

**John 6:35-59**  
**(Jeremiah 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:3-10)**  
**“Bread of Life II”**

## **Introduction**

At the heart of this text is the question we raised last week: What did Jesus say, what did he do, to cause him to fall so quickly from the height of his popularity, surrounded by thousands of eager followers as described in the opening of this chapter to the poignant scene at the chapter's end where he sits alone with the original Twelve disciples, abandoned by everyone else, asking them whether they also plan to leave him?

The reason becomes clear in the verses before us this morning. The great question this text raises for all of us but especially for those of us who dare to call ourselves Christians is whether we have ever really understood the call of Christ and the radical nature of salvation. In these verses, Jesus gives us a reason for radical confidence, a reason for radical humility, and a call to radical living.

## **Body**

- 1. In a world often marked by fear and uncertainty, Jesus gives his disciples a reason for radical confidence (6:35-40).**

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out (6:37). God has known and loved those who are his from eternity, and nothing can snatch us from his grasp or separate us from his love. This and this alone is the proper basis of a Christian's confidence, and should sustain us in times of joy and sorrow, of failure and success.

- 2. In a religious community often marked by pride and arrogance, Jesus gives his disciples a reason for radical humility (6:41-44).**

No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him (6:44). Even our faith is a gift of his grace. Apart from his smiling upon us, we also would reject his offer of life and join the rest of the world on the path that leads at last to the crushing death of being forever separated from the loving presence of God. The Bible's teaching about election should never lead to pride, but rather to the deepest humility.

- 3. In a church often marked by biblical talk and unbiblical living, Jesus gives his disciples a call to radical living (6:45-59).**

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him (6:56). Here is the heart of the teaching, and the cause of offense: Jesus calls us to something so radical that it can only be understood in terms of death and resurrection. If we would be his disciples, we must die to our past and be reborn into intimate union with Christ. With the apostle Paul we say, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20). So the Scriptures speak of us as in Christ, new creatures and of Christ in us, the hope of glory.

We are quite simply united with Christ, entrusted with his ongoing life and ministry. Here we see once again that the Bible is far less interested in answering our questions about the mystery of election as in telling us the reason for election: God chooses those who will carry his good news to the world. We are his only plan for carrying the gospel, for offering his salvation, to the nations.

## **Conclusion**

What will we do with this Jesus? Will we do as most American Christians: Ask him into our heart, but keep him out of our business; sing his songs one day a week, and our songs the other six; give him a bit of our time, our creativity, our wealth, our passion, while preserving most to spend on what is passing away? Could we honestly and passionately say to those who know us best, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21) without them wondering if we were joking?

This matter of radically following Jesus into every area of life is the most deadly serious decision of all, and it is one that only God's grace can enable us to make. If your heart is cold to my words, cry out to God to send his Spirit to you and make you new, to give you a heart, mind and will to follow him all the days of your life. Nothing else is worth it, nothing else will matter at the end of our days when we stand before the King and hear him pronounce his verdict on our life.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (6:53-54).

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