



Sunday, March 15, 2026

John 6:60-71

It's been a while since we've been in the book of John so I thought I would give a little bit of a recap this morning so we're all on the same page. And the beauty of the four gospels is that each one of them share the life and story of Jesus ministry from the perspective of either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

Matthew and John were part of the Twelve disciples themselves. Mark likely wrote his Gospel based on the testimony of Peter, and Luke carefully gathered the accounts of eyewitnesses. And when we put all four Gospels together, we get a rich, well-rounded picture of the life and ministry of Jesus.

But John's Gospel has a very specific purpose. John is writing to show us clearly who Jesus is - as sovereign.

In fact, near the end of the book John tells us exactly why he wrote it. He says:

John 20:31

'But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'

So for John, every story, every miracle, every conversation he includes is carefully chosen to reveal the lordship and kingship of Jesus Christ - that Jesus is not merely a teacher or a prophet, but God in the flesh.

Now, as we been walking through chapter 6, we've seen things start to come to a head in this regard because this is the chapter where Jesus finally says definitively that, 'I am the bread of life.'

And in saying that, He is making an astonishing claim about Himself.

The chapter begins with one of Jesus' most famous miracles: the feeding of more than five thousand people. With just five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus miraculously multiplies a young boy's lunch and feeds the entire crowd abundantly - so much so, that there were 12 baskets of leftovers.

Naturally, the people that witnessed this miracle first hand immediately sought to make Him their king. But filling their stomachs with physical bread was never the end goal for Jesus. The miracle was meant to point to something deeper.

It was meant to reveal that Jesus Himself is the true Bread of Life. And that just as bread sustains physical life, Jesus sustains eternal life.

After this moment, Jesus withdraws from the crowd and sends His disciples across the lake. They obey, and sometime in the middle of the night they see Jesus walking toward them on the water. At first they think it's a ghost. But then Jesus speaks and says, 'It is I' - more literally translated, 'I Am' - the very same language that God used when He revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush.

And later He would even compare Himself to something His listeners would immediately recognize: the manna that God provided for Israel in the wilderness. Just as God sustained His people with bread from heaven during the Exodus, Jesus says He Himself is the true bread that comes from heaven.

So when Jesus finally declares the words: 'I am the bread of life,' it shouldn't come as a surprise. The stage has already been set. But now, no more hints. No more speculation. Jesus is declaring that He is the God of the burning bush and the God of eternal life. That He was there in the beginning with God, and He is God and will be forevermore.

And the most amazing detail for me is back up in verse four where John lets us know that all of this is taking place around the time of the Passover, which is not an accidental detail. Because just as the sacrificial lamb brought deliverance and life to Israel in Egypt, Jesus would soon give His own life so that the world could live.

So Jesus isn't just offering bread for the body. He is offering Himself as the only source of eternal life. He's showing everyone who will listen that yes - He is a provider. But He is far more than that.

He is the Great I AM.

Just as He later declares in John 14:6:

John 14:6

‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’

And when you truly recognize Him for who He is, there is only one appropriate response: complete awe and surrender. Awe that He would love His creation so intimately and powerfully that He would become like us, to save us. And surrender because we know that we have done nothing to earn that love, yet He freely gives it.

But, as we’re about to see in today’s passage... not everyone responds that way. Because the truth about Jesus can be difficult to grasp. And when His truth confronts us, not everyone is willing to yield their control and surrender.

So, if you have your Bibles with you this morning, I’d like to invite you to turn with me to John 6 where we will be reading from verse 60 all the way to the end of the chapter.

John 6:60-71

‘Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

61 Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.) 65 He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”

66 From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?”

68 Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

70 Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” 71 He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.’

Again, this is another one of those passages that has a lot of meat in it. It is actually been a passage that has been used to talk about the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism - Predestination and free will. Although we're not going to go there today, this could be a great conversation that you and your life group have this coming week.

For the sake of today, however, I feel the Lord, drawing me in a different direction.

There are a few memories from my adolescence that even to this day have stuck with me and are permanently etched in my memory. One of those memories is of a conversation that I had with a friend of mine when I was about 15 years old. For the sake of this conversation I'll call him Mark. And I remember him coming up to me one night after youth group and he tells me that he's made the decision to not be a Christian anymore. He said he had given it a lot of thought, but that he really wanted to pursue the things that the world had to offer, and he even said that he fully recognized that if he were to die, he would go to hell and that was a risk he was willing to take.

'This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?'

The fundamental reality of following Jesus is summed up in this statement. It's a statement that was made over 2000 years ago and it is a statement that is equally as relevant to us here today in 2026. And it is a reality that is just as real today as it was then. Many who want to follow Jesus choose not to because His teachings are not easy and require surrender. Many fall away because He is not the Jesus that they want. Many fall away because they want Jesus on their terms - not His.

And what's striking in this passage is that it isn't just the fringe people who walk away.

It's disciples.

Notice the language that John is using here. Throughout the entire chapter, John references the crowd. The crowd does this, the crowd does that. But now something changes. Now he tells us that amongst the crowd are disciples who begin to fall away.

But when John uses the word 'disciples' here, he's not talking specifically about the Twelve. Instead he's using the word in a broader sense to distinguish between the crowd of curious onlookers and those who had actually begun following Jesus and learning from Him.

The word John uses for disciple here is the greek word 'Mathetes,' which means: a learner, pupil, disciple.

And it's important to understand that discipleship is a journey.

Every disciple of Jesus begins in the same place - belief. There has to be a moment where someone recognizes that Jesus is who He claims to be. You cannot be a learner or follower of Jesus if you don't first believe that He is worth following.

But belief is only the starting point because ultimately, true discipleship always moves from belief to following.

And that's exactly where the tension appears in this passage.

The only way to move from belief to following is through sacrifice and surrender.

And for the people listening to Jesus that day, that sacrifice and surrender would have been very real.

It would have meant surrendering their expectations of what the Messiah should be. Many of them wanted a political king who would overthrow Rome and restore Israel's power. But Jesus wasn't offering political freedom - He was offering eternal life.

Secondly, It also would have meant surrendering their control. The people listening to Jesus had grown up in a religious system centred on obedience to the Law, and naturally they thought in terms of what they needed to do to earn life with God - hence their question in verse 28 about works. But Jesus was telling them that life didn't come through human effort - it came through complete dependence on Him.

Lastly, it would have meant surrendering their reputation. Because following Jesus at this point was starting to become increasingly dangerous. The religious leaders were already opposing Him, and aligning yourself with Him could cost you your place in the community.

In other words, following Jesus was going to cost them something. It was going to require a yielded heart.

Because belief receives the truth about Jesus - but following responds to it.

And when they realized that... many of them decided they weren't willing to pay the price.

And so without a yielded heart, their belief wasn't strong enough to move them into true discipleship. And a belief that never moves into surrender eventually stops following.

And this is a theme that shows up all over the New Testament.

In the book of James, there's a powerful line that says,

'Even the demons believe.'

And that statement is both fascinating and sobering. Because the demons absolutely believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They recognize His authority. They know exactly who He is.

And their belief leads them to action - but it does not lead to surrender. Instead, it leads to rebellion.

Which means belief alone is not the full picture. Belief is like the fulcrum on a playground see-saw. Remember as kids trying to get two people to balance perfectly? It never really works. Eventually one side always moves.

And in the same way, you can't just sit on belief. Belief always demands a response.

It will either move you towards trust, or towards rebellion. Because true belief always changes the direction of a life.

For the demons, their belief drives them to oppose God and deceive humanity. But for us, belief in Jesus is meant to move us toward surrender... toward obedience... toward trust and relationship with Him.

Otherwise, what good is belief if it never transforms who we are?

One great example is the story of the rich young ruler. This was a man who had everything the world could offer. One day he comes to Jesus and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells

him to follow Him - but first he must sell everything he has and give it to the poor.

The rich young ruler wanted eternal life. He believed Jesus had the answer and he even wanted to follow Him. But he could not surrender the grip that the world had on his heart.

So he walked away empty-handed.

Which is exactly what we read of the disciples in verse 66.

But before that moment happens, Jesus - who already knows what is about to take place - sees their frustration with His teaching. He knows they're grumbling. And I find His response incredibly fascinating because...

Often when I'm dealing with my children, or when someone struggles with a decision I've made, I try to explain the reasoning behind it. I'll walk them through the logic, maybe soften things a bit, sometimes even meet them halfway.

But Jesus doesn't do that here. Not even in the slightest.

Instead, He confronts the offence directly by simply asking them, 'Does this offend you?' But even though it's framed as a question, it's not really a question. Jesus already knows the answer. He knows they are offended. And yet He doesn't soften the message.

Instead He presses even further and says: 'Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?' In other words, Jesus is saying: 'If this is hard for you to accept... you haven't seen anything yet.'

Because the full picture of His mission is going to be even more difficult for people to grasp.

The language Jesus uses here would have immediately triggered something in their memory. It echoes a story from Israel's time in the wilderness when poisonous snakes were attacking the people. God instructed Moses to make a bronze snake and lift it up on a pole, and anyone who looked at it would be healed.

If you remember, Jesus had already referenced that story earlier in John's Gospel. And it pointed forward to something much greater.

That just like the snake on the pole, Jesus also, one day, would be lifted up on a cross. And just as the Israelites looked upon the bronze serpent and were healed, anyone who looks upon Christ and trusts in His sacrifice on the cross will receive salvation.

But if the people in the crowd were already struggling to believe that Jesus was the Bread of Life - sent from Heaven - how in the world were they going to accept that their Saviour, the Messiah would die - and that this would be purposeful and intentional? Well, that would have simply been beyond their comprehension. And so instead of trusting Him, they respond with grumbling and offense.

These are important words, because they describe the true condition of their hearts more than anything.

The word for grumbling in the Greek is the word 'gongyzō,' which means to murmur, to mutter, to complain quietly under your breath. It's the same kind of word used in the Old Testament when Israel grumbled against God in the wilderness. So again, we see language being used here that is drawing a comparison to their ancestors of old and the offense in their hearts as well.

But the second word is even more interesting. The word for offense is 'skandalizō.' It's actually where we get our English word scandal from. Originally it referred to the trigger stick in an animal trap. When an animal touched the stick, the trap would spring shut. So the word eventually came to mean a stumbling block - something that causes someone to trip, stumble, or turn away.

And that's exactly what happens here - Jesus' words become a stumbling block.

When He claims to be the Bread of Life... when He tells them that true life comes through Him... when He calls them to surrender and follow Him fully...they stumble. Why? Because...

They wanted Jesus to be the Messiah on their terms, not His.

And if we're honest, we face the very same struggle today.

When following Jesus requires more of us than we are willing to give, then we too can easily become offended. We stumble, we falter because we don't want to give more. We want to hold on to what is ours.

But the Bible reminds us that that is not the way it's meant to be:

You are not your own.

You were bought with a price, the Apostle Paul says.

Therefore:

Your body belongs to God - for you are actually a temple - a dwelling place - for the Holy Spirit.

Your mind belongs to Christ. We are called to have the mind of Christ - not the mindset of the world or the flesh.

Your time belongs to Him. He knows how many days, hours and minutes you have left, so use them wisely - for His glory, not your own.

Your gifts, your talents, your finances - none of it is ultimately ours.

It is all His.

And that is the message of the gospel. But that message is not necessarily a message that the church of today wants to hear. But if we are going to be the men and women of God that He's calling us to be, then we must face our offense and not allow it to trip us up but yield to Him through our submission, surrender and sacrifice.

And friends, let me tell you something: when we finally give God our yes, something begins to shift in our lives.

That's when real change begins.

That's when chains start to break - it's when bondage loses its grip.

That's when freedom comes.

That's when peace finally settles into our souls.

But sadly... that is not what happened for many of the people in the crowd that day.

In verse 66 we read that many of them allowed their offense to trip them up, and instead of trusting Jesus, they turned their backs and walked away. And it's at this moment that Jesus turns to the Twelve - the very ones who had been with Him every step of the way - and He asks them a simple but incredibly revealing question:

‘Do you want to leave too?’

And Peter responds with one of the most powerful statements in the entire Gospel.

Vs. 68

‘Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’

What a statement.

Peter doesn’t say, ‘Lord, we understand everything.’

He doesn’t say, ‘Lord, this teaching is easy.’

He simply says:

‘Where else would we go? You have the words of eternal life.’

In other words:

Even when it’s hard... we’re staying.

Oh, that we would be a people that learn from this moment.

That when the message of Jesus becomes difficult...when His teaching challenges us...when surrender costs us something...that we would not turn away.

But instead we would allow the Holy Spirit’s prompting... His stirring... His conviction... to move us toward Him, not away from Him. Because the truth is, Jesus already knows that following Him isn’t easy. He’s given us the story of the rich young ruler...and even the teaching of the wide road vs. the narrow road. But His arms are still open wide.

There are things He may ask of us that will go directly against the direction of our culture... against the desires of our flesh... against the patterns of this world. Things that we may not fully understand or comprehend.

Moments where something in us feels challenged... exposed... or perhaps even offended. But again, that offense was never meant to push us away from Him. It was meant to draw us closer to Him. Closer to the heart of a God who is perfectly just... perfectly good... perfectly loving. Perfectly

trustworthy.

So what do we do with those difficult things? What do we do with our offense?

We surrender them. We bring them to Him.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus calls them burdens, and He reminds us of Davids words in Psalm 55 where he tells us to lay them at His feet.

Why? Because His yoke is easy. His burden is light. He can handle it. He can handle your frustration, your weight, your grief, your offense...He's the only one.

So maybe today you're carrying an offense.

Maybe it's offense toward someone else.

Maybe it's offense toward the church.

Maybe it's offense toward something God has asked of you.

Maybe it's something in His Word that has been difficult for you to accept.

Listen - you don't have to hide that. He already knows it and His arms are open wide. You don't have to be ashamed of it. You don't have to carry it anymore. You can bring it to Him. You can lay it down at His feet.

And when we finally surrender and give Him our yes - even in the middle of our questions, even in the middle of our struggle - He will do what only He can do.

He will bring freedom.

He will bring peace.

He will bring healing to the broken-hearted.

Because the moment we stop running from Him... and start surrendering to Him... that's when everything begins to change.

Maybe today the Holy Spirit has been stirring something in your heart.

Maybe there's something in your life that you've been wrestling with... something that has been difficult to surrender... something that has created distance between you and God.

And I can guarantee you're not alone in this.

The people in John chapter 6 struggled too.

Even the disciples had moments where the teachings of Jesus were hard to understand.

But the difference between those who walked away and those who stayed was simple.
Some let their struggle push them away from Jesus.
Others let their struggle draw them closer to Him.

So today I'm going to ask us to stand as the worship team leads us in worship. I'm going to ask that we close our eyes and open our hearts to the leading of the Lord and finally give Him the yes that He deserves. Some of us may want to come to the altar and lay our burden down in prayer and that's beautiful - some may want to kneel and that's beautiful too.

We all have something in our hearts that needs to be surrendered... a burden we need to lay down... an offense we need to release... a place where we need to give God our yes...

Altar/response/worship

Blessing

May the Lord Bless you and Keep you
May He cause His face to Shine upon you
May He be gracious towards you
Lifting up His countenance upon you
And may He give you peace
In Jesus name, Amen.

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