

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** Third Sunday of Lent - March 14, 2010

**Title:** “Why the Rebel Must Come” - “Imaging Faith”

**Text:** John 6:1-71 (read John 6:47-58)

**Theme:** The need is great; the provision is made; now is the time to receive Christ as the sufficient and sole means of escaping divine judgment and eternal separation from the blessing that is God.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

## Reflecting on His Work and the Storyline of the Bible

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### Introduction:

The Story written by God speaks of a rebel's insurrection against his God, Creator and Master. It is because of this rebellion that the sinner must die. God's justice speaks and its execution is non-negotiable and direct. Yet God made promises and provided pictures whereby a vicarious, voluntary and victorious sacrifice would enable the rebellious to pass from death to life. Although the magnitude of the provision is inexhaustible, there is still the necessity on the part of the sinner to accept God's provision as his own. If such an invitation is rejected, then all hope is lost. Thus there is a call to obey, to have faith, to believe, to listen, to look and to trust. All of these ideas speak to the rebel's necessity to receive the offer freely and graciously extended to him by God.

There is an action to faith that moves it from mere knowledge. When we say to an individual, "Just trust me," or "Will you not trust me" we are inviting them to accept or act a certain way or trust a certain thing. This trust on their part is visualized by some action. This same idea comes from the biblical record. In our current passage Jesus says, "He who believes has eternal life." This belief will then be visualized when one takes and eats His flesh and drinks His blood. Again stressing the idea that faith is not only knowledge of and assent to, but unreserved trust in. It is also seen in the ordinance of baptism by immersion. Time will prohibit us from speaking to the idea of water baptism, but like the Lord's Table, it speaks to the gospel and the individual's faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Let me state several initial qualifiers.

- First, John 6 is pre-cross. Thus when He speaks of a body broken and a blood poured, the actual event is still future.
- Second, John 6 does not reference the Passover Event but the wilderness wandering and the provision of God for His people in providing manna.
- Third, Jesus speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood but His audience did not then eat bread or drink wine.
- Fourth, when Jesus says, "I am the bread of life" (v. 48) He is using a metaphor. Jesus is not simply similar to bread, but is fundamentally a life-giving property.
  - "Jesus said unto them. **I am the bread of life**: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst'" (John 6:35, see also 6:41, 48, 51).

- “Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, ‘**I am the light of the world**: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12, see also 9:5).
- “Jesus therefore said unto them again, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door** of the sheep” (John 10:7, see also 10:9).
- “**I am the good shepherd**: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11, see also 10:14).
- “Jesus said unto her, ‘**I am the resurrection**, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).
- “Jesus saith unto him, ‘**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
- “**I am the true vine**, and my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1, see also 15:5).

The imagery used exposes those qualities that are intrinsic to Him which He desires to make known to His audience. All that bread is, He is; and the bread itself is only a shadow speaking to a greater truth. Both bread and wine/body and blood speak of life-giving and sustaining qualities. They speak of one’s essence, of being.

- Finally, it will become evident that I see a consistent thought between John 6, Matthew 26 and 1 Corinthians 11. With this said, let us equally see that something significant is taking place in the metaphor used by our Lord to describe faith as the means of appropriating His person and work.

The gift must be accepted (John 1:12; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8) and the object must be believed (John 3:16).

<sup>10</sup> “He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup> He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:10-13).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

<sup>8</sup> “for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not of works, that no man should glory” (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Yet what does this look like? How might we visualize faith? Both the Old and New Testaments provide such an answer. The New Testament record builds on the foundation laid in the Old Testament text. From the Passover Feast will come the language employed by our Lord and then continued by Paul to speak to and explain “faith”. It is clearly noted in John 6, Matthew 26 and then reiterated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. Let us consider John 6.

I am not teaching on the Lord's Table directly, but rather indirectly. It is not the Lord's Table that I address in this study, but rather how partaking of the elements speaks of personal faith and a corporate affirmation of our common belief in the gospel. With all of this said, let us consider why the rebel must come.

### **THE BIG PICTURE:**

John 6:1-15 The feeding of the five thousand.

John 6:16-21 Jesus walks on the water.

John 6:22-71 I am the bread of life.

### **The Storyline:**

It is not enough to know of one's rebellion. In knowing, one might still go about trying to fix the problem himself. Self-help will only deceive you. You will continue in the path of damnation unless and until you accept fully and exclusively what God has done in your behalf. The only thing one must do is believe. It sounds so simple and it is. It is the one work that God invites us to do. And it is the one work that everyone everywhere at all times is capable of doing.

<sup>22</sup> "and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. <sup>23</sup> **This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and love one another, just as He commanded us. <sup>24</sup> The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us" (1 John 3:22-24).

We are all "hard-wired" to believe. Yet as "simple" as this sounds, there is divine causation behind all of it. There is mystery that incapacitates the arrogance of the individual. Those who believe have no basis for boasting of self-enablement. Salvation has been and will always be of God. Yet we are invited to come, to look, to listen, to believe, to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Can you accept this; will you accept this? If you are to be saved, you must accept this. Herein is the invitation to come. The rebel must come or he will perish.

### **The Problem:**

We are arrogant beyond our ability. We ask the right question, but we answer it in all the wrong ways. There is nothing we can do except believe. But believing sounds so base. Anyone can believe, but many will not. The question isn't why will they not believe or how might one believe, but rather will you believe?

### **Questions:**

1. Why must the rebel come?
2. What does this imply?
3. Does faith act?
4. Is John 6 pre-cross or post-cross?
5. Does John 6 have implications for how we understand the Lord's Table?
6. Is John 6 using the Passover Event as the backdrop for presentation or explanation?

7. What does the Eucharist speak to?
8. Is everyone capable of receiving the offer made by God?
9. According to John 6, who ultimately draws us to faith?
10. What are some synonyms John 6 uses in place of “believing”?
11. What point is Jesus making when He says, “You must eat my flesh and drink my blood?”
12. Is saving faith only intellectual assent?
13. What does eating and drinking imply?
14. Is it possible to be a disciple of Jesus and not believe/receive Jesus?
15. Is faith only a point in time action or is it something we do every day?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know how Jesus is the bread of life and all who partake of Him will have eternal life.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him above our own self-effort.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His provision and abandoning our own works righteousness.

### **Outline:**

There are several complimentary ideas that support our claim that the rebel must come.

- I. The text invites the audience to believe who Jesus is and what He is saying.

The two cannot be separated. What He speaks embodies who He is. To “accept Christ” without “accepting His words” is unreasonable and unsustainable. This is the primary thought contained in the text. You can see the parallel ideas in the text.

- He who **believes** has **eternal life** (v. 47)
- So that one may **eat** of it and **not die** (v. 50)

To believe in Him is to have eternal life. To “eat” Him is to have eternal life. The two ideas are working synonyms in this text. Jesus speaks of “the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal” (John 6:27). Jesus fuses together the idea of believing and the eating of food. You cannot do one without doing the other. You cannot believe without eating, and you would not eat without believing or trusting that what is offered is true.

Jesus clearly identifies “the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh” (v. 51). Jesus speaks of His vicarious, voluntary sacrifice. The death He will die is the bread which came down from heaven given to us by the Father.

- II. Jesus uses the imagery of bread to explain what believing looks like.

His immediate audience is no different than we are. Wanting eternal life, they ask the same and simple question, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” (John 6:28). Our Lord’s answer is direct, “Believe in Him whom He has sent” (v. 29).

See also

“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, **Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**” (Luke 18:18).

<sup>37</sup> “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, **Brethren, what shall we do?** <sup>38</sup> And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him” (Acts 2:37-39).

<sup>30</sup> “and brought them out and said, **Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** <sup>31</sup> And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house” (Acts 16:30, 31).

This is what we default to and unless we answer it correctly, our activity will be damnable. The audience does not quite get it. They want the same kind of bread offered to their ancestors in the wilderness. Jesus now identifies Himself as the bread given by God that leads to eternal life (vv. 32-35).

It is more than mere intellectual assent. There is an “ingesting” of who He is and what He says (vv. 53-56). We use this type of language when we say, “I devoured the book.” Do we mean that we literally “ate it”? No, but we do mean we ingested what the author wrote and internalized the thoughts and message of the author. For me to eat what you offer suggests that I believe you are not trying to hurt me, but rather help me. I trust you, thus I eat. We do this all the time whether we admit it or not. You look at a dish and you are concerned as to who made it and where it was made. If we eat out and afterward get food poisoning, we no longer “trust” the establishment. The implication is one of life and death. The Psalmist also speaks of “**tasting and seeing** that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). To the normal person, such thinking is repugnant. Yet the invitation is clear; you must eat my flesh and drink my blood if you will have eternal life.

Paul speaks to this same idea in 1 Corinthians 11. It is not always possible to understand the immediate question that solicited the response, but it is something that dealt directly with the Lord’s Supper. This is based on the Passover Meal.

<sup>23</sup> “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘**This is My body, which is for you;** do this in remembrance of Me.’ <sup>25</sup> In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘**This cup is the new covenant in My blood;** do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ <sup>26</sup> **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes**” (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Each and every time we partake of the elements we are signifying our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We must not allow those who differ with us to keep us from accepting the thought as it is noted in Scripture. The partaking of the elements simply visualizes saving faith. It is your faith in the object, in what those earthly elements speak to, that saves. It is the object of faith and not faith itself that has the power to save.

III. Although belief appears ethereal, it is concrete and an “either-or” proposition.

I fully recognize the difficulty we have with this text, but also note the synonyms used alongside eating and drinking: believe (vv. 29, 35, 40), come (vv. 35, 37, 44, 45, 47), look (vv. 40), and listen (v. 60). Friend, I think believing is easy and looking is easy, coming becomes a little more complicated, and eating His flesh and drinking His blood is significantly problematic, yet all of these “things” speak to the same idea. I believe Adam Clarke captures the significance of what we are reading when he says, “Reader, remember this: **it is one of the weightiest, and one of the truest and most important sayings in the book of God.**” (Adam Clarke on John 6:51)

You either believe or you do not believe. You either eat or you do not eat, but there is no middle ground. You cannot say you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and NOT eat His flesh or drink His blood. Faith is seen in the accepting of His proposal. You must ingest or partake of Him. If you say you trust someone, but fail to follow them, then your affirmation of trust is invalidated by your action of distrust. The same is equally true of saying you believe and trust Jesus but fail to follow Him. You are not a follower of Jesus unless you partake of Jesus.

IV. The idea of believing/eating Jesus for some is repugnant and therefore dismissed and yet fully accepted by others.

Just like us, His immediate audience struggled with what He was asking of them (v. 52).

“Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’” (John 6:52).

Can you not see them shoving and pushing one another with incredulous expressions on their faces as they argue among themselves. Others, however, will believe. Many within hearing distance found His statement “difficult” (v. 60), and “grumbled at” (vv. 61) what Jesus declared. Jesus knew what He asked would cause some to “stumble” (v. 61). And “As a result of this many of His disciples **withdrew** and **were not walking with Him anymore**” (v. 66). Was Jesus encouraging “**physical** cannibalism”? Was He implying “spiritual cannibalism”? Most assuredly Jesus said to those who would follow Him, “You must eat my flesh and drink my blood or you will perish.” Let us push past 2,000 years of theological debate concerning spiritual presence, transubstantiation, consubstantiation and symbolism and let us sit with His original audience and listen to what He is saying. Although Peter has a strong propensity of putting the proverbial “foot in mouth,” he also often gets it right. Listen to how Peter understands what Jesus is saying, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal

life. We have believed and have come to know You are the Holy One of God” (vv. 68, 69). BINGO, Peter gets it. **He knew that Jesus was speaking in metaphor. He knew Jesus did not become literal bread or wine. He did know that just like eating bread and drinking wine so also must we fully commit to and ingest all that Jesus is in His person and in His work. Unless and until this happens, we will not have eternal life.** What if we replaced the idea of believing with that of eating? Listen to how this text would then read.

“Lord, whose flesh would we eat and whose blood would we drink? You have words of eternal life. We have eaten your flesh and drunk your blood and have come to know you are the Holy One of God.”

**Remember, Jesus has not yet gone to the cross. Jesus is working from the wilderness Manna. Peter understood Jesus spoke with a metaphor.** Again, I am not trying to unpack the mystery of the Table, but rather to show how our partaking is an affirmation of our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This event is the work God invites us to “do”. Peter took the plunge and fully entered into what Jesus meant. When we eat and drink we are openly stating that we are full followers. What I find interesting is how many “disciples” turned back (vv. 60, 66, 70, 71). Simply because someone looks like a “Christian” or professes Christ does not guarantee that he is a follower of Christ. Only those who eat His flesh and drink His blood have denied themselves, taken up their cross and followed Him (Matt. 16:24). For those Christians who find such thinking repulsive, then I would invite them to do what Paul suggests in 2 Corinthians 13:5, 6.

<sup>5</sup> **“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test? <sup>6</sup> But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test” (2 Cor. 13:5, 6).

One of our struggles is the idea that salvation happens only once and indeed this is a true idea, but the difficulty lies in our thinking that once we are saved, the gospel is never revisited. Often when I speak with someone who struggles with their profession of faith it is often because they made a profession of faith at a very young age and cannot remember what they actually said. It is almost as if they have faith in their faith or their salvation rests on their prowess in remembering. Others look to their “works” and begin questioning whether or not they are “doing enough,” as if they behave to meet a quota of righteousness that measures up to or is compatible with their “salvation.” This is unbiblical. When confronted by such scenarios I often tell them, “I’m not asking you if you believed, but if you believe. Do you believe right now? Right now are you a follower of Jesus?”

As believers we are marked by belief. We do not simply believe at a point in time and then never believe again. We believed and are to continue in that belief. Believing is a continuous and daily activity. I fully understand justification happens in a point in time moment, but I am also convinced that justification happened and continues to happen. I am to “preach the gospel to myself everyday and everyday I am to believe the gospel.” I am not worried about losing what grace gains, but I am worried that I will forget what grace gives and in forgetting,

I simply fall away. I am neither denying nor addressing the issue of eternal security at this time. Like the Scripture, I believe all who believe in Jesus according to the Scriptural understanding of this shall be saved. The issue for me this morning is direct, do you believe the gospel? Have you accepted who Jesus is and what He has done as the only way for your rebellion against God to be propitiated and redeemed? Are you a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ? If we are believers, then what might we do to protect ourselves from an attitude of unbelief? Friend, thank His name He has not left us without resources. A means of reminding ourselves of this believing is found in the regular celebration of the Lord's Table. Each time we partake we are saying, "I believe Jesus is the one and only offering for sin, and I rest in His provision and sufficiency." May we lay aside a spirit of indifference or mechanical compliance and may we once more in receiving His body and blood say, "I come to you denying myself, shouldering my cross and following you."

I do find it dreadful that we partake of the elements without ever remembering the gospel. I find it unfortunate that we can take the elements so casually without any affirmation of faith. When we partake of the elements without forethought of its significance and to what it speaks, we are desecrating the sinless offering of God's own Son. Friend, unless and until the rebel comes, he will continue to identify himself in the unholy alliance and face the full wrath of God. Jesus made a way that is vicarious, voluntary and victorious but unless and until we come, all is for naught personally.

The Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). If you've never accepted His invitation to believe, then I would invite you to do so today. What does this internal faith look like? It looks like what Jesus said in John 6 and Matthew 26.

<sup>26</sup> "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, '**Take, eat; this is My body.**' <sup>27</sup> And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, '**Drink from it, all of you; <sup>28</sup> for this is My blood of the covenant,** which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins'" (Matt. 26:26-28).

So today I ask you, "Will you believe in Jesus, will you accept His words and will you visualize your faith by eating and drinking?"

### **Shepherding the Sheep:** (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. For many of us, this type of imagery is difficult. For many of us, we have to unpack decades of misguided and misdirected thinking. Yet this morning I am asking you to look beyond your past ignorance and misdirected faith, and look to the Lamb of God in celebration and gratitude for God's unspeakable gift.
2. If you have never believed in Jesus and done the hard thing of following Him, then today I invite you to come to Jesus and become His follower.
3. Friend, look past the shadow and see Him ministering to you within the very fabric of your existence.