

**Sermon Series Four: Believe and Live**  
**(The Gospel of John: Signs of the Messiah - 1:1-12:50)**  
**John 6:35-51**  
**To Eat or Not to Eat**

At every turn in life, we are confronted with **choices**. Consider the following choices that one must make by simply taking a trip to the grocery store. As you travel down the aisles you will notice that there are 53 varieties of **Campbell's condensed soup**, eight sizes of **Tropicana Pure Premium Orange Juice** from 8 to 128 ounces. Instead of the simple old-fashioned **Cheerios**, there is now Original, Honey Nut, Honey Nut Medley Crunch, Apple Cinnamon, Banana Nut, Frosted, Chocolate, Multigrain, Multigrain Peanut Butter, and Cinnamon Burst. Even **Tide liquid laundry detergent** comes in Original Sent, Plus Febreze, Plus Febreze Sport, Free and Gentle, Plus Bleach Alternative, Cold Water, Clean Breeze, Mountain Spring, and Plus Downy. And of course we have got to have **Breyers Ice Cream**. But which kind: Natural, French, Half the Fat, No Sugar Added, Extra Creamy, Homemade, Lactose-Free, Carbs Smart (and that's just for vanilla ice cream). But the most important choice you will ever make in your life is what you do with Jesus. Jesus has just said that he is The Bread of Life. Just as bread is necessary for physical life, so Christ is necessary for spiritual life. And he promises that all who come to him will never hunger and never thirst again. And so we have a choice of whether to eat or not to eat. Now by eating Jesus means to trust and believe in him as the Bread - the one who gives eternal life. And Jesus makes some very wonderful promises to those who choose to feed on him - to eat of this Bread:

**I. When you come to Jesus you will never be rejected (John 6:36-37, 44a, 45-46)**

*<sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out...<sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...<sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father*

*comes to me—<sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.*

We discover **three wonderful truths** here:

### **1. God chose you!**

Before the universe began, before a star had been set in place, God thought of you. A great transaction took place in eternity past between the Father and the Son in which God saw you and graciously and lovingly determined that you would become a part of his family (Ephesians 1:4). God chose you and gave you to Christ as his child. Indeed, this wonderful thought of God giving individuals, like you, to Jesus is a repeated theme throughout this gospel (cf. 6:39; 10:29; 17:2, 6; 18:9).

### **2. God drew you to himself!**

1) The verb here “draws” is a very strong one. It is used of dragging a fishing net and of the people dragging Paul from the temple area. The idea is that you resisted, that you may have come to God kicking and screaming, but your resistance was unsuccessful. No, he did not coerce, force or manipulate you; you were simply overpowered by God’s love and grace. 2) Further, Jesus states that God taught you. God enlightened you about who Jesus was so you could come to Christ. God gave you the necessary information about Christ that you needed, in order for you to believe and to become his child. Jesus further clarifies how God draws people to Himself by explaining how He does not do it. God does not give a mystical vision of Himself walking about heaven in His blazing glory. Jesus is the only “One” who “has seen” God fully (cf. 1:18). He is the only mediator of the knowledge of God. To see Jesus was to see God. God instructs people about Himself through Jesus - through Jesus’ life, ministry, and Christ’s teaching as found in the Scriptures. God drew you to Himself by revealing Himself through Jesus.

### **3. God will never cast you out!**

He will never tire of you, get fed up with you, and eject or drive you away from his presence. This thought is of the greatest comfort to believers. Your assurance is based not on your feeble hold on Christ, but on his sure grip on you.

## **II. The Life Jesus Gives You Will Last Forever (6:38-40a; 47-51a)**

<sup>38</sup> *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* <sup>39</sup> *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me...* <sup>47</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.* <sup>48</sup> *I am the bread of life.* <sup>49</sup> *Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.* <sup>50</sup> *This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.* <sup>51</sup> *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.*

### **1. God has determined that you are secure in Christ.**

Not only is God promising *to reject no one who comes to him*, he is also stating his determination *to lose none of those who come to him*. He will not expel you and he is absolutely determined to keep you and to prevent anyone else from taking you away from him. Romans 8 makes it very clear that nothing can separate us from God's love. 1) **Sin cannot separate you!** You may worry when you look at the sin that seems ever present in your life (worry, irritability, pride, envy, ingratitude, lust for power, money, sensual desires, etc.), but Christ died for that sin and in God's sight it is gone forever. You have been acquitted before the bench of the highest court of the universe, and no one is authorized to reopen your case. 2) **Suffering cannot separate you!** Neither tribulation, famine, or nakedness, peril, sword or any internal anguish of the soul can separate you from God's love. Betsy Ten Boom in the midst of the horrors of a Nazi death camp said, "There is no pit so deep that God is not there. The best is yet to come." God walked with and carried Betsy and Cory Ten Boom all through that journey. 3) **Supernatural powers cannot separate you!** In our struggle against Satan and the powers of darkness we can be certain that they will never be victorious over us (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15). Nothing in the present, nothing in the past, and nothing along the corridors of the future can separate you from God's love.

### **2. God has promised that you have eternal life both now and in the future.**

You will never die spiritually. You will never be separated from God for even a split second. Even in physical death, your spirit will be

instantaneously in God's presence. Not only that, but the life that Jesus gives, you have already received. Food that is eaten must be chewed and digested. But then it then immediately nourishes and invigorates the body. You have already received the manna from heaven! Each day you have the privilege of feeding on Christ through his Word, through your conversations with God throughout the day, through the fellowship and intimacy you have with other believers. Each day you enjoy the life Jesus has given you in the blessings that you receive from him (examples of forgiveness, joy, satisfaction from service for him, peace, emotional and physical healing. The list goes on and on!). And this life will culminate in the new heavens and new earth. All the joys and surprises of this new world and the heavenly realm will eclipse and far exceed anything in this life.

Jesus clarifies in this passage the distinction between the physical bread that God provided in the wilderness, and the spiritual Bread that He provided in Jesus. The result of eating the manna was temporary satisfaction and ultimately they experienced physical death, but the result of believing in Jesus is permanent satisfaction and no death. Wiersbe writes, "When God gave the manna, He gave only a gift; but when Jesus came, He gave Himself. There was no cost to God in sending the manna each day, but He gave His Son at great cost. The Jews had to eat the manna every day, but the sinner who trusts Christ *once* is given eternal life."

### **III. If You Die, Your Physical Body Will Live Again! 6:39, 40b, 44b)**

*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day...and I will raise him up on the last day...And I will raise him up on the last day.*

Sounds important, doesn't it? Jesus promises that he will one day raise your body from the grave and it will be perfected in every way. Imagine that! No more blemishes, no more disfigurement, no more disease, no more indigestion, no more aches and pain, no more decay...!

### **Conclusion**

You have the privilege of making a choice - a vital choice! You have the privilege of coming to Christ, of believing on Christ. What does it mean to come to him? To come to Jesus means to have faith in him.

Faith in Jesus is commitment to Jesus based upon a belief that he is who he said he is and that he will do what he has promised to do for everyone who trusts in him. Charles Spurgeon says it well: “Faith is not a blind thing; for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which is sure. It is not an impractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation... Faith is believing that Christ is what he is said to be, and that he will do what he promised to do, and then to expect this of him.” **Now it is true that receiving Christ is a once and done act, but it is also true that every day we make choices which involve a decision to feed or not to feed on Him.** We choose to feed or not to feed from the Scriptures, to listen or not listen to his voice in prayer, to worship or not to worship with His people... And our choices bring joy and peace or sadness and anxiousness. But Jesus is there, no matter what, with his arms welcoming us to come and feed on him - to get our fill- he who is the Bread of Life! It reminds me of the movie, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. It is a movie about a mythical golf match, set in 1930s Savannah, Georgia, involving golf legends Bobby Jones, Walter Hagen, and hometown ace Rannulph Junuh. As a teenager, Junuh had tremendous promise as a golfer. But after his World War I tour of duty, he is marred psychologically and loses interest in golf. Content to gamble and drink, Junuh is a recluse until his former girlfriend invites him to join Jones and Hagen in an exhibition match. Throughout the movie, Junuh seeks to find purpose in his life, though he is fearful of what that purpose might be. During the exhibition match, with four holes to play in the final round, Junuh successfully overcame his several strokes deficit and took a two-stroke lead. But by the sixteenth hole, he trails again. On the seventeenth hole, he slices his tee shot deep into the woods. As he enters the dark forest to find his ball, panic overtakes him. The steam evaporating from the ground triggers memories of smoking battlefields where he watched all his company die. His hands tremble and he drops his clubs. Upon finding his ball, he calls it quits. He remembers why he quit playing golf and started drinking. Just then, Bagger, his golfing mentor, finds him and asks which club he'd like from his bag. He proceeds to tell Junuh that his problems have to do with the grip the past

holds on him. "Ain't a soul on this entire earth got a burden to carry he can't understand," Bagger consoles. "You ain't alone in that. But, you've been carrying this one long enough. It's time to lay it down." Junuh admits, "I don't know how!" Bagger replies, "You got a choice. You can stop, or you can start walking right back to where you've been and just stand there. It's time for you to come out of the shadows, Junuh! It's time for you to choose!" "I can't," Junuh protests. "Yes, you can," Bagger counters. "You're not alone. I'm right here with you. I've been here all along. Now play the game. Your game. The only one you were meant to play: the one that was given to you when you came into this world. Now is the time!" Perhaps today you have a choice to make. Perhaps Jesus has been pressing you to obey in some area, to trust in another, to take the time to feed on him daily. This morning. He reminds you that you are not alone. He is right there with you. Everything you need to obey he will provide. It is time for you to choose. To eat or not to eat, that is the question!