

# Jesus Teaches Difficult Truths

## Summary and Goal

The goal of this session is to see Jesus through His own words and ministry. We live in an age when many, some even in our churches, have made Jesus in their own image. One reason this happens is because Jesus' teachings often were very provocative, challenging, and convicting, and most of us will do whatever we can to avoid being on the wrong end of them. In this session, we will take a look at the familiar passage of John 6, in which Jesus feeds the five thousand. We often focus on Jesus' compassion for the needy and the miracle He performed, but here we will examine Jesus' hard teaching following this miracle, which led the crowd to walk away.

## Session Outline

1. Jesus shares words of life (John 6:52-59).
2. Jesus shares words of the Spirit (John 6:60-65).
3. Jesus receives words of worship (John 6:66-69).

*Background Passage: John 6*

## Session in a Sentence

Jesus' teachings about eating His flesh and drinking His blood were difficult to understand, but eternal life is found in them.

## Christ Connection

Jesus' teachings about eating His flesh and drinking His blood were difficult to understand. Many turned away from Jesus because of these words, but it is in them that we find eternal life made known to us in Jesus' death and resurrection.

## Missional Application

Because we have been given the Holy Spirit, who guides us to truth, we proclaim the full counsel of Scripture, even the more difficult parts, so others may hear Jesus' words of life.

# Group Time

## Introduction

**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraphs on page 29 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) to establish that Jesus was a polarizing figure, despite some of the present-day misconceptions about Him and His teaching.

Often people who are quite unfamiliar with Christianity still admire Jesus and even wish more Christians were like Jesus, at least as they understand Him. But when they encounter what Jesus actually said, they find He is not who they thought He was. The Jesus they thought they admired said some very hard things. He wasn't all "peace, love, and good vibes." He didn't go around just teaching everybody to be nice to each other. (For one thing, He never would have been crucified if *that* were His major message.) No, the real Jesus was, and is, polarizing.

Jesus' words and actions offended people, not because He lived to give offense but because He lived to center everything and everyone on Himself. The claims Jesus made of *His* self-centrality are an assault upon the self-centeredness of sinners like you and me.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What are some misconceptions people might have about Jesus? (*Jesus was just a nice guy who was in the wrong place at the wrong time; Jesus' message was similar to a lot of other religious leaders throughout the ages; Jesus was a martyr for a good cause; Jesus was simply a human being whose followers made into a legend*)

**SUMMARIZE:** The goal of this session is to see Jesus through His own words and ministry. We live in an age when many, some even in our churches, have made Jesus in their own image. One reason this happens is because Jesus' teachings often were very provocative, challenging, and convicting, and most of us will do whatever we can to avoid being on the wrong end of them. In this session, we will take a look at the familiar passage of John 6, in which Jesus feeds the five thousand. We often focus on Jesus' compassion for the needy and the miracle He performed, but here we will examine Jesus' hard teaching following this miracle, which led the crowd to walk away.

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## Point 1: Jesus shares words of life (John 6:52-59).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read John 6:52-59 (DDG p. 30).

<sup>52</sup> At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. <sup>54</sup> The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, <sup>55</sup> because my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your ancestors ate—and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.”

<sup>59</sup> He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 30) to explain why Jesus’ references to His **flesh** and **blood** were offensive to His audience.

“Eat My **flesh** and drink My **blood**”—what a strange thing to say! And though the Jews misunderstood His meaning, Jesus didn’t let up on the metaphorical language. He insisted that people must find their spiritual sustenance in Him as the fulfillment of all God’s promises. Manna fed the body for the Jews in the wilderness, but Jesus—the Bread of life—feeds body and soul for eternity. Blood represented the life of an animal or a person, so it was prohibited for eating and drinking, but Jesus—the Lamb of God—poured out His blood for our forgiveness and our eternal life.

- Was Jesus commanding cannibalism? Of course not. Jesus’ metaphorical references to His **flesh** and **blood** confronted the concept of salvation by religion or by any means other than Jesus Himself. You cannot save yourself by your good works, your moral attitudes, your religious affiliations, your ethnic or cultural identity, your family history, your spiritual feelings, or anything else. Salvation only comes through the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God who laid His life down for us.
- **Flesh:** Jesus’ reference to manna in comparison with the true bread of His flesh showed that the old was passing away and the new has come (see Ex. 16). In essence, Jesus was announcing that His presence and work was the culmination of all Jewish religious hope. In fact, He was announcing that if anyone does not take the next step of faith from the old covenant to the new covenant in Himself, then they would choose to remain in the darkness of death.
- **Blood:** The Jews knew full well by God’s own law that consuming blood was forbidden. According to Leviticus 7:26-27, for instance, anyone who ate blood was to be cut off from the covenant people (see also Gen. 9:3-6). Jesus seemed to be commending an act that would result in disfellowship as a means of gaining life. Jesus allowed the offense of His words to remain, but of course, His words were metaphorical in nature.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 30) to note that the most offensive aspect of Jesus’ teaching from this passage was His telling us that we don’t have “what it takes” to save ourselves.

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“You have what it takes” is the message of the world. It is the message of self-help spirituality and self-centered self-esteem. But the truth claims of Scripture—indeed, the very essence of Christianity—hinges on our *not* having what it takes (Rom. 3:23). We have nothing but need; Jesus has and is everything we need, so we must feast on Him.

### Voices from the Church

“The gospel of Jesus Christ is not a rock we stand on to climb a mountain; it is the Rock, the Mountain. It is His faithfulness that holds me, not mine that holds Him. The footholds only hold because they are part of the Rock of Ages.”<sup>1</sup>

—Amanda Bible Williams

- Everything in the world and everything within us tells us to believe that we have what it takes and we can do whatever it is that we need to do. But we cannot do enough to save ourselves—we are sinful, and God is holy and just. Jesus’ teaching that connects eternal life to eating His flesh and drinking His blood strikes at the heart of every one of us, whether Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious. We cannot gain eternal life apart from Him. If we would live, we must trust Him. If we want salvation, we must have all of Jesus. We must be “all in,” and He must be “in all” of us. Christ’s hard and offensive teaching wasn’t just the perception of cannibalism but that we don’t have what it takes. Jesus, on the other hand, does.

*History:* This teaching was one of the chief emphases of the Protestant Reformation, and for good reason. The religious empire of the day taught that justification for sinners came through Christ’s work *and* our works together. The Reformers, however, heard the words of the Bible and took them seriously, no matter how offensive they might be to our spiritual sensitivities or religious pride. The Scriptures teach that justification comes through faith alone *in Christ alone*. This was summarized in the Reformation “sola” known as *solus Christus*, and it was as offensive to the religious establishment of Martin Luther’s day as it was to the religious establishment in the day of Jesus. “My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink,” Jesus said (John 6:55). Everything else is a pale imitation, and it won’t save you.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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Why do people find it so offensive to hear that we don’t have what it takes? (we are raised being taught that we do have what it takes to do so many things; our culture prizes the attitude of picking yourself up by your bootstraps; when faced with this teaching, we must face the truth of our sin, that we fall short of God’s glory, and that we are helpless before God’s justice and judgment; we can’t imagine that God would have such high and unattainable expectations for His creatures)

## Point 2: Jesus shares words of the Spirit (John 6:60-65).

**READ** John 6:60-65 (DDG p. 31).

<sup>60</sup> Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

<sup>61</sup> Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this offend you?” <sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup> The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. <sup>64</sup> But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup> He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 31) to point out that the Holy Spirit is responsible for our ability to believe in Jesus—He convicts us of sin, points us to Jesus, and regenerates our hearts.

Many people who were following Jesus had a hard time with His teaching that centered the hope of salvation on Himself. They struggled to believe Him, and Jesus explained why: No one comes to Jesus in faith unless the Father grants the ability to do so through the Holy Spirit. Without new birth in the Spirit (John 3:5-8), there is no salvation because the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us of sin, leads us to Jesus in faith, and regenerates our hearts. If you want eternal life, you must believe in Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is integral for that step of faith.

- One of the major themes of John’s Gospel is the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation. As Jesus conducted His earthly ministry of signs and wonders, He often taught about the necessity of the Spirit for people to believe in Him and to know the truth (John 3; 6; 14; 15; 16; 20). In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus about the necessity of being “born again” in order to enter the kingdom of God. This new birth, Jesus said, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit’s working, we cannot gain eternal life.
- The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is actively involved in God’s work of salvation on earth. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell us that Christ’s conception within the virgin Mary was brought about by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:34-35), and the Holy Spirit was integral to the ministry of Jesus as well. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness after His baptism to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1), and the Holy Spirit raised Christ’s body from the dead (Rom. 8:11).
- The crowd listening to Jesus in this passage needed ears that hear and eyes that see the glory of God in Jesus (2 Cor. 4:6). They needed ears and eyes and a heart that they didn’t have from natural birth. Thus, they needed a new birth, a spiritual birth, through the Holy Spirit.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 Why is it important for us to remember the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation and our sanctification? (so we can resist pride, knowing that God has accomplished our salvation from first to last; so we remember where the strength comes from for us to obey and honor our Father; so we understand that our role in evangelism is not to convert people but to share the truth of the gospel with others and pray for God to save them)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 31) to highlight how we are unable to add to our salvation—it is the work and gift of God through grace.

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Sometimes people may think they were saved because they knew more than others or were morally superior. But the reality is that not one bit of our supposed “righteousness” is any advantage at all. For any of us to experience the new birth, whether we were raised in church or raised to stay away from it, whether we have been a moralistic older brother or a wild prodigal, we need the radical intervention of heaven. We need to be given the gift of faith unto eternal life, and this gift is pure grace from God, not based on our works.

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- However people come to Christ, whatever their means of acceptance of that gift of faith—whether through praying a prayer, walking an aisle at a church service or an evangelistic event, or making a profession of faith by some other avenue—we see that it all begins as a gift from God’s Spirit revealing the truth to you, calling you to God, softening your heart, and planting in you a love for and worship of Jesus.

*History:* The Protestant Reformation recovered this important biblical truth: justification is *by grace alone (sola gratia)*. Salvation is the work of God through Jesus’ death and resurrection applied to our hearts through faith in Him and the new birth brought about by the Holy Spirit. Paul put the idea this way in Ephesians 2:8-10: “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” This is the exact point Jesus made in John 6:63 when He said, “The flesh doesn’t help at all.”

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 What means did the Holy Spirit use to draw you to faith in Christ? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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### Point 3: Jesus receives words of worship (John 6:66-69).

**SAY:** Remember the scene earlier in John 6. A gigantic crowd gathered to watch a radical rabbi named Jesus perform wonders, and they got their fill. Jesus miraculously turned a bit of bread and fish into a meal for five thousand, and the crowd was in awe. But just as quickly as they were impressed by Him, they turned on Him. Jesus followed up His miraculous feeding with a truthful sermon, and it emptied the ranks.

**READ** John 6:66-69 (DDG p. 32).

<sup>66</sup> From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?”

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 32) to show how Peter’s response signified his realization that we can only find eternal life in Jesus.

The twelve disciples had been around Jesus for a while. They had heard His teachings and seen His miracles, but so had a lot of other people. Now, after some hard teaching from Jesus, they watched as some who claimed to follow Christ vanished into the distance. But the Twelve remained. And to Jesus’ question, Peter, for all his impetuosity, replied with the right answer, the response of faith and worship. Truly seeing and believing Jesus means every other option has become no option at all, and that leads to worship of “the Holy One of God.”

- Jesus’ question asked of the Twelve faces us every day as well: When the truth from Jesus is tough to swallow, will we still believe it? What Peter saw, you and I must see if we’re to believe in the real Jesus—there are no other options. We cannot have Jesus *plus* anything: We cannot be saved by Jesus *plus* our good works. We cannot be saved by Jesus *plus* our political ideology. We cannot be saved by Jesus *plus* our religious affiliations. We can only be saved by Christ alone. Only He has the words of eternal life, so He is worthy of our worship and our proclamation.

**Commentary:** This moment is reminiscent of another exchange Jesus had with His disciples in which Peter stepped up to answer. In Matthew 16:13-17, Jesus asked them about His identity. Peter replied, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16). Jesus then told him he was blessed because his answer didn’t come from his own understanding but it was revealed by the Father. As we’ve seen previously, for anyone to know the truth, it must be revealed by God as a gift of grace.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 What are some declarations of truth that glorify Jesus? (Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins; Jesus rose from the dead to give us eternal life; Jesus will come again as King over all creation to set all things right; God created all things through His Son; Jesus loves me)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 32) to emphasize the exclusivity of Jesus' claims, namely, that salvation comes through faith alone in Christ alone.

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Salvation comes through faith alone in Christ alone. *He* is the way, *He* is the truth, and *He* is the life (John 14:6). He is the only way to the Father, the only way to new and eternal life. The world's wisdom runs counter to the truth of Christ, which is why so many left Him when He challenged their worldly beliefs. Therefore, to follow and worship Jesus means rejecting the ways of the world in favor of God's truth. We must love Him above all, not ourselves, or we will miss out on His love for us. We must live His way, not our own, or we will not live at all.

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- Anything that competes with Jesus for our trust, affection, and worship should be considered an idol, and that could include “good” things such as family, schoolwork, God-given talents and abilities, and even church. We see this kind of idolatry every time we compromise our following of Jesus with some other allegiance. The response must be to repent of our sin and return, or turn for the first time, to the singular worship of our first love—Jesus, who alone holds the words of eternal life. For those “good” things that compete with Jesus in our hearts, we still repent of putting other things ahead of Jesus, but we don't abandon our commitments to and uses of them. Instead, we ask the Lord to help us keep them in the proper perspective and at the right priority level, which will always be behind Jesus and for use in the service of His glory.
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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 32).

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**God Is Truthful:** The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood. God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be **trusted** because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. Telling the truth is one way we bear the **image** of God, whose **Son** is “the way, the truth, and the life.”

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**Essential Doctrine “God Is Truthful”:** The Scriptures are clear that in God there is no falsehood (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God represents things as they really are. Everything He says can be **trusted** because God guarantees the truth of everything He tells us. The call for humans to be honest and not to bear false witness is rooted in the utter truthfulness of our Creator. Telling the truth is one way we bear the **image** of God, whose **Son** is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

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# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** Perhaps at no other time in recent memory has sharing the exclusive truth of Jesus and His gospel been so poorly received and challenged than it is today. In a way, however, we should find it encouraging that Christ's claims to exclusive lordship and the Bible's teaching on salvation by grace alone were just as polarizing and potentially offensive in Jesus' day as in ours. Knowing the difficulty should not dissuade us from sharing the gospel with others. Knowing God's Spirit is still at work in the world to awaken hearts to receive Christ should motivate us. The task is still ongoing and the stakes are high. People are dying and left to experience God's judgment without knowing Jesus. But in Jesus are found the words of life, so let us—in the truth, guidance, and power of the Holy Spirit—lead others to Jesus so they too may believe and live.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 33), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because we have been given the Holy Spirit, who guides us to truth, we proclaim the full counsel of Scripture, even the more difficult parts, so others may hear Jesus' words of life.

- **How will you move closer toward Jesus in faith because He has the words of eternal life?**
- **What are some ways your group can support and encourage one another in the mission of sharing the gospel with others?**
- **With whom will you share about Jesus and the words of eternal life? Pray for guidance and the words to say for when you next encounter this person.**



## Voices from Church History

“To receive [the words of eternal life] is to belong to the fellowship of him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life ([John] 14:6). And that presumes a continued walking along the Way, remaining in the truth, and living in communion with the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

—G. R. Beasley-Murray (1916-2000)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, thank You for Jesus, the bread of life. Apart from receiving by faith all that Your Son is and has done for us, we are spiritually barren because the flesh cannot help us. Fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we might declare to others the sometimes difficult but always good news about Jesus the Messiah. Amen.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 34-36), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 37) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God's Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 34-36) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 37) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 34-36) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 5** as a part of point 3 in the session: **Repentance isn't feeling sorry you got caught or simply wanting to be free of guilt; it is a despair of your own sin and a desire to be in fellowship with Jesus.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 1:** "Nobody on their deathbed wishes they'd spent more time chasing more money, bigger stuff, and other temporary cares."
- **Day 3:** "Just like not eating food means we will die, not trusting in Jesus means we will die the second death."



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 37) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share with one another the ways they regularly feast on Jesus along with ways they sometimes fill up too much on the world.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## Point 1: Jesus shares words of life (John 6:52-59).

“There has been much debate concerning the meaning of eating Christ’s **flesh** and drinking His **blood**. Some have argued that these words are a reference to the Eucharist. However, nothing in the immediate context warrants this interpretation. Rather, eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood are vivid metaphors describing the kind of relationship true believers must have with Christ. The necessity of food intake in the physical realm carries over as analogous to receiving Christ (i.e., partaking of His body in a figurative sense, in order to have spiritual life). Jesus’ followers must be willing to identify with Him and assimilate His life within their own lives so that they will be willing to suffer and die with Him.”<sup>3</sup>

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“Failing to understand his words spiritually, [the Jews] were offended and drew back, thinking that the Savior was urging them to cannibalism. Then again in the old covenant there was the showbread. But that, since it belonged to the old covenant, has come to an end. In the new covenant there are the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, which sanctify body and soul. For as bread corresponds to the body, so the Word is appropriate to the soul. So do not think of them as mere bread and wine. In accordance with the Lord’s declaration, they are body and blood. And if our senses suggests otherwise, let faith confirm you. Do not judge the issue on the basis of taste, but on the basis of faith be assured beyond all doubt that you have been allowed to receive the body and blood of Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

## Point 2: Jesus shares words of the Spirit (John 6:60-65).

“Jesus knew that the disciples were grumbling (6:61). In this Gospel, we are constantly reminded that Jesus is all-knowing (omniscient). The point is repeated in 6:64. So he responds to their question with a question of his own, that could be paraphrased as ‘Since you are offended by my claim to be the bread come from heaven, and my statement that you must eat my flesh, what would happen if you were to see the Son of Man going back to his original state? Would you be able to appreciate that higher glory at all?’ (6:62). The claim that he is the bread of life is a small one compared to the claims he can make from eternity . . . Jesus was well aware that some of his disciples did not like what he was saying and did not believe his claims (6:64). He reminded them that they needed the Father’s help to come to him (6:65). The ‘coming’ of which he speaks here is more profound than the ‘coming’ in 6:45. Here the person comes with expectation, hoping to receive all that Jesus has to offer. Judas and some of the other disciples who did not believe had come to Jesus and were with him physically, but their hearts were elsewhere. Only God could turn those indifferent hearts and bring them to follow Jesus sincerely.”<sup>5</sup>

“Jesus meant for his words to be taken neither literally nor in a sacramental sense. The Hebrew idiom ‘flesh and blood’ refers to the total person. Nowhere is Jesus’s teaching more shocking than here. **Eternal life** comes from eating his **flesh** and drinking his **blood**—that is, from believing in him. Even Jesus’s disciples were offended by such talk. But Jesus explained that he was talking spiritually. Unaided by the **Spirit**, human reason cannot discern spiritual truth. The Jews wrongly believed study of Scripture (see 5:39) and doing “works of God” (see 6:27-29) were sufficient for spiritual understanding . . . Many of Jesus’s disciples turned from him at this point, which is a watershed in John’s Gospel. But Jesus was not surprised by the defection.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Point 3: Jesus receives words of worship (John 6:66-69).**

“Jesus’ explanation of the nature and cost of discipleship was unpalatable to many who were following him. They turned away from him (6:66; see also Luke 9:57-62). Turning to the Twelve, Jesus asked about their desire and decision (6:67). Would they still remain with him? As in many other places in the gospels, Peter speaks up for this group, assuring Jesus that they would not, and could not, forsake him. For them there was no other option. They were convinced that Jesus was the *Holy One of God*, the one sent from the Father, who had a unique relationship to God (6:69). There was no one else like him, for his words were indeed the source of eternal life (6:68).”<sup>7</sup>

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“That the crowds were offended by Jesus’ scandalous words is not surprising, and Jesus warned that there would be even greater grounds for offense in the coming days. Jesus didn’t come to win a popularity contest but to give his life as ‘a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45). The cross, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are foolishness, even offensive to the natural mind (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 5:11). For the gospel reveals the depth of our need and our total inability to save ourselves. When we trust in our own cleverness or obedience or resources or abilities, we abhor God’s grace. But when God kindly deconstructs our vaunted self-sufficiency, our hearts come alive again. The Father generously grants many to believe on Jesus (John 6:39-40), and the Spirit gives life to all who call on his name.”<sup>8</sup>

### References

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3. Tamra Hernandez, “John,” in *The Study Bible for Women* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014), 1381, n. 6:51-58.
4. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures 4.4-6*, in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 239.
5. Samuel Ngewa, “John,” in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1291-92.
6. Andreas Köstenberger, “John” in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1679, n. 6:3-59; n. 6:60-63; n. 6:64-66.
7. Pratap C. Gine and Jacob Cherian, “John,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1408.
8. Scotty Smith, “John,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1419, n. 6:60-71.