

The Spirit is The Life Giver

John 6:59-71

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John 6:59-71 ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" ⁶¹ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?" ⁶² "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴ "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." ⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

Introduction: In the small lakeside village of Capernaum... Jesus, who is arguably the best preacher who has ever lived, has just delivered a sermon. John records the reaction of His hearers....They begin to complain under their breath about its content. They are scandalized by what they think they have heard and a large number of them stopped following Him altogether. This does not strike us as the goal of preaching. Not at all! In fact we could say that our goals in the 21st century church are exactly the opposite. We want people to applaud the content of the sermon and maybe even go on line and tell others. We want them to be soothed and appreciative....and even agree with what has been said and we want the number of our attendees to increase. So what did Jesus teach in Capernaum to get such a response. The sermon is on the day after the feeding the crowd on the other side of the lake. During that night He stilled the storm and rescued the twelve from certain death. Here are the main points of His sermon....

- There is life that is not just physical, but eternal

John 6:26-27 ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

- There is nothing any man can do to obtain this eternal and spiritual life.

John 6:28-29 ²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

- He [Jesus] Himself is the sole channel for this eternal Life

John 6:35-36 ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. ³⁶ "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

- The Father Sovereignly draws men to this eternal Life

John 6:43-45 ⁴³ Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

- Union with Christ Jesus is the sole means to this eternal and spiritual life

John 6:54-58 ⁵⁴ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

Jesus was a metaphorical preacher. It was the way of the Rabbis and Jesus used it as well. The apostles understood this. That is why there is not a single hint in the entire New Testament that requires men to literally drink His blood and eat His flesh. Here are a couple of familiar metaphorical sayings of Jesus.....

John 3:3-4 ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

John 10:9 ⁹ "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:11 ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Nicodemus knew Jesus was speaking metaphorically, he just did not understand the metaphor. The crowds knew that Jesus was not a literal door and He was certainly not a shepherd...He was a carpenter. And they knew He was not demanding cannibalism....

...The crowd was offended by the gospel assertion that Christ Jesus and only Christ Jesus is the way to eternal life in heaven with God. They wanted something literal and earthly to eat. They rejected the metaphor because they were annoyed that Jesus only gave them literal bread once and now was offering something they did not want...Himself and only Himself as the solution to the lost condition of humanity.

Men are always offended by the exclusivity of the Gospel. Nothing else is sufficient. No morality or good work is accepted. All religion and ritual is vain. This is the Gospel that the church is supposed to preach. When it does the results are pretty much always the same. Scripture records Paul's gospel preaching in Corinth this way....

Acts 18:5-11 ⁵ Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ And he settled *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Later....when Paul actually wrote to the church that the Father had brought to Christ, He said....

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

In the closing verses of John Six God records human reactions and Christ's response to them. Let's turn there and look at them together.

THE HUMAN REACTION TO GOD'S TRUE MESSAGE

John 6:59-60 ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"

Simply put in other words.... "This teaching is hard [difficult] to swallow. We cannot accept it." The end result would be recorded in verse sixty-six

John 6:66 ⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

The purely human reaction to any claims of exclusivity by Christ are difficult to believe and according to Jesus, humans will reject them along with Christ Himself because He makes them. The Gospel is not well received by humanity. That is why it is seldom preached where numbers and wealth are the main desire.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO THAT HUMAN REACTION

John 6:61-64a ⁶¹ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? ⁶² "What then if you see the Son of Man

ascending to where He was before? ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴ "But there are some of you who do not believe."

"What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?: God responds to lost men by giving them even more reasons to believe. They have seen his signs and healings. They have eaten His physical food. Now they are hearing His life giving call to trust Him alone for their eternal souls, but they **DO NOT TRUST** Him when He says...I am the bread of life that came down out of heaven. He asks them hypothetically, I believe, if they would believe He came down out of heaven if they saw Him ascend back up to heaven. Would that convince you that I am the **ONLY** way back to heaven?

But they reject the exclusive way that God has provided for men to come. Men and religion still do not like the exclusive gospel. They want a way of their making. They want a priesthood or a doctrine or a denomination or a ritual that they have created and followed. Religion as surely as atheism rejects the gospel Jesus preached. The one that says all men must come through Him. They must leave everything else behind...set everything else aside....and, as Jesus told another crowd..... have childlike trust.

Luke 18:17 ¹⁷ "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*."

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.: Jesus taught Nicodemus this way when he objected to re-entering the womb. That is just as impossible as the thought that drinking human blood and eating human flesh will give you non-human or eternal life. So Jesus clarifies the metaphor...for them and for us today. He is speaking of a spiritual reality by using physical terminology. It is the **HOLY SPIRIT** who gives spiritual and eternal life. To Nicodemus He said it this way....

John 3:6-7 ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, [physical] and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [spiritual] ⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [you need more than physical life!!!]

In other words....do not expect the flesh or the physical to do anything spiritual. It has physical value, but no spiritual value. "If you want Spiritual Life," Jesus said, "you must trust me and you cannot trust me without the help of the Father and the Spirit."

The apostles understood and taught the gospel that Jesus preaches to this crowd.

1 Corinthians 2:2-5 ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Paul is expanding, explaining and expositing the Gospel in these verses. Life comes from the Holy Spirit. In the process men are brought by God to undiluted faith which means

trust in Jesus Christ's death for their sins and perfect sinless life for their righteousness and resurrection for their eternal hope of life.

Why would we expect wine in a cup or bread from a loaf to do anything for us at all? These are earthy things. They are physical which means fleshly.

Galatians 3:3 ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Far from backing away from the claim of being the only possible way to be saved, Jesus doubles down on it and all the apostolic preachers did as well. Why is this so vital? Why can't we just let people have their pride...their dignity....yes their religion even? Why does Christ have to be so narrow? Because it is the only way to fix our condition!

Humans like you and me cannot, under any circumstance, undo what has been done. We have been born as sinners. We have lied, stolen, dishonored our parents, coveted, just to name a few. We have spoken evil of others and sought revenge for wrongs. We have wronged one another as well as God. How will anyone turn back the clock...change the past or undo what has been done? AND....God has always known these things about you and me. He sees all things from eternity past.

John 6:64b-65 For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR LOST MEN

John 6:64b-65 ⁶⁵ And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

It is because of man's hopeless condition that The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit devised a one sided, but perfect plan to save you. The Son would become a human being in every sense. One of His own creatures. He is not ashamed to be a human. He made humans in His Own Image. But men are fallen and broken in nature. They are born that way and need redeeming. They need sanctifying by Christ the Sanctifier.

Hebrews 2:11-15 ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." ¹³ And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME." ¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Jesus the Son of God...now a human being lived a sinless life on your behalf. He so loved you that He died a sinners death....again on your behalf. He spent three days in a grave....on your behalf. He became alive again physically....on your behalf. His resurrection proved that all the miracles were authentic and all the claims valid.

Romans 1:1-4 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the **gospel of God**,² which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,³ concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,⁴ who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

The crowd did not want to hear about ONLY ONE WAY. They did not want Jesus alone to be the solution to eternal life.

John 6:66⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

CONCLUSION: But what about you and me. What are we doing with the gospel message? Do we have gospel faith or Christian religion. Are we cast upon the mercy and blessed compassion and love of our Jesus or are we somehow seeking to be perfected or find favor with God in the flesh.

John 6:67-69⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

There are few outward things that beg this question more than a communion table. Here we have a cup and some bread. The problems men have with communion extend deep into evangelicalism as well. I know countless people who only come to their bible believing church for communion Sunday. What are they saying? That there is something here that can make up for a complete lack of fellowship, brotherhood and Scriptural teaching. And it can be done in a matter of minutes....once a month.

The Catholic church teaches that the wine in the cup becomes the literal blood of Christ when you drink it and the wafer the literal flesh of Christ when you eat it. But far from this being a teaching of Jesus, He said that the flesh profits nothing. It is the spirit that gives life....not the communion and we receive it by putting all our trust in Jesus Alone.

There are still others who prefer to go to war over what is actually in the cup or in the bread. I have heard people say that if there is leaven in the bread the communion is cursed, but it is also cursed if there is actual wine in the cup. The communion for these folks is about bread or wine or juice, but not about what Jesus said it was about. What did Jesus say the communion is about? Let's read what He said...

Luke 22:15-20¹⁵ And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;¹⁶ for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."¹⁷ And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves;¹⁸ for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."¹⁹ And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁰ And in the same way He *took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Luke tells us that communion is not a Passover celebration. Passover was partially fulfilled at Christ's coming and will be completely fulfilled when He comes again. [16] It is after the Passover that Jesus then institutes an entirely different event. [19]

The purpose of both bread and cup are simple. We need to remember Christ...and not in some religious, doctrinal, ritualistic way. We need to set aside a time to remember how God has loved us. How Christ has rescued us from our own hopeless condition. We are not doing something for our own salvation or even Christian life here. That is Christ's to do and ours to receive by simple trust.

We have come to remember so that we may worship. We have come to exalt Christ in our inner man as our only hope of salvation. The bread and the cup are effective metaphors. The bread reminds us of how he gave His body as punishment for your sins and the cup reminds us that by His blood He established a New Relationship or Covenant between God and us.

Serve the Communion:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ³¹ "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."