

**Title:** Extravagant Hope: Where Else Can I Turn? Christ is the Key to Life

**Text:** John 6:1-2; John 6:54; John 6:60-69

**Date:** August 16, 2020 at FBCW

**Preliminary:** Jesus made several turbulent, extraordinarily different/difficult statements:

- Pluck out your eye...cut off your hand (Matt 5:29).
- Sell everything you have and give it to the poor (Luke 18:22).
- Let the dead bury their dead (Luke 9:59).

But perhaps none is more graphic than Christ's statement in John 6:53 –

- The crowds were following Jesus and asking him for a sign of His deity.
- Crowds: “*Our ancestors ate manna in the wilderness...what will you do for us?*”
- Jesus: *Moses didn't provide the bread from heaven...but my Father has!*
- “*I am the bread of life*” (6:35).
- “*Truly I tell you, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood...you do not have life.*”

**INTRO.** Can you remember the popular song from the 1990s by Ace of Base, “I Saw the Sign”?

*I saw the sign, and it opened up my eyes, I saw the sign  
Life is demanding, without understanding  
I saw the sign, and it opened up my eyes, I saw the sign  
No one's gonna drag you up to get into the light where you belong  
But where do you belong? (oh, oh, oh, oh)*

**John 20:30-31**, *Jesus performed many signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

In fact, the primary distinguishing feature of John's Gospel is the signs:

- John never uses the word miracle...John only speaks of signs.

What does a sign do? A sign points to something else. A sign says be alert to something more.

**Background.** The trap many 1<sup>st</sup> century seekers fell into was following Jesus to watch/observe, maybe even to receive something, to benefit from his miracles → they enjoyed watching the things he was doing – but they weren't interested in surrendering their lives to Jesus as the one/only son of God.

- They enjoyed the show.
- But they were not interested in the call to follow Him.

**Still today** → Church/religion can be more of – “*I want to benefit...I want to receive something*” ... instead of ... “*I lay down my life for you, Jesus. Do whatever you want in me, Jesus.*”

- LESSON.** What separated Jesus' disciples from the multitudes (crowds) was –
- His disciples desired to lay down their lives in surrender (Luke 9:23).
  - The crowds wanted to see something cool...maybe get a blessing...but not necessarily give something up.

**John 6 is a classic example of this.**

John 6:2, *A huge crowd was following him because they saw the signs that he was performing by healing the sick.*

- Healing the sick...Feeding the 5,000 for a free buffet...Walking on the water.
- We love it, Jesus! So cool, Jesus! What's next?

**And Jesus said to them:**

*My work is to do the work of my Father in heaven.*

*No one knows/understands me unless my Father draws his heart.*

*Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness; they enjoyed it, but they later died.*

*I, Jesus, am the true bread of life – No one who comes to me will ever hunger/thirst again.*

*In fact, if you don't eat my flesh or drink my blood → you cannot have eternal life.*

**Crowds:** "Oh...Wow...maybe not" –

John 6:60, *Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?"*

John 6:66, *From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him.*

**Let me repeat this point and say it one more time, for clarity:**

In John 6:2, the crowd is growing → Jesus is healing...feeding...walking on water.

In between, Jesus says, "Now that I have your attention..."

- Feed on me...literally consume my life as your own life.
- I am your life...you will not live without surrendering to me.

John 6:60, 66 → No thanks, Jesus. We have other plans.

**In John 6:26, Jesus cuts to the chase of their motive, "You are looking for me...not because you saw the sign..."**

- *But because you ate the food I provided and got full.*
- *You're not personally looking to join my mission. Instead, you're all about how you can personally benefit.*

- *Stop seeking the food that perishes (things of this world).*
- *Seek the food that is eternal life (things of God).*

**The crowds then ask the best question a man will ever ask →**

Q: John 6:28, *Ok, Rabbi, tell us, what are the things God wants us to do?*” (New Cent. Vers.)

**And Jesus provides the most honest answer God could ever give →**

A: John 6:29, *This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he has sent.*

**But unfortunately, the crowds still don't get it!**

John 6:30, *Ok, Rabbi, what sign will you give so we may see you and believe? What will you perform? Moses gave our ancestors bread in the desert.*

It's interesting – yet again → John's already recorded for us Five Signs from Jesus:

- He turned water into wine (John 2).
- He healed a nobleman's son (John 4).
- He healed a paralyzed man at the Bethesda pool (John 4).
- He fed the 5,000 (John 6).
- He walked on the water (John 6).

Q: Crowds: Where's the sign, Jesus?

A: Jesus: “I am...I am your sign!”

**Honest questions for all of us at FBCW:**

How much does God have to do before we will believe in Him?

What needs to happen before we realize we are not in control?

What's the worst thing that could happen if we fully surrender our lives to God?

What's more foolish: Living in the power of our own strength? Or trusting our future to Almighty God?

**LESSON:** As God speaks to your heart → Come! Say yes!

- Come because He is Lord! Come because He is worthy!
- Come with your questions! Come with your reservations! Just come!
- Don't linger to watch a religious show – just come to Christ!

**Perhaps today's text is the most graphic/shocking statement of Jesus in all the Gospels:**  
(John 6:52-54).

- It's intensely personal.
- He is not speaking physically, sacramentally, or literally.

This is personal. This is very, very important.

- a. Food is essential to your physical life.
- b. Jesus Christ is essential to your spiritual (eternal) life.

You do not have eternal life, period, if your soul is not consuming Jesus Christ for salvation.

- a. To eat Jesus' flesh means: spiritually you are trusting/believing in Him for salvation.
- b. To drink Jesus' blood means: you are trusting His atoning death on the cross, the shedding of his blood, to cover your sins.

So to Eat his Flesh? To Drink His Blood?

This graphic language from Jesus metaphorically symbolizes our need to completely accept Christ's work on the cross, and Christ work alone, for our salvation!"

**The Jews said:**

- We want a sign.
- We want religious benefits.
- We are the descendants of Abe/Moses.
- Don't dare tell us we aren't good enough!
- We are fine. We don't need to repent!

**But Jesus said:**

Consume me.  
You need every drop of me, and me alone!

**But when the crowds heard this** → many walked away. Many said, "I'm finished with this."

- People don't like being told to repent.
- People don't like hearing, "You cannot fix this by yourself."
- But friends...it's the Gospel truth!

**Some believe they walked away in two groups:** 1) Some stepped back ... 2) Then more stepped away.

**And Jesus turned to the Twelve,** "*Do you also want to walk away?*"

**I love Peter's words:** "*Lord, to whom would we go? Where would we go? You have the words of eternal life!*"

**PERSONAL Application!**

I am not saying following Christ is easy! It's difficult. This message is heavy.

But where else are you going to go?  
Who else will you trust in?

**Big Idea.** Jesus Christ is the bread and drink of heaven. He is the food of our salvation! We trust in Him alone.

6:54, He is eternal life... 6:56, We remain in Him. ... 6:57, We feed on Him.

Christ is our permanent food – physically, humans must keep eating to stay alive.  
Christ is the food that heals – physically, meals cannot prevent our inevitable death.

**1. When did you first believe? (6:53). When did you first partake of the Gospel?**

- What is your testimony? Story?
- ILLUS: There is a difference between being close: Chickfila, Kroger, the kitchen.
- We must consume it – it must get inside us.
- Tell your personal story!

**2. Let us be encouraged as we endure the pain of this world. We have hope!**

- 6:54, “I’ll raise him up on the last day!”
  - A better day is coming!
  - We must keep our eye on that day!

Question: who else do you plan to follow? Where else would you turn?

- Life
- School
- Work
- Family issues
- Physical health

Embracing the Gospel = assurance of both suffering and glory.

**3. Let us move our thinking from crowd to disciple.**

- Not – how can I benefit and be entertained.
- Yes – how can Christ transform me to follow, serve, and obey Him in all things.
- Discipleship = *whatever Christ wants, wherever Christ goes, however Christ wants my life to look...that is what I want, too.*

**CONCL.**

ILLUS: Cindy Evers with Fred – if God heals Fred, I will joyously live with him. If not, I’m committed to walking him home to heaven. (Where else can she turn?)

ILLUS: Jerry C. and the regret of his four sons – I’m going to live the rest of my life showing them what I failed to show them when they were young (Where else can he turn?)