

The Savior Satisfies

(John 6:37-59)

(preached 10/7/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

The church as a whole is a unique organization.

Churches are not businesses with a profit to make, and therefore church members are not employees who have to meet standards of production and performance...

Churches are not social clubs either, and therefore members are not required to pay monthly dues and sign contracts..

Instead, the church is a body of believers who are simply united by their claim of faith in Jesus Christ..

Thought this is how God intended it to be, it does make the church a unique body of people..

If the church did require membership dues and the signing of a legal contract to be a member, it would cut down on folks who show up but really have no love of Christ..

If the church did have production standards and performance evaluations, it will also thin down the amount of people who come...

But the reality of the church is that anyone is free to come and associate with the church..

And that is good...

WE welcome the unbeliever.

WE welcome the skeptic.

We welcome the person with questions about the Christian faith..

So I am not saying that an open church is bad.

It is not.

But it does create the opportunity for folks to be a part of the church but not be committed to Christ.

And throughout the history of the church that has always been the case..

But even before the church began, there were false believers..

In fact, Jesus was surrounded by folks like this his entire ministry, and John 6 is a chapter that demonstrates their counterfeit faith this picture of false faith.

Just like today, Jesus had people around him that loved his miracles and power but didn't care to follow or obey his words.

In fact, I want you to look down toward the end of John 6 at verse 66..

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

Now notice it calls them disciples but that is not a word that means they were saved..

They we're simply people who followed Jesus for a while but left.

Now why does this matter?

Why does the Bible even mention these people?

Why should we even be concerned about them?

Two things..

#1 - False disciples are there to warn us not to follow in their footsteps.

Look, self-deception is the hardest deception to overcome.

It is easy to fool yourself into thinking you are a disciple when in fact you aren't..

And it is real easy to do that in the culture of the south..

You go to church, you eat at Chic-Fil-A and you're a good person.

In most people's minds, that makes them a Christian.

But the sad reality is that their heart has never been given to Christ..

That was true in Jesus' day and that is true today, so be warned.

#2 - False disciples are in the Bible to help us understand the craziness we sometimes see in the church.

Look, we talk about it all the time, but the things we see in the church often confuse us..

People who look like believers falling into sin and disappearing..

People who look like Christians acting like unbelievers in the world.

How do we explain those things...

Well, they aren't Christians.

Sitting on a pew doesn't guarantee your entrance to heaven no more than sitting a bleacher means you are a football fan.

People go to football games for all sorts of reasons and people come to church for all sorts of reasons to..

And we need to acknowledge that when we see it...

Today, we are going to look at verses 37-59 which continue to show us the difference between true and false disciples...

WE have already seen that false disciples are shallow in their view of Christ..

They don't see him as God.

They see Him as a giant vending machine that they can go to and get health and food whenever they want because false believers focus on physical needs over spiritual needs..

They are also blind to the truths that Jesus teaches..

Jesus will be teaching them about the bread of heaven but they will only be thinking about getting some bread to eat..

However, we will not just of false disciples in this passage..

We are also going to add some truths about the true disciple of Christ as well...

So let's simply begin in verses 37-40 with this..

I. True Believers are Called (37-40)

Last week, we left off at verse 36 with Jesus speaking to the crowd of 20000 people that he had fed a day before..

This crowd had left the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee where they had been fed by Christ..

Remember that they woke up the next day after eating the best tasting fish and bread in the history of the world, and when they couldn't find Jesus, they jumped in their boats and headed to the western shore.

There, they found Jesus in Capernaum, and he rebuked the crowd because they were only there for more free food and more free health care..

Look back at John 6:26..

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.”

In other words, don't come to Christ or to his church looking for a free meal, come to Christ and his church looking for eternal life..

And though the crowds seemed to listen, they could not understand the spiritual truth that Jesus as the bread of life was far superior to the bread of the earth..

Therefore, Jesus began a little sermon last week in verse 35 designed to teach the crowds the gospel of finding salvation in Him..

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.

This is a gospel invitation to the crowds..

Forget about physical bread and seek the spiritual bread of Christ...

Yet we ended with verse 36 last week...

A tragic verse that is still very true even in here today...

36 But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

Despite Jesus’ miracles, despite displays of his power, despite the proof that he was God, the crowds simply refused to believe in Him...

But Jesus is not done preaching yet, so let's pick up his message in verse 37-40..

37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

The reality of those who are truly saved in this world is that they were all truly called by God to salvation.

Jesus is extremely clear here.

The only ones that come to him in true repentance and faith are those that the Father has sent to Him..

So many people get so much heartburn and disagreement from verses like this which speak of the doctrines of election and predestination and God's calling..

Yet, here is nothing to really debate here.

Christ is crystal clear in what He says here.

True believers are those that are called by God.

True believers will never be rejected by Christ.

True believers will never be lost by Christ.

True believers will be raised by Christ from the dead.

And though of all speaks of the complete sovereignty of God in salvation, nothing in there says that you are excluded from the call of God..

If you are here this morning and you desire to be saved, come to Christ repenting of your sins and trusting in Him..

HE will not reject you, not lose you, and He will ensure that you will be raised from the dead...

True believers accept the sovereignty of God..

True believers love the fact that God is fully in control..

True believers know that they are saved not because they are worthy but simply because God called them to Christ..

Let's now move from the true believer's calling to the false believer's complaining...

II. False Believers are Complainers (41-47)

41 Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"

In verse 41, we begin to hear from some people in the crowd..

John simply calls them the Jews, which would be a reference to the Jewish religious leaders..

Though most of them were in and around Jerusalem in southern Israel, there were synagogues all over Israel...

As a result, religious leaders were all over Israel as well..

It may be that Jesus was getting away from the crowds and moving into the synagogue at Capernaum now..

But either he is continuing his preaching, but false disciples aren't really interested in what he is saying..

Worse yet, they are rejecting it..

And the reason these Jews are rejecting is that Jesus is claiming that he is bread from heaven..

In their mind, that claim was the equivalent of Jesus saying that he had been sent from heaven by God..

And they were right.

Jesus was saying that, but they could not accept that since he looked like one of them..

They even say in verse 42..

How can he be from heaven?

WE know his father and mother.

He is not from heaven.

He is from that sorry town of Nazareth..

And look in a sense they are right.

Jesus wasn't born in Jerusalem in the temple..

Jesus didn't grow up under the high priest of Israel..

Jesus was an ordinary Jew in so many ways and the reason for that is that he had to keep the law perfectly in our place...

And he did that as an ordinary Jewish boy and young man...

But when he entered into ministry, he told the world that he was the Son of God, and he not only declared it with words, he declared it with miraculous works as well..

The reality is that Jesus was ordinary and extraordinary..

He is a natural man but a supernatural God..

He is the God Man..

But the Jews simply couldn't accept his claims of deity...

And look, there are people who admire Christ but refuse to accept his supernatural nature...

Thomas Jefferson claimed to be a Christian, but sadly, he rejected the supernatural abilities of Christ..

In fact, he went through his Bible and removed any pages and crossed out any passages that spoke of the miracles of God..

But I would tell you that you can't have Christ without believing in his supernatural miracles...

Jesus is God.

Yes, he had an earthly family, but his home was in heaven..

False disciples grumble about the identity and power of Christ..

And let me add this..

If you go throughout the Bible from beginning to end, there is not one very that commends grumblers and complainers..

Every time, folks who grumble and complain are judged by the Lord..

Sadly, so many people who claim to know Christ today are known for their grumbling and complaining...

I would be very skeptical of anyone who claims to be a believer but seems to complain about everything..

All the grumblers in the Bible seemed to always be on the opposite side of God, and that was certainly the case with these Jews here..

Let's continue to add to the picture of unbelief in verses 43-47

Verse 43.

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. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

In these verses, we find an additional characteristic of false disciples..

False disciples are not taught by God...

You see, these Jews thought they were experts in the OT, but the reality is that they didn't know anything about the Bible.

According to verse 45, these men who claim to be closest to God and supposedly spoke for Him actually were not even his students..

And the reason we know that they weren't his students is that that they weren't coming to Christ..

The reality is that who are truly close to God always come to Christ..

This is why Jews today are still in error..

Though they claim to be experts in the OT and know the God of the Bible, nothing could be further from the truth..

Because you can't know God apart from knowing and honoring and obeying His Son..

If you don't believe in Christ as the Son of God, you don't know God..

And if you don't know God, you have no hope of eternal life..

According to verse 47, only those who believe in Christ have eternal life..

Yet, false believers, false disciples would rather grumble about Christ than come to Christ..

Look, there are people in the church who come to grumble...

They love to sit and whisper and point all all of the churches flaws..

They love to point out the sin of others in the church..

They often call everyone else a hypocrite..

They often complain about the music, the pews, the heat, the air, the preaching, the paint, the carpet...

They will talk about anything but they have no interest in Christ talking to them...

On top of that if you ask them if they are saved, they will say a hearty, "amen."

Yet they don't love Christ and you can see that in how they grumble about his church and his people..

Let's now happily shift back to a picture of true belief in verses 48-51...

III. True Believers are Consumers (48-51)

Verse 48...

48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

For the second time in this message, Jesus describes himself as the bread of life..

Now look, we know that the crowd isn't getting what he is saying..

Remember they are looking for physical bread, but Jesus isn't offering physical bread..

Instead, he is offering himself as spiritual bread...

Jesus is the literal fulfillment of the the picture that God had given Israel in the wilderness...

There, God had rained down physical bread from heaven to keep the people physically alive..

But now, God has rained down spiritual bread in the person of Jesus Christ to make it possible for people to be spiritually alive to God.

And look the reality is this..

Those who consume the bread that Christ offers will live forever..

Take yourself back to wilderness with Israel..

You are walking in the wilderness where nothing grows and nothing lives..

You are hungry, your family is hungry..

It is nighttime and you got to sleep still hungry, but when you wake up, there is bread all over the ground..

So what do you do?

You go out and grab all you can..

You eat it, your family eats it, everyone around you eats it..

This is what will do to you...

You just gobble it up..

Only a hungry fool would see bread lying around and refuse to pick it up and eat..

Yet, that is the reality for so many spiritually hungry people in the world..

They refuse to consume the bread of Christ..

And instead the moldy bread of false religion and unbelief..

True believers see the beauty of the bread of life in Christ and eat of it...

Now, we must shift back the ugliness of false believers for a moment in verse 52..

IV. False Believers are Confused (52)

Verse 52..

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”

Once again we see the spiritual blindness of the world..

Jesus is calling people to eat the bread of life by simply believing in Him as the Son of God..

Yet, the Jews can't get past Jesus' call to eat his bread...

Clearly, this isn't a call to cannibalism..

Jesus isn't commanding people to literally eat him, but this is the ridiculousness of unbelief..

It cannot and will not see spiritual truth..

1 Corinthians 2:14..

14 But [f]a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually [g]appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

We have seen this already in John 6, but false disciples are unable to hear spiritual truth..

I sometimes shudder when I hear people who claim to have been saved for many years, but can't understand the most basic Christian truths..

This is not a good sign in your life..

Now look, the Bible has difficult parts that require study and prayer and careful examination..

But truths about the nature of the gospel..

Truths about Christ..

Truths about what it means to grow in Christlikeness.

These are not difficult truths to embrace, and if you claim to be a believer for some amount of time but can't understand the basics of the faith, it should be concerning to you..

Though there are confusing things in the Bible, there should be no confusion over what Jesus means when he calls people to eat the bread of life...

It is simply a call to commit your life to Him..

A final note to make about Jesus' sermon is found in verse 53-57...

V. True Believers are Cross-Centered (53-59)

Verse 53...

53 So Jesus said to them, "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 yourselves. 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."

A lot of people see this passage as a reference to the Lord's Supper, yet that is not what Jesus is talking about here..

First of all, the Lord's Supper has been instituted yet..

That will come the night before Jesus going to the cross...

In this context, Jesus is simply previewing the cross..

The living bread will become the dying bread..

And the dying bread will be accompanied by the spilt blood..

This is clearly a picture of the cross that is in Christ's future...

And the reality is this...

You can't be saved if you don't believe in the death of cross on your behalf...

You can't have eternal life if you don't embrace the death of Christ..

Verse 55 says that Jesus' flesh is true food and His blood is true drink..

In other words, you must believe that he laid his life and down and spilt his blood in order to abide in Him..

True believers are those who are cross centered..

This is why we never go too long without a Lord's Supper...

Because we don't want our minds to move too far from the sacrifice of Christ...

False disciples, on the other hand, seem to care little for the cross..

To this crowd of false believers, Jesus' death will be tragic not because he is innocent but because their free health care and free lunch will be gone...

For the true believer, the cross is the foundation of who they are and the hope they have..

Conclusion

As you read the Bible, it is common for God to use the picture of food to teach spiritual truth..

You have milk and bread and meat and wheat and honey and vinegar and wine and figs and flour and fish and rain cakes...

And why is that?

Well, food represents life..

WE may not think about that today because we have an abundance of food, but in those days, food was much more scarce..

And to have food was to ensure survival..

So God used food to teach...

Jesus callign himself the bread of life was not just poetic, it painted a real picture in this culture..

Bread was a staple of the diet..

To have bread on hand meant that your family ate and survived..

To turn down brad was to turn down life..

My dad fished, and as a kid, I went with him..

And there is something about fishing that makes you hungry...

Real hungry...

It is probably the boredom, but on one occasion, I was starving to death..

Yet, my dad was out of orange cheese crackers..

The only thing in the boat was a can of vienna sausages...

Just the gel on the top of those is enough to make a hungry person sick...

But on that day, the whole can went down into my stomach..

And they tasted good..

To a hungry man, vienna sausages are delicious..

Look, everyone is born spiritually hungry and Christ is the bread of life to quench that spiritual hunger forever..

True believers understand that...

IF you are here this morning with pain in your life, it may be spiritual hunger pains...

And if that is the case, Christ is the only bread that satisfies that craving..

A can of Viennas or better yet a Snickers may satisfy your physical hunger but only the Savior can satisfy your spiritual hunger...

Don't turn away from the food that gives eternal life..

Repent of your turns and believe in Him..

Let us pray.