will praise His Son for His indescribable gift.⁵

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1. **Jesus’s sinlessness:** 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5
 2. **Everyone sins:** Romans 3:10; 1 John 1:8
 3. **Jesus’s sacrifice:** John 3:16; Romans 5:8
 4. **Holy Spirit’s conviction:** John 16:7-8
 5. **God’s indescribable gift:** 2 Corinthians 9:15

In God’s power alone, God’s children trust God’s promises and fight sin in His strength. They seek His will in daily circumstances and witness to His presence in the world. Believers still sin, yet are forgiven as they continue to “eat His flesh.” God’s children grow in Christlikeness and dependence on His indwelling Spirit. “Eating” means meditating on Jesus’s words, taking them in, acting upon them, and trusting God for the results He promises. ←

Most Bible teachers believe Jesus’s words in John 6 are not about Holy Communion, or the Lord’s Supper. However, both point to the same supreme reality—the cross. Both show believers their great need and immense privilege to share personally in Jesus’s death and life. **Communion outwardly pictures the inward, spiritual reality of “feeding on Jesus.”** The next time you share in the Lord’s Supper, consider this passage of John 6. Ask God to help you, by faith, to enter fully into the experience of “drinking Jesus’s blood” and “eating His flesh.” →

Eternal Life through Jesus

Jesus's rich teaching offered serious warnings alongside glorious promises. **To refuse Christ means facing eternity spiritually destitute and without hope.** With repeated clarity, Jesus promised that those who trust Him for salvation would be raised to eternal life at the last day. **The only way to receive eternal life is by participating fully in the death and life of Jesus Christ through faith in Him.**²⁴

All who by faith "eat" the flesh of Christ and "drink" His blood receive a **double** promise. They possess eternal life here and now, as well as in heaven. They also gain absolute assurance of resurrection and eternal life. To receive Jesus means remaining in Him as He remains in you. Faith in Jesus involves so much more than a one-time decision. Believers are called to live the same way Jesus lived His human life on earth—in moment-by-moment dependence on God. Jesus lived by remaining in His Father and made it possible for you to live forever by remaining in Him. **When believers see Jesus Christ in heaven, their transformation will be made complete.** Then "we shall be like Him"—gloriously free of sin and all its barriers— "for we shall see him as he is."²⁵

Jesus: The Decision – John 6:60-71

Jesus's challenging words brought His followers to a critical decision point. **The truth about Jesus confronts all people with an unavoidable, personal, and eternal choice.** At this point, tragically, many of the "disciples" in the crowd turned against Jesus.

Many Leave – 6:60-66

Many who had considered themselves Jesus's disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" **The word "hard" here does not mean difficult to understand, but rather means unacceptable, harsh, or offensive.** **Jesus offered these followers satisfaction and fulfillment in Himself.** As the Lamb of God, Jesus would die to take away their sin.²⁶

The wavering followers wanted a Messiah who fulfilled their personal desires—miraculous manna, material blessings, and political freedom. A suffering Messiah who would bear their punishment on the cross did not match their expectations.²⁷ The challenging truth Jesus unrelentingly taught **sifted out His true followers from the fickle crowd.**

Jesus knew these disciples were grumbling against Him. The apostle Paul would later write: **"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."**²⁸ **Even today, following Jesus requires leaving the crowd to stand with Him.**

Jesus's previous teaching had **baffled** His listeners, but this time His message created a **dividing line.** Purposefully, Jesus turned the discussion from His death to His coming victory. **Jesus's resurrection and ascension would prove that He is all He claimed to be. Jesus's words,**

24. Life in Christ: Galatians 2:20

25. Freedom: 1 John 3:2

26. Redemption: John 1:29

27. Punishment for sin: Isaiah 53

28. Message of the cross: 1 Corinthians 1:18-19

full of the Holy Spirit's power, offered life to those who would believe. Yet Jesus knew the very hearts of the ones who rejected His words and refused the life He came to give. He repeated the important truth that only those the Father enables can come to Him. Many superficial disciples turned away from following Jesus.²⁹ **Failure to believe results in failure to understand spiritual truth.** ●

Some Believe – 6:67-71

As the unbelieving crowd departed, Jesus asked His 12 disciples, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Peter, often the spokesman for the rest, replied with words that captured their growing faith and commitment to Jesus: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” Peter confessed faith as Jesus’s betrayer, Judas, remained in their midst.³⁰ **Even when following Jesus is hard, there is no better place for us.**

The truth about Jesus divides people into two camps. While His teaching propelled many to resist and reject Him, Peter’s statement marked a turning point in Jesus’s ministry and the lives of the disciples. Peter and the other 10 men committed themselves to following Jesus. **Eternal life requires a commitment to Christ.** Where else could we possibly go to find what we need most—forgiveness from sin and eternal life? There is no other place. There is no turning back. ➤

✦ Take to Heart

Hold Fast

The large crowd that followed Jesus after He miraculously fed 5,000 grew impatient with His teaching. They took offense when Jesus taught them further about the Living Bread. While through Moses God provided daily manna for His people to live in the wilderness, Jesus Himself was heaven’s bread and the source of eternal life. Those God the Father draws to God the Son “drink” His blood by accepting His atoning sacrifice that covers their sin. They “eat” His flesh by living as new humanity, indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit. God declares believers righteous and promises them a place in His eternal kingdom.

Eternal life is a gift that requires a commitment to Christ. For many, that is too much to ask. ☹️ The idea of a sacrificial Messiah, rather than the worldly conqueror the crowd imagined and desired, led many to reject Jesus. Belief in Jesus is the only work He requires. Jesus’s claims divide humanity into two camps. Believers are the Father’s gift to His Son. Jesus will never turn away from those given to Him by the Father. Those who reject Jesus and His truth remain separated from Him forever. !

29. Difficult to accept: 1 Corinthians 2:7-12, 14

30. Judas’s betrayal: John 13:21-30; 18:2-6

Apply It

No one automatically receives the gift of eternal life. By faith, you must spiritually “drink” and “eat” of Jesus. Jesus shed His blood for you. He gives those who believe in Him the Bread of Life—eternal satisfaction in Him to enjoy today. Eternal life through Jesus Christ is God’s free gift to those who take and eat. If not, Jesus says, “You have no life in you.” If you desire this Bread of Life, know that God is drawing you. Jesus will not turn you away. Will you turn from your sins to God? Ask for faith to believe that Jesus’s blood, shed on the cross, has cleansed you completely in God’s sight.

How would you describe your spiritual appetite? Bread that remains untasted upon the shelf cannot satisfy hunger. Do you regularly feed on Jesus by reading and applying His words? How aware are you that the Holy Spirit longs to cover you with Jesus’s sinless life while leading you to forsake specific sin? Have you allowed this world’s busyness or temptations to dull your appetite for God? Ask God to allow no other food to satisfy you more than He does. By God’s grace, He desires to awaken within us a permeating hunger that only He can satisfy. Jesus’s words are “Spirit and life.” **As you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to make God’s Word alive and deeply satisfying to you.** Thank Him when He does, and then turn to Him for more. God both satisfies our deepest hunger and makes us hungry again to receive further truth.

Jesus’s words demand a response. Peter knew he had no better place to go than Jesus. Turning away was not an option. Perhaps you find yourself with more questions than answers or more confusion than understanding. How do you respond when God does not do things the way you expect? God uses our perplexity to call us to Himself and to trust Him with what we do not understand. People who experience God’s faithfulness in life learn there is no safer or more secure place to turn than Jesus. **The truth that causes some to run from Jesus leads believers to run toward Him.** Where else can we go? Only Jesus has the words of eternal life and the power to take us safely to eternity’s shore. Forever will not be long enough for your finite mind to grasp all there is of Jesus’s infinite goodness, truth, power, and love. There is no god like our God.³¹ Jesus is the only Savior we need. He is enough. There is no better place to go than to Jesus— the Holy One of God!

31. No god like our God: Exodus 8:10; 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Chronicles 14:11