

## Partakes the Bread of Life

**(John 6:35, 41-51)**

How one partakes of or shares in—receives the Bread of Life—that is, how one comes to know Jesus personally or receives him, is the focus of this Scripture passage. There are **three** things a person must do when getting to know Jesus personally. **First**, a person must **stop rebelling against the claims of Jesus**. The religionists rebelled against the claims of Jesus. They grumbled against him. The Greek word (*gogguzete*), refers to the grumbling, the buzzing, the discontent that arises from a crowd that is upset and confused; that is misunderstanding, rejecting, and opposing a speaker. They radically disagreed with Jesus' claim that he had come "down from heaven."

They questioned his origin. They knew him personally; and they knew his father, Joseph, and his mother, Mary. They knew he was a mere man just as they were, having been reared by human parents. How could he possibly claim to be "from heaven"? Note: their problem was twofold. **First**, they were ignorant of the incarnation. And **two**, they were so fixed on his origin, on where he had come from, that they lost sight of his mission, which

was to feed and nourish men spiritually—to save and to give life.

Jesus appealed to the crowd, “stop grumbling.” He loved and cared for them and longed for them to listen to the truth. As long as they grumbled, they would never be willing to listen to the truth. (What a lesson for us all: “Be still, and know that I am God” as it says in **Psalm 46:10.**)

The **second** thing a person must do to know Jesus personally is that **a person must be drawn to God**. Three verses – **vv. 44-46** – have to do with predestination. Let me read them again. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.”

The truth of predestination in the Bible is not so much a statement of theology or philosophy as it is a message that speaks to the spiritual experience of the believer. If

the pure logic of philosophy and theology is applied, then predestination says that God chooses some for heaven and others for a terrible hell. But this is simply not what God means in the passages dealing with predestination, and this fact needs to be given close attention by all who interpret the Scriptures. What God wants believers to do is to take heart, for he has assured their salvation. This is what he means by predestination.

We can read about this in **Romans 8:29-30**, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also *called*; those he called, he also *justified*; those he justified, he also *glorified*.” Predestination here is to moral conformity to the likeness of his Son. The reason God foreknew, predestined, and conformed believers in Christ’s likeness is that the Son might hold the position of highest honor in the great family of God.

So, the person who comes to Christ is a person who has been *drawn by God*, a person who has experienced the *divine initiative*. A man does not act alone, coming to

Christ by his own effort and energy, not by his own works, whether mental—thought or will—or physical labor—good deeds. A man is a dead spirit; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. The natural man prefers self and sin; therefore, if a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be acted upon and drawn to God. Both God and man have a part in salvation.

I believe I came to Christ after I was acted upon through Confirmation classes. I felt drawn to God during this period in my life. If my family had the money and if I had a small “push” after eighth grade, I would have gone to seminary.

God’s part in salvation is to draw man. God has to draw because man resists the gospel. Man’s resistance is seen in the word **draw**. The word draw has the idea of both initiative and rebellion, of constraint and resistance. For example, the pulling-in of a net loaded with fish involves both actions of pulling and resistance; a person being dragged to court encounters both actions of pulling and resistance.

How God draws a man is clearly stated. He draws by teaching (v. 45). The teaching may come from the voice of a preacher, or a myriad of other sources. But one thing is always common: the movement of God's Spirit upon the human heart, teaching the need for God and drawing the heart toward God for salvation. The Spirit of God teaches a man and moves upon the heart of man.

Now, let us take a look at several of the things the Holy Spirit does. **First**, it quickens, or makes the gospel alive to a man's mind so that he sees it as never before. He sees, understands, and grasps as never before that "the Father...who has sent" Christ to feed and nourish man. In other words, to save him and to give him life. Which is what it says to us in **John 5:21**, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it." **Second**, the Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that is, of his need to be fed and nourished or saved and given life. This we can find in **John 16:8**, "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness, and judgment."

**Third**, the Holy Spirit attracts men to the cross of Christ through its glorious provisions. Which is what it says in **1 Corinthians 1:18**, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” **Fourth**, the Holy Spirit stirs a man to respond by coming to Christ. Which is what it tells us in **Matthew 11:28**, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

As I mentioned earlier, both God and man have a part in salvation. We have just looked at God’s part, now let us look at what man’s part in salvation is about. Man’s part in salvation is **threefold**. **First**, man must hear the voice of God when God draws. When the pull, tug, or movement of God’s Spirit is felt, man must listen to the conviction of the Spirit. **Second**, man must learn of God. However, he can learn of God only through Christ. If a man wishes to learn of God, he has to come to Christ. The reasons are clearly stated by Christ in **verse 46**: no man has seen God, Christ alone is of God, and Christ alone has seen God. Which is what Jesus said in **John 7:16-17**, Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It

comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." **Third**, man must come to Christ: he just yields to the drawing power of God. God reveals, pulls, and tugs at the heart of a man to come to Christ. Why? Because the only way a man can learn of God is to come to Christ, and God wants every man to learn of him, to know him personally.

Being self-centered and rebellious, man likes to feel independent; consequently, man resists the quickening pull and drawing power of God. However, those who give in to the godly restraint and who partake of Christ learn of God and are accepted into his household to partake and feast at his table.

Continuing with what man's part in salvation is, is a person must believe on Christ. The person who believes has eternal life. Christ calls for man to pay close attention: "I tell you the truth," that is "listen". What he now says is critical: a person must believe **four** things. The **first** thing a person must believe is that Christ is **the** Bread of Life: the bread that feeds and nourishes man

spiritually, that saves and gives man life. Note the Lord's claim in verse in verse 48, "I am the bread of life." Note how straightforward the claim is. Note how brief, clear-cut, straight-to-the-point, and unmistakable the claim is. Note his claim to deity: "I am" in verse 48. There is no hesitation—no reservation—no holding back. He pulls no punches: "I am." And finally, note how Christ refers to the manna again in verse 49. Eating physical food will only sustain man temporarily; man still dies. The point is clear: man's concern should not be physical food. If it is, man has only death to anticipate. Which is what we can read in **John 6:35**, Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

The **second** thing a man must believe is that Christ is out of heaven, that he has come to deliver man from death. Christ claims two things. Number **one**, he has come out of heaven, from God himself (John 3:31). Number **two**, if a man partakes of him, that man will not die. This means that a man eats and partakes or receives of Christ once-



for-all. It is a one-time experience. Which is what we can read in **John 6:58**, “This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.”

The **third** thing a man must believe is that Christ is the living Bread, the One who gives life to a man forever.

**Four** things to make note of here. **First**, the Bread is living; it is life. The words are literally, “the Bread, the Living.” **Second**, the Bread “came down from heaven.”

The phrase came down is again in the aorist tense which means Christ came once. The incarnation had never taken place before, nor will it ever take place again. The miraculous entrance of the Living Bread into the world is a one-time-only event. My **third** note is that the Bread, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to provide spiritual food for man; spiritual and eternal life. And my **fourth** and final note is that the offer of eternal life is conditional, “If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever” (v. 51).

The **fourth** thing a man must believe is that Christ gave his flesh for the life of the world. Note that Christ identifies the Bread: it is his flesh which he gives for the

life of the world. So Jesus came in the flesh, which we can read in **1 John 4:2-3**, “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” And finally, Jesus gave his flesh (or life) for the life of the world. Which is what we can read in **Hebrews 2:14-15**, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

What **lessons** we can learn from this Scripture reading? Jesus tells us that no one can come to him unless God draws us to Jesus. With the grace of God, we can find the strength to make the choices that will transform us and Jesus will lead us to everlasting life. Jesus states that whoever takes part in him will not die if they first believe in him. Faith or belief is required to receive the eternal

life that he offers. He distinguishes himself as the living bread and as such he does not only last for the day, but is eternal.

Please bow your heads as I pray.

Dear Lord, thank you for your amazing love and grace that you have bestowed on me. Thank you for being the Living Bread which came down from heaven. Your love and grace is sustaining me and giving me life. Help me to take your words to heart and to truly take them within my innermost being. As long as I partake in your Bread of Life, I will live forever. May I never forget the sacrifice you made for me, that I may have eternal life. I am forever grateful for your mercy and love. I ask this in the name of your Son Jesus. **Amen.**