

“Breakthrough!” in 2022

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 09.04.2022

Too Good not to Believe – JOHN 5:17-47

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

After Jesus fed the multitudes with a few fish and some loaves, His popularity soared. The crowds literally tried to take Him by force and make Him king, but Jesus slipped away. If He had consulted with a public relations firm at this point in His ministry, they would have told Him that He needed to strike while the iron was hot. This is the moment He had been waiting for. He needed to capitalize on the momentum that had been generated by the miracle and leverage it to draw even bigger crowds. In verse 59 John will tell us that Jesus delivered these remarks in the synagogue in Capernaum. Every seat would have been filled. A packed house is every preachers dream. So, what kind of sermon did Jesus cook up for His biggest audience yet? Jesus used His biggest stage to deliver one of His most offensive teachings yet. He had already put the crowd on edge by claiming that He had, ‘come down from heaven.’ When He claimed to be ‘the bread of life’ it further irked them even more. Jesus was saying, ‘This bread is my flesh, which I give for the world.’ Things had been going so well. The miracles were a hit. The crowds were growing. The future was bright. So why was Jesus talking about eating His flesh? Even his own disciples were having trouble with this one. Let’s get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What comes to mind when you think of the word “faith”?
2. How does a biblical understanding of faith differ from how our culture thinks of faith?
3. Which is more important: the quality of a person’s faith or the object of his or her faith? What about the source of a person’s faith? Why are all of these essential?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:41-46

1. What is the crowd’s response to Jesus’ teaching that He is the bread of life? According to verse 42, why do they object to His claim to “have come down from heaven”?
2. How do verses 44-45 reiterate what Jesus already stated in verses 37-40? How does this help to explain why the crowd did not accept His teaching?

Jesus explained that the reason anyone comes to Him is because the Father has given them to Him and draws them near. Jesus will never deny anyone who truly comes to Him in faith, so we can have confidence in coming to Jesus in knowing that if we believe in Him it is because of the Father’s mysterious and invisible work in us.

3. What do you think of Jesus’ statement that “not that anyone has seen the Father” in verse 46 (cf. 1:18)?
4. How should we understand this statement in view of the multiple occasions that Yahweh appeared to people in various forms throughout the Old Testament?

We can draw two possible interpretations from statements in John’s Gospel that indicate no one has seen God or the Father (1:18; 5:46). First, when New Testament writers use the word God (Greek, theos) they typically refer to the Father in distinction from the Son and Spirit (see 2 Cor.13:13 CSB; Eph. 1:17; Rev. 1:6). So, John could be implying that when Yahweh made himself visible using material forms in the Old Testament, people were seeing the specifically the divine

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person of the Son rather than the Father. Second, John’s statement that no one has seen God could be his way of conveying that no one prior to the Word becoming flesh had seen God in the fullest way (John 1:18; 14:9). Previous revelations of God were only partial whereas Jesus is the fullest revelation of God. Both of these are valid options for Bible-believing Christians, and the two options are not necessarily opposed.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:47-59

1. In verses 47-51, how does Jesus contrast the life He gives with the manna the Israelites received in the wilderness?

Jesus said that “anyone who believes has eternal life” (v. 47) and that the one who believes will never hunger or thirst (v. 35). Hence, Jesus extended the metaphor of His identity as the bread of life. We are to receive Him and consume Him for who He is—the true bread from heaven. He did not teach that eating His body and blood physically brings people eternal life. Rather, He made it clear that believing in Him gives eternal life.

2. Why do you think the imagery of eating flesh and drinking blood would be offensive to a Jewish audience? How might this teaching further confuse the Jews about Jesus’ identity and origins?

The food laws found in the Torah forbid the eating and drinking of blood in animals (see Lev. 17:10-14), so the idea of eating another human’s flesh and blood would have seemed unthinkable to first-century Jews. This helps us to see why even the disciples perceived Jesus’ words as a hard teaching (v. 60). What are some ways we might, today, read and study the Bible and yet miss the main point?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 6:60-71.

1. In what sense is Jesus’ teaching “hard”? What do you find most difficult about what He has said in John 6?
2. What does Jesus say in verses 63-65 to explain why some are able to accept His teaching, while others cannot?

Jesus earlier referred to the Father’s working in bringing sinners to faith in the Son (vv. 37-40, 44-45) and here mentions the Spirit’s work (v. 63). The Spirit works with Jesus’ words to bring life, and humanity in its flesh stands in the way of receiving eternal life. That is why Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.” We need God the Father to change us through the work of the Spirit in order for us to believe in the Son.

3. In verses 64 and 70-71, what does John say to indicate that Jesus knew that some of His followers at the time were not true believers and that Judas would betray Him?
4. What purpose did God have for Judas? What does this suggest about God’s sovereignty over even unbelievers in the midst of the church (see also 1 John 2:19-20)?

God had a purpose for Judas’s unbelief, namely so that Judas’s betrayal would lead to Jesus’ crucifixion, which was necessary in order to redeem the world. In the broader church, God continues to have purpose for unbelief existing among professing Christians. According to 1 John 2:19, He permits false teaching to exist in order to draw away and expose those who never truly believed in Jesus. Those who remain faithful to the biblical gospel do so because of God’s work in them—“the anointing from the Holy One” that enables them to recognize the truth (1 John 2:20).

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. How should the fact that many disciples no longer followed Jesus after hearing this “hard teaching” sober us? Why should we never compromise our doctrine for the sake of retaining “healthy numbers” in our services?
2. How should we approach people who are tempted to abandon Christianity? How can help them see that truth and satisfaction cannot be found outside of Jesus?

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3. If Jesus asked you the question, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?” how would you respond? What are some reasons you remain committed to Jesus? What is your hope for remaining faithful to Him? How can Peter’s words in verses 68-69 offer you hope and assurance?
4. Who will you share these truths with this week?

PRAYER - Ask the Holy Spirit for greater, deeper dependence upon the anchor of our faith, Jesus Christ. Pray that you would feast on Christ for who He is, and that you would submit to Him as Lord.

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” 1st Corinthians 11:24-26