



January 28-29, 2023

Please note: All campuses have live preaching this weekend, so this discussion guide aims to simply engage with the text itself, not the direction any particular preacher will be applying it!

Ice Breaker Questions

In John 6:44, Jesus claims that it is God the Father who draws people to Jesus. When you think back on your own life, how do you see this working out? How were you drawn to belief in Jesus?

Understand Their Story

In John 5:1-15, Jesus performed a sign (healing an invalid), and then he taught on this sign in John 5:16-47. The same pattern is found in John 6. Last week we discussed Jesus' signs, and this week we will hear him explain them. As a refresher, what signs were performed in John 6:1-21? [Feeding of 5000, Jesus walking on water \(which only the disciples saw\)](#)

1. Jesus and the crowd (John 6:22-40)
 - a. As you read the initial setting for this story (verses 22-24), what kind of mood / energy do you think would characterize the crowd as they begin to engage with Jesus? [Seems like a big hubbub and confusion! You can imagine lots of questions and speculation: they are searching, seeking, wondering what happened to him & where he went. They didn't see him get in the boat with the disciples, but he isn't anywhere to be found.](#)
 - b. As Jesus speaks to the crowd, how does he challenge and confront them? What does he exhort them to do? [They are seeking him for the wrong reasons - want physical stuff \(food\)! \(v 26\), they are working for earthly things instead of eternal things \(v 27\). They are seeing him but not believing \(v 36\). They should NOT work for the food that perishes but work for the food which endures to eternal life \(v 27\), They should come to him & believe in him \(v 35\)](#)
 - c. How does he define the *work* of God and the *will* of God? Do either of these definitions surprise or challenge you? [The work of God is enabling belief in Jesus \(v 28\). The will of God is that everyone who beholds Jesus and believes will have eternal life \(v40\), and that Jesus loses none of the people which the Father gives him \(v39\)](#)

2. Jesus and the Jews¹ (John 6:41-59)
 - a. What questions do the Jews have, which stand in their way of understanding Jesus' words? [How can Jesus be the bread from heaven - he is the son of Joseph \(v 42\)? How can Jesus give us his flesh to eat \(v 52\)?](#)
 - b. How does Jesus explain the fact that they aren't receiving his words? [Those whom the father draws \(v 44\), and those who hear and learn from the Father come to Jesus \(v 45\). If they aren't](#)

¹ As a reminder - when John identifies a group as "the Jews" he is pointing to the religious leaders and/or those who are actively opposing Jesus.

receiving his words, it means that the Father isn't drawing them, and they aren't hearing and learning from the Father.

- c. What do you think Jesus means when he says people must eat his flesh and drink his blood? The picture of flesh and blood seems to point forward to the last supper where Jesus tells his disciples to eat the bread and drink the wine, which symbolize his body which is broken, and his blood which is shed for them (see Luke 22:14-20). We must believe that he is the Son of God who came into the world, and was lifted up on a cross (John 3:13-18), died to pay the penalty for our sins, and was raised to resurrection life, to have eternal life.
- d. What is the 'benefit' of eating his flesh and drinking his blood? What do people receive?
Eternal life - they will be raised on the last day (v 54)
They abide (remain) in Jesus, and Jesus abides (remains) in them (v 56)
They will live because of Jesus (v 57)

Connect to His Story.

3. In our text the crowd asks Jesus to do more signs, so that they can believe (John 6:30). This request seems consistent with their nature & with human nature in general, so let's press into this a bit!
 - a. If you think back to the first time that the people of God received bread in the wilderness (in Exodus 16 - which is referenced in John 6:31-32), what signs of God's mighty power had the people of Israel seen before they received bread²? The 10 plagues, crossing through the Red Sea, Pharaoh's army destroyed.
 - b. Did these signs cause them to believe and trust God wholeheartedly? No! Grumbling in the wilderness as they were without food and water, made a golden calf a few weeks later (Exodus 32), refused to go into the promised land when he brought them to the border (Numbers 14)
 - c. Read Numbers 11:1-10. Did they respond positively to God's provision of bread in the past? No! They grumbled about the bread and wanted to return to Egypt.
 - d. If we can't rely on signs to cause people to believe, what can we rely on? The work of God's Spirit in our hearts! He causes us to believe, and grows our belief as we learn from him (John 6:45).

Apply to Our Story

4. Jesus' only direct command in this text is as follows: "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." (6:27) What are practical ways that you can remind yourself, this week, to focus on the 'right' food? We 'work for the food which endures to eternal life' as we allow the Spirit to work in our hearts and grow our belief in Jesus, as we are in relationship with him and learning from him. So - it's helpful to think through your week: Are you setting aside time & priority to be in relationship with him? We also 'work for the food which endures to eternal life' as we work in the world with God's purposes in mind. Only people are eternal - so how can you invest in people for God's honor and glory this week?
5. As this text affirms, God draws people to Jesus (v 37, v 44), and works in them to cause them to believe (v 29). Pray together for your 5 x 5 x 5 prayer card people: that God would draw them to Jesus by His Spirit.

Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus is the source of everything we need for life on earth and life eternally.*
- *Pray in Confession: There are times that all of us haven't been willing to believe, but have held out and asked for a sign, or have demanded 'stuff' rather than simply seeking his will and his ways.*
- *Pray in Supplication: Ask God to help you focus your efforts on things with eternal significance.*

² Skim through Exodus 7-14 if you aren't sure!

God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 6:22-59

The Theology of Work commentary, summarizes some of the ideas in John 6 as follows:

The issue in John 6 is that people want to keep Jesus around to serve as a Magical Baker King, who will keep the loaves coming. Thus when Jesus says, "You are looking for me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves" ([John 6:26](#)), he is rebuking their spiritual shortsightedness. They ate the bread, but they were unable to see what this sign signified.

One way to understand what Jesus says next is to recognize it as the same lesson we learned in chapter 4. Eternal life comes not from an unending supply of food, but from the living Word who proceeds from the mouth of God. ... Jesus doesn't mean "stop working," but stop working for more stuff (food) when more stuff isn't what you need.

... "What is the difference between food that perishes and food that endures for eternal life?" According to Jesus, food that perishes is food that merely fills you up. It satisfies the immediate need, but nothing more. As applied to the workplace, this could be working just for the paycheck, with no concern for the value of the work itself. By contrast, working for food that endures for eternal life, is analogous to work that accomplishes God's purposes.

On one hand ... God's work on our behalf is infinite—we need only to believe him and accept the work of God in Christ. On the other hand, Jesus is equally capable of laying the emphasis on our active obedience. "Whoever says, 'I abide in him,' ought to walk just as he did" ([1 John 2:6](#)), and again, "The love of God is this: that we obey his commandments" ([1 John 5:3](#)).... In other words, according to the Bible, belief is not mere intellectual assent, but includes faithful action. To believe in the one whom God has sent is not merely to agree that Jesus is the Son of God, but also to follow Jesus by doing the good work that God intends for us.

- *What would it look like for you, this week, to put your belief in Jesus into faithful action in your workplace (or school, or neighbourhood, or place you volunteer?) What can you 'work for' that has eternal significance?*