
Day 1 / Memorize: Choose one verse and work on memorizing it this week. Great options are 6.44 or 6.51.

Learn: Prayerfully read John 6.41-48. If your translation says “the Jews” were murmuring about Jesus [v.41], remember that John often uses this term to refer to the religious leaders in Israel, rather than all Jews. It seems likely that here the scene shifts to the synagogue in Capernaum [see v.59], where the local religious leaders were gathered. The religious leaders knew the family of Jesus, so they were troubled that he said he came from Heaven [v.42]. This made no sense to them, since they knew his parents in Nazareth and they thought of him only as a man, not as the divine Son of God.

In v.37, Jesus said that anyone whom God chose would come to faith in Jesus. Now, in v.44, he says that no one can come to faith in Jesus unless God chooses [draws] that person. This is what we call “election”: God chooses who will come to faith and who will not. All who are chosen to come to faith do come to faith; none of those not chosen to come to faith do come to faith. Why? As we have discussed, we are born with a corruption to our human nature, called inherited sin [because we inherit it from our ancestors]. This corruption incapacitates us from properly discerning things of a spiritual nature. Thus we cannot see God clearly or come to saving faith in Jesus, unless God chooses to help us by enlightening us [v.45] such that we respond to Jesus in faith. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 54.13 [v.45]: this prophecy was about the restored Jerusalem after the exile, when people would be taught by God; Jesus’ use of this prophecy implies that believers are children of the kingdom of God already, partially experiencing the prophesied New Covenant promises.

Reflect: Some people get upset about election, because God determines that some will be saved and others not, which seems unfair. But even if you believed that everyone gets the same shot at saving faith, it still would be true that God knew who would come to faith and who would not when he chose this path for the universe at creation, so he still would be the root cause of some believing and others not. Truly, none of us deserve salvation, because all of us are tainted in our nature, guilty of our own sins, and sharing in the guilt of the human race for going astray from God in the first place. The miracle is that God bothers to save any of us at all! Write down your thoughts about this or talk about it with someone.

Want More? Only Jesus as the divine Son has seen the Father [v.46], so he is the true revelation of God; spirituality apart from him means nothing! If God is revealing himself to you, that will draw you to Jesus; you will come to Jesus only if you hear from God; and you can be said to have heard from God only if you come to Jesus! Reflect on those truths.

Day 2 / Memorize: Continue to do your memorization work! Practice verses from past weeks too!

Learn: Prayerfully read John 6.47-54. Jesus reiterates that he is the life-giving bread [“bread of life” in v.48; “living” or “life giving” bread in v.51]. The crowd was comparing him with Moses. He told them again that Moses provided manna [bread] that was not eternal, and so everyone who ate it eventually died [v.49]. But Jesus himself is eternal bread from Heaven, so he can sustain eternal life [v.50]. Specifically, Jesus said his “flesh” was the bread. Jesus was teaching with metaphor. The Jewish religious leaders could not understand the metaphor [v.52]. They knew Jesus was not advocating cannibalism, but they were not sure what he meant. In v.35, Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; the one coming to me certainly will not hunger, and the one believing in me certainly will not thirst ever.” Now, in v.51, he says, “If anyone should eat from this bread, he will live into eternity.” Compare also v.40 with v.54. We can understand the metaphor of eating Jesus’ flesh and drinking his blood to mean *believing* in him.

Jesus is the divine Son of God come to earth to take on flesh. That is what we mean by “*the incarnation*”: God took on flesh. He did this for several reasons, but the primary one was to be a sacrifice in our place. Only Jesus could be a perfectly pure man and thus a worthy sacrifice for sin in our place. John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” [1.29, 36]. Jesus’ sacrifice is *vicarious*: we experience the benefits *through him*. Part of believing in him is to accept this sacrifice on your behalf, to believe that Jesus did pay the penalty for your sins, thus reconciling you with God the Father and providing you with eternal life. His flesh was broken and his blood was spilled as a sacrifice for you; thus you must “eat” his flesh and “drink” his blood [believe!] to have eternal life.

Reflect: Do you understand why Jesus is the only way to salvation? Can you explain it? If not, talk with a pastor, elder, or your small group leader about it.

Want more? In v.51, Jesus said he would give his flesh for the life of the world, not just the Jews. This was consistent with the Old Testament: In Isaiah 49.6, the Messiah is called the Suffering Servant, who reaches out to Jews and Gentiles. God’s plan always was to reach the world through Israel and her Messiah-Savior!

Day 3 / Memorize: Continue to do your memorization work!

Learn: Prayerfully read John 6.55-58. Drinking of blood was offensive to Jews, because it was against the Law of Moses to drink the blood of animals or even to eat meat with the blood not drained from it [thus even today they eat pastrami and corned beef instead of roast beef]. Blood was associated with the source of life, but even more so with death and especially sacrificial death: blood had to be shed for the temporarily atoning sacrifices of Israel [the animal sacrifices that temporarily appeased God's wrath], so this symbolism would help people understand that Jesus was the sacrifice for them, if they could get past their objections to the metaphor. Jesus says his flesh is "true food" and his blood is "true drink," in other words what food and drink ideally should be: eternal-life sustaining.

Compare v.54 with v.56. There is a strong connection between having eternal life and remaining in Jesus. To remain in Jesus means to continue coming to him and believing in him, being identified with him, experiencing saving faith and personal transformation; Jesus remaining in you means he is sacrificially identifying with you, to help you, bless you, give you true and eternal life. God is the "living Father" [or "life-giving" Father], in that God has life in him to give [v.57]. Jesus has life to give because of the Father's will [5.26], so if we depend on Jesus, whom God the Father sent, then we will have eternal life because of Jesus [v.57]. As often the case in this gospel, it is emphasized in the Greek that eating and drinking [v.56], like believing, are continuous and ongoing activities.

Reflect: In vv.54-58, John switches from the usual verb meaning "to eat" to a verb that means more specifically "to chew." This switch might not be important, because John often uses similar words interchangeably, switching back and forth. But it could be that he wanted to emphasize something about our faith. Just as he used present tense participles to remind us that believing is ongoing, maybe he uses "chewing" to remind us that accepting Jesus is not a quick swallow, but a time of savoring. If that were the case, what would it mean to you? If to eat is to believe, what is to chew?

Want more? This passage is not about taking communion [or the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist]. Rather, communion is about the truths in this passage. In communion, we celebrate that Jesus gave his body and blood for us. This sacrifice is what Jesus is describing with metaphor in this passage. Jesus is not referring to the bread we eat or the juice we drink, rather the bread and juice are descriptive reminders of what Jesus has done for us.

Day 4 / Memorize: Continue to do your memorization work!

Learn: Prayerfully read John 6.59-65. Most English translations show the disciples saying Jesus' teaching was "hard" or "difficult" [v.60], but we should not take that to mean they were complaining about its difficulty to understand: rather the Greek word indicates they found this teaching "unpleasant." They literally asked, "Who can hear it?" But "to hear" in Hebrew and Aramaic can mean "to obey," and in Greek it can mean "to listen," "to heed," or "to understand." Jesus asked them whether he had "shocked" them [v.61; the Greek verb *σκανδαλίζω* (scan-duh-LEED-zoh) can mean to cause them to stumble, but the idea here is more about offense or shock]. These "disciples" were following Jesus around and submitting to him as their teacher, but that does not imply necessarily that they had come to saving faith. Jesus then asks what would happen if they saw him ascending back to Heaven [v.62]. Would that help them or further shock them? This might be even more "scandalizing" to them in that to ascend back to Heaven and end his time on Earth Jesus will have to go to the cross. If they find his teaching scandalous, what will they think of his actual sacrifice of flesh and blood? A sacrifice of the supposed Messiah would be outrageous! If he is the divine Son of God, why would he allow himself to be sacrificed on a cross, the lowest form of death in this culture? [See 1 Corinthians 1.23.]

Reflect: Is there anything about John's biography of Jesus that you find shocking, offensive, or hard to understand? Write these things down, pray about them, talk with a spiritual leader about them.

Day 5 / Memorize: Continue to do your memorization work!

Learn: Prayerfully read John 6.66-71. Some of those who were following Jesus and learning from him had not yet come to faith in him as the Son of God and Messiah, and these people turned away now. But when Jesus asked whether his chosen twelve disciples, those he was actively mentoring, were going to leave, Peter acknowledged that they knew he was the Messiah from God who could give life, so where else would they go? Note that Jesus referred to one of them, Judas Iscariot, as "the Devil" [not "a devil," there is only one!], because he was going to do the Devil's work.

Reflect: In Christianity, there are difficult teachings and difficult commands, which can make us uncomfortable. Are you willing to believe in Jesus and follow him no matter what? What obstacles to faith and obedience do you face right now?