

JOHN 6:60-71—THE REAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

INTRO.: Christmas is over! (Yea!)—Good Christmas? Have enough to eat?
Looking forward to New Year's? . . . Resolutions? (Lose weight? . . . Exercise more?)

With the end of the year upon us, and the beginning of the new year staring us in the face, this is a natural time for reflection and self-assessment.

Today's passage—**John 6:60-71**—is all about that very thing: *Centered around our reflecting on what we are going to do about Jesus*

WHY? B/c that is the most important issue we face—whether we realize it or not.

Losing weight/exercising more: That's important

Fixing a marriage/bldg. a relationship: That's important

Wanting to save more & get financially ahead: That's important

B/c a more loving person/being more generous: That's important

But what are you going to do about Jesus? That's MOST important.

WHY? B/c that is the key to all these other things (even losing weight) [I'll tell you why at the end of today's message]

Why is Jesus key to all these other things? B/c of *who he is*.

READ JOHN 6:60-71—1st some background: B/g with v. 51

PROPOSITION: *Our response to Jesus is the most important decision we face—whether we realize that or not.* This is so because of who Jesus is.

ORG. SENTENCE: (1) Who Jesus is; (2) What we must do to get in right relationship with him; and (3) How we apply our relationship with Jesus in our lives—*WHO*; *WHAT*; and *HOW*.

I. WHO IS JESUS?

A. This entire chapter—John 6—has been telling us about who Jesus is:

- The chapter began with Jesus miraculously feeding 5000 people.
- Jesus walked on water.

READ C.S. LEWIS RE. MIRACLES (from *God in the Dock*)

B. Most of the rest of the chapter is Jesus himself speaking. *What does he tell us about himself?*

- Greater than Moses: vv. 32-35, 48-51, 58 he cps. himself to the manna of Moses' time
- vv. 38, 41 he says that he has *come down from heaven*
- v. 62 he says he is *going back to heaven*
- v. 46 he says he is from God and is the only one who has seen God
- vv. 39-40, 44, 54 he says *he will raise the dead*
- vv. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 57, 58, 63 he says *he has the power to give eternal life*
- v. 69 Peter concludes—with the 1st glimmer of insight: **“We have come to know that You are the Holy One of God”**—Jesus will later confirm what that means when he says, he not only has seen the Father, and comes from the Father, but **“I and the Father are one” (John 10:30)**—i.e., *“I'm God”*

C. Do you believe that?—If not, why not? You may say: “Anyone can ‘say’ that he is God.” Is that credible?

- *We all know the kind of people who say such things:* nut cases; seriously unbalanced people; evil people; people who are both seriously unbalanced and evil at the same time like Roman emperor Caligula.
- *Is Jesus like that?* No he's not. He is able to credibly make that statement. So he confronts us to come to grips with the fundamental issue of WHO HE IS.

READ C.S. LEWIS RE. WHAT JESUS SAID ABT. HIMSELF (from *God in the Dock*)

D. If you follow the teachings of Buddha, or any modern spiritual self-help writer, or guru (Tony Robbins, Deepak Chopra; Eckhard Tolle), they can help you live better, be calmer, etc. But Jesus confronts us with claims

about himself which, if true, mean that if you miss him mean *you have missed everything*. WHY? B/c of WHO HE IS.

- If Jesus is who he says he is, then we can be in a relationship with him that we cannot have with Buddha, or any modern spiritual self-help writer, or guru.
- If Jesus is who he says he is, then we are confronted with the issue of *what are we going to do about it?*

II. SINCE THAT IS WHO JESUS IS—WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TO GET IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP HIM?

A. Today's entire passage makes clear that being in right relationship with Jesus is the KEY to our life.
So what do we do?

- **vv. 28-29: [READ]**
- **v. 64: 2X** talks about “**belief**” as the *key*

The rest of the chapter give us various metaphors to show us what “believing in Jesus” means:

- **vv. 51-58** talk about “**eating his flesh and drinking his blood**”—i.e., *taking Jesus inside of us*
- **v. 63** makes clear that Jesus is not talking about his literal flesh and blood, but about *the Spirit and his words give life*
- **v. 56** says whoever does this “**abides** [i.e., lives, stays] **in me, and I in him**”
- **v. 65** talks about “**coming to Jesus**”
- **v. 66** talks about “**walking with Jesus**”
- **vv. 67-8** talks about *staying with Jesus* as opposed to leaving him
- **vv. 70-71** talk about *remaining faithful to Jesus* as opposed to betraying him

All of that is what it means to “believe in Jesus”

B. What is Jesus saying to us? He is saying:

- To have life, our only hope is to “eat his flesh and drink his blood”: i.e., *to take all of him into all of us*. We do it by *BELIEVING* in him: i.e., we have his words—his spirit—his mind—his values—HIMSELF INSIDE OF US; AS A PART OF US.
- Can't we do some good deeds/sacrifices/whatever to earn God's favor? That was the Q of v. 28. But the Ans. is: “**NO—Believe in Him (Jesus) whom He (the Father) has sent.**”
- WHY is that necessary? B/c there's nothing we CAN do—we can't save ourselves—b/c of what we are INSIDE.
- We need to have as clear and honest understanding of OURSELVES as we need to have of Jesus. In the wee small hours of the morning when we think about what we are really like on the inside, what do we see?: the petty deceits, the contemptible thoughts, the base lusts, all those things that are a part of us that we just can't seem to shake. We know that our worlds basically revolve around OURSELVES—what I want; what I like; what I don't like; what can I do to maximize MY happiness, MY significance, MY security—and that of MY family and friends. Even as I do good deeds I think, “*my, what a good boy am I!*”
- And then do you ever think how someone with all of these things that are a part of our very fabric—*like snakes in the soul*—how can I ever hope to stand before a holy God? **THAT IS THE ISSUE.**
- That's why Peter's answer in v. 69 is so important, where he says: “You are the Holy One of God.” You see, the Greek gods were just like the Greeks: they lusted; they fought; they all advanced their own interests. Muhammad's god is just like Muhammad: an aloof and violent, vengeful god; Buddha said there is no god—you're on your own. **WHAT ARE BUDDHA'S FINAL WORDS? [READ] There is no hope there.** We can try our best to work harder *BUT THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH*—WHY? B/c the real God is **HOLY**. That means: without sin; without fault; without flaw—from the inside-out. And he requires **HOLY PEOPLE**—without sin; without fault; without flaw—from the inside-out, to stand before him. Holy—*WE CAN'T DO THAT ON OUR OWN* no matter how hard we try.
- The answer is not “try harder.” No, we need a **SUBSTITUTE**: i.e., *someone who IS Holy to stand in our place*. And *Jesus CAN do it for us*. Jesus is the only one who can do that. Why? B/c he—unlike us—**IS** holy: he's “**THE HOLY ONE FROM GOD.**”
- That's why Christianity is unlike every other religion that there ever was or is: B/c every other religion basically says, “you have to try harder.” But Jesus does for us what we can't do for ourselves. Jesus stands before the Father in our place—so that with him living in us, **WE** can stand before the Father w/o fear.
- To be in right relationship with Jesus simply requires that we recognize and believe who HE is, admit who and what WE really are, and then give control to him.

- *I did that 28 years ago.* I am not perfect now; I have ups and downs—as my wife and children clearly know (*Take my word for it; you don't have to ask them—PLEASE*); but I am in RELATIONSHIP with Jesus. He is the one—his words, his spirit, his mind, his values—around which my life now revolves. And he's made all the difference in my life.
- *If you have not yet done this, why not?* What have you got to fear?
- If you have questions, check them out. There are reasonable answer to your Qs. Don't just sit on your hands: the stakes are too big.
- When we are in relationship with Jesus he WILL challenge us. Look at what he said about “**eating his flesh and drinking his blood.**” Vv. 60-61, 66 tell us that this caused MANY of those who had been following him to grumble, and stumble, and withdraw, and to not walk with him anymore.
 - WHY will he challenge us? Remember—*Who is HE? And who are WE?* HE is “**The Holy One from God**” WE are not.
 - *He takes us just as we are now*—but he won't leave us that way. He comes inside of us to change us to take all our garbage, and change us from the inside-out to become like himself.
- B/c Jesus will challenge us in all areas of our lives, you will see amazing things when you are in right relationship with him. It is an adventure.

If you believe that—if you have chosen to get in right relationship with Jesus—then:

III. HOW DO WE PRACTICALLY APPLY THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS IN OUR LIVES?

- First, make Jesus consciously present to you as you go about your daily activities. Remember He is God. So he IS present with you. But most of us live our lives as if he was nowhere around. But as we become *consciously aware of his presence* we can begin to draw upon his wisdom and strength.
 - Frank Laubach, missionary to the Philippines and developer of a method of teaching illiterate people how to read invented what he called the “Game With Minutes” which can be transforming: “Experience has told us that good resolutions are not enough. We need to discipline our lives to an ordered regime. Select a favorable hour; try how many minutes of the hour you can remember God at least ONCE each minute; that is to say, bring God to mind at least one second out of every sixty. It is not necessary to remember God *every second*, for the mind runs along like a rapid stream from one idea to another. Your score will be low at first, but keep trying, for it constantly becomes easier, and after a while is almost automatic.”
 - Laubach said this to encourage us: *Grudges, jealousies, hatred, and prejudices melt away. Little hells turn into little heavens...This game...eventually results in flashes of new brilliant thought which astonish us, and keep us on tiptoe with expectancy for the next vision which God will give us.*
 - He concluded: This game is not a grim duty. No one need play it unless he seeks a richer life. It is a delightful privilege. If you forget to play it for minutes or hours or days, do not groan or repent; begin anew with a smile. It is a thrilling joy -- don't turn it into a sourfaced penance. With God, every minute can be a fresh beginning. Ahead of you lie limitless anticipations!
To learn more just Google Frank Laubach “Game with Minutes”
- Second, draw on the means of grace that Jesus provided for us. Specifically, he has left us **His Body (the church)** and **His Word (the Bible)**.
 - *With respect to His Body:* Wade . . . Life Group . . . TECH Time.
 - *With respect to His Word:* Remember, he says in v. 63 “**My words are spirit and are life.**” When you read the Bible, don't just say “that's interesting—I've learned something about the Philistines that I didn't know before.” DO IT. LIVE IT [PIPPERT EXAMPLE]
- Third, start where you are right now. e.g., LOSING WEIGHT. Bible tells us things that can change our thinking and thereby affect our actions. For example, in **John 2** Jesus said that his body WAS the temple. Later the Bible tells us that b/c believers are *in him, and he is in us, our bodies are the temple of the HS.* I.e., Christ gives us a whole new perspective on our own bodies. How do we treat a temple? Fill it full of junk food and live like a slug? Not at all. We recognize it for the great value it has, b/c of the ultimate value it contains—so we treat it well—incl. losing weight if we know we should. Jesus will give us the mind, and the will, and the power to make the changes he wants us to make.
- If you start where you are now, he will deal with you where you are now, and then b/g showing you new things. As I say, entering into relationship with Jesus is an adventure. Imagine, if you start taking your relationship with Jesus seriously, what you can be like next year at this time!

CONCL.: CHRISTIANITY IS UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD B/C *Jesus is unique in all the world.*

- A lot of people may say they are Christians, but they are really misrepresenting Jesus and Christianity by how they live. They may falsely be taking Jesus' name and are just hypocrites—or they may be real believers, but are deeply flawed, like me. Don't let the behavioral flaws of people who act in ways CONTRARY to Jesus turn you away from Jesus himself. LOOK TO THE SOURCE—Look to JESUS HIMSELF.
- Enter into right relationship with Jesus. Then apply that relationship in your life. *What is the one thing you know you need to change in your life RIGHT NOW?* Give that to Jesus. See what he does. DO IT! You will never regret it.

LET'S PRAY

BENEDICTION: **John 14:21**