

Salvation is a Life [pt2]

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[0:00] And loving each other is something we're really good at. So don't take that for granted. Hold on to it and continue to do it. Paul said to the Thessalonians, who are like us, He said, excel still more.

Keep at it. So that's my word for you this morning. So a couple of things just kind of lead to the sermon that don't have anything to do with the sermon. The reason we're promoting that movie, The Story of Everything, is it's a way to equip you in some important ways. Number one, it's a movie that will help reinforce your trust in what the Bible says that God created, God spoke, and all that we see came into being.

It says that in Genesis chapter one. The Story of Everything is basically a look, is a look at what contemporary science is finding that you cannot hide from the fact that there was an uncaused cause.

What does that mean? That somebody is behind everything we experience. That God is real. That he's personal. And that our world is by design.

[1:10] The Story of Everything goes into the scientific side of that and brings it to light. So that's beneficial for your faith. The other benefit is, it's a great place to segue into sharing the gospel with somebody.

You saw the last question at the end of that little video was the question now becomes, what do you do with this? It's interesting.

You've heard me refer to this man from the pulpit. I oftentimes have private conversation. Jordan Peterson is a person who won't disclose whether or not he's trusting Christ as a savior or not. He keeps that close to the vest. But he thinks deeply about what the Bible has to say and what he sees in creation. And I like listening to his viewpoint because it gives me a peek from the outside in, if you will, to what our life is like.

And one of the things that he has concluded is when he looks at creation from a secular perspective, when Jordan Peterson looks from the outside and he says, creation's basically good.

[2:16] And the person who made it is good. Well, if you have that conversation with somebody, what do you do next? Well, the next step is, let me tell you about how that good God reached down and sent his son to die for us on the cross, to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

So we want to give you a way of sharing the gospel. So that's the story of everything. We'll give you more details about taking a group down, probably to see the rapids to see it down there because it's not showing in Dubuque.

How rude is that? So we'll go watch it down there and bring it back with us once we get it inside of our heads. I just want to say some thank yous to several people that are often neglected. So you notice these banners that are flanking me here, the decor that we had on the stage last week for Easter.

Peggy Redmond drives that engine, making sure that the church is clean, that the signage is up. These are perfect, by the way, for the topic of our sermon this morning.

So I just want to thank Peggy for all the work that she does behind the scenes to make sure that we have a clean sanctuary. Thank you. I want to thank Becky for doing the announcements and coming up here.

[3:37] And I'm very relieved that Brian came over and put this down because at first I thought, are we going to just look at a blank music stand? But we fixed that. She did a great job.

So Becky, I think, is downstairs with the Sunday school. So she's serving all over the place. But if you see Becky this morning, thank her for stepping up and taking some time to tell you what's going on.

I want to thank June for the work that she does completely behind the scenes, keeping track of our finances. That's a very important role. That's critical to make sure that our books are in order, to make sure that we're doing what we need to do, that we're spending our money well.

So June, thanks for the work that you do in that regard. And the worship teams that we have every week, that's a lot of work.

To prepare music, it doesn't happen instantaneously. And this week in particular, Tim Biang and his family came down with the creeping crud again. And he just realized, I just can't do it all.

[4:40] And so Brian and Wincy and Roger and Tina, and who am I missing? I think I got everybody. Last minute, stepped up, did I get you, Roger?

Stepped up to help us and lead us in worship this morning. So we want to make sure and thank these people who lead us in worship for all that they do. We really appreciate the work that you do. All right, so now let's step into God's Word.

Open your Bibles to John chapter 6. While you're doing that, I'm going to take you on a brief stroll down memory lane. I'm going to talk about what we looked at last week.

If you recall, we were focused on the last couple of verses of John chapter 20, verses 30 and 31.

I'm going to read just verse 31 to you. John was telling us why he wrote his gospel.

But these things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. The whole gospel of John was written so that we could believe that Jesus was the Messiah that was promised and the Son of God, and that through believing we would have life.

[5:54] Now last week, I described that life, but I didn't define it. Today we're going to define more closely what it actually is.

What is this life that Jesus is offering to us, and how do we apprehend it? How do we receive it? What does it mean to believe? We're going to answer those two questions.

So last week, the descriptions we came up with was number one, this life is rooted in relationship with God. It begins there, it is sustained there, it continues there forever.

The life that we have that Jesus is offering to us is rooted in a relationship with God. It's not head knowledge, it's relationship knowledge.

That was number one. Number two, it's an abundant life. Jesus said that in John 10, that as we follow the good shepherd, we receive this abundant life.

[6:51] God isn't meager, he's not cheap, he's generous, he offers abundant life. It's a fruitful life. Jesus said in John 15, that you did not choose me, but I chose you, that you might bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain.

He also said, a couple verses before that, that God is most glorified as we bear fruit in our lives. We have lives that matter, they're significant.

We live life that is empowered by God. The fact of the matter is, life is impossible. But because we have relationship with God, he walks with us, and he empowers us to do what he's called us to do. As a matter of fact, the power that's at work within us, Paul wrote this in Ephesians chapter one, the power that's at work within us is the same power that raised Jesus from death to life.

That's a lot of power. And that life, that power, is bringing life to us moment by moment every day. It keeps our heart beating, it keeps our brain functioning, and it enlivens every effort that we do to reach people, to share the gospel, to love them, to live the life that God's called us to do.

[8:12] And finally, it is a life that is just like Jesus' life. Remember when we were looking at Mark, we talked about it during the Mission and Value series. Part of Jesus' mission, the reason he came as a baby and lived life all the way through his crucifixion as an adult was to show us how should people live.

What does it look like to live in relationship with God? Remember, we talked about the fact that Jesus did not have a cheat code. He didn't need one. He didn't play the I'm God card.

Instead, he used the same tools to live his life that we have available to us. He was a student of the Bible. He was a man of prayer. He was engaged in a community.

These things are the tools that God has given us to live out that life so we will look like Jesus. But now we need to define it.

We're going to look at it. But before we do, we're going to leave theology for a minute and talk about some science, specifically psychology and neuroscience.

[9:24] And we're going to delve into philosophy a little bit too. And one thing I want to make crystal clear, that movie, *The Story of Everything*, some of the things I'm going to share with you from the sciences of psychology and neuroscience, those are valuable things.

But make no mistake, I do not interpret the Bible based on modern scientific findings. I interpret modern scientific findings from the Bible.

This is our bedrock. And what's really cool, this is what gets me really excited about science, is all that it does is discover what we already knew if we read the Bible.

These scientists, they would think they're so smart. And that movie has some smart people in it. Actually, got to brag, a friend of mine is in that movie. A guy named Dr. Brian Miller. He's a smart guy.

He's literally a rocket scientist. He's got a degree in physics from MIT. But these guys are discovering this stuff like, oh wow, the whole world was designed by somebody.

[10:32] Well, welcome to the party, guys. We're glad you could make it. But it also helps us to put into context and understand a little bit better some of the things that we may wrestle with.

So we're going to look at three concepts to start out this morning. The first one is happiness. What is happiness? Thomas Jefferson wrote, you know, he said, we all these truths would be self-evident, that we have the right to the pursuit of happiness.

What is that? What does it mean? Well, what it doesn't mean, biblically, did not mean to Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. It does not mean just pleasure, stimulation.

It's not a roller coaster, though that could be part of it. Happiness is far richer than that. It's far deeper. The Jews had a word for it, still do, shalom, which we interpret as peace.

That's true happiness. Happiness is rooted in a sense of wholeness, of being complete, of having well-being in all areas of life. Now, that doesn't mean it's free from suffering.

[11:38] As a matter of fact, suffering is part of life, and it's a means that God uses to help us to better understand our world and arrive at a state of happiness, that state of wholeness.

But it's well-being, it's content, and it's rooted vertically in relationship with God. I picked up a book by a guy named Arthur Brooks.

Brooks has been researching happiness his entire career. He's a psychologist, social scientist, and he's looked at happiness, and what his definition has found in research, big shocker, is shalom.

The happiness that we seek that Thomas Jefferson said is our right, is shalom. It's peace with God and peace within our world.

And it's rooted in three things, according to Brooks. First of all, is enjoyment. Remember, I said it's not pleasure. It's not the quick stimulation we feel in the moment, but it's this deep-rooted satisfaction.

[12:47] It's pleasure plus with people, so it's something shared. This is enjoyment. And it's rooted in memory. We remember the good things we've experienced, and we look forward to more.

And so, it's rooted in enjoyment of our life, regardless of what life brings us. Happiness is rooted in satisfaction. That our life matters.

That it has impact. Do you know that you have a fundamental need to matter? Did you know that? It's how God made us.

We need to be needed. That's a healthy thing. Now, it can be corrupted, but part of happiness is to see the satisfaction of a life well-lived of blessing other people.

Some in big ways, some in small ways. The ways don't matter, but it's satisfaction in a life that matters. It's the joy that follows struggle and effort.

[13:45] And then lastly, happiness is rooted in meaning. That our life has meaning. Do you know that one of the number one most referred to

books of the 20th century was written by the survivor of Auschwitz during the Holocaust, Man's Quest for Meaning.

It's foundational to a lot of our philosophical thinking since. Viktor Frankl did a brilliant job of helping us understand our need to have a reason.

What is our meaning? What's our purpose? One of the number one films of the 20th century, the old Jimmy Stewart classic, It's a Wonderful Life. He thought his life was meaningless.

It had no purpose. And yet, what did the angel reveal to him in that great movie? Your life matters. If you weren't here, all these dominoes wouldn't have fallen and all these people that you've touched would not have been touched.

Your life has meaning. That's what we're looking for. That is, in its essence, the life that Jesus is offering. That's the life.

[14:57] I want you to hold on to that. God wants you to be happy. He wants you to experience shalom. That is where our salvation leads.

So hold on to that because we're going to come back to it. Now there's two other concepts I want to deal with. This is three. This is two. There's two other concepts I want us to address. But to kind of set the table, all of you probably remember the view of our brains.

You see the picture. It's that lump of flesh inside our skulls. It has two halves. And scientists for years believed that the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere did different things. We still actually believe that.

Our thinking has changed, however, in what those things are. We all grew up thinking, well, the left brain is where engineers and accountants live. They love tasks over people, things over people. Introverts are probably left brain. Scientists are left brain. And so problem solving, that's on that side. And then over in the right hemisphere is people who are more extroverted.

[16:05] They're more emotional. They're more artistic. Painters, writers, poets, songwriters. Those are the right brain people. And so we would talk about, well, I'm more right brain because I'm creative or I'm more left brain because I'm an engineer.

We don't think that anymore. That's too simplistic and it really doesn't fit with the spectrum of humanity. So what's the better way? Well, we still believe that they're different.

But the gesture with my left hand, the right side of your, no, I was doing left. Wow. I wrote these notes. I should read them. The left side of your brain, actually it's because I'm dealing with a creative expression trying to gesture with my left hand.

Our bodies are amazing. The left side of our brain deals with complicated tasks. Remember that, complicated tasks. Complicated tasks are things that can be solved.

Yesterday, I watched Eric Kronstead change the oil in his van. I watched because I have no ability to actually offer productive help. I was just there for companionship. But I watched him because he's not, he doesn't have a lot of experience with it.

[17:19] He's thinking consciously through each of the steps. To make sure that he removed the old oil in the proper order, that he put the thing, parts back on, then put the new oil in.

One of my boys may have put oil into the car without putting the plug back in the oil pan, which means you have to put it in again because they're all drained straight through. That's a complicated task.

That's a left brain task. It's solvable. It might be hard, but we can figure it out. That, by the way, is where all of us live most of our lives.

That's where we want God to address our problems. We want to approach life as a complicated problem. We can solve it because we can control it. Now, the other side, the right side of our brain, we deal there with complex challenges.

Remember, complicated. Right brain is complex. Some are just pretty easy to state. What is the meaning of life? But there's not a solution.

[18:26] There's not a clear-cut formula or recipe or checklist that will allow us to say, well, I've arrived. I've got the meaning of life solved. Done.

Whereas the left brain deals with the concrete for the most part in solving for problems, the right brain is lived out and understood, but it's never-ending.

You know, I love to quote Ephesians 2.7 that we are going to spend eternity experiencing and seeing the kindness of God to us through Jesus Christ. That's going to be a right brain activity because it can't be summed up.

That's why we have to express ourselves in song rather than in prose because understanding this stuff is a process that we live out as we go through our lives.

That's the complex. So, these are the three concepts that Jesus deals with in John chapter 6. Happiness, shalom, well-being, meaning, purpose.

[19:33] He deals with, I just lost my place. I hate it when that happens. So, Jesus in John chapter 6 is dealing with complex and debunking our desire to be mixed up with the complicated, to be in control, to have all the answers.

That's what Jesus is going to deal with and it's brilliant. It is absolutely brilliant. One thing I want to thank you for is that I get to dig into God's word and spend time thinking about it and unearthing this stuff and I just, I hope that I can give you at least a glimpse into just the beauty that's here.

John was brilliant as a writer and he does such a good job of demonstrating that Jesus goes right to the heart of the matter of what we need to know.

Jesus was so capable, so wise and so effective in how he communicates. So John chapter 6, will you pray for us and we'll get into it.

Father, I pray that as we look at a series of conversations this morning very briefly, I pray that we as your people would step into relationship with you.

[20:55] That we would take a step away from trying to come up with a formula for following Jesus and land on exploring what it means to have a relationship with you, to see you as a person, to see you as a loving father who wants to engage with us.

Help us to see that. Help us to step into it and to wrestle with understanding what that means and continue to wrestle with it day after day after day.

Lord, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So in John chapter 6, Jesus is going to address two questions.

What is the life offered by Jesus? We've talked about that a little bit, this idea of shalom. And how do we experience this life? How do we arrive at it?

So we're going to start John chapter 6. We're going to read the first 15 verses. After these things, Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee or Tiberias.

[22:04] So he went over to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him. If you remember from Mark, they actually walked around to connect with him.

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. Therefore, Jesus, lifting up his eyes and seeing the large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that we may eat? This he was saying to test him for he himself, Jesus himself, knew what he intended to do. Just by the way, memorize that verse. You don't even have to memorize the whole verse.

Memorize the second phrase. And when you're really confused by life, just remember, Jesus knows what he intends to do.

Rest in that. Jesus knows what he intends to do. Always. Philip answered him, 200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them for everyone to receive a little.

[23:09] One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Jesus, there's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are those for so many people? Jesus said, have the people sit down.

Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down and numbered about 5,000. Jesus then took the loaves and having given thanks, he distributed to those who were seated. Likewise, also the fish as much as they wanted.

When they were filled, he said to his disciples, gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost. So they gathered them up and filled 12 baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

Therefore, when the people saw the sign which he had performed, they said, this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. That's a look back to Deuteronomy 18 where Moses was told to tell the people that someday a prophet will come who's like me.

This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. Now this is the brilliance of Jesus. Jesus, he's going to take this action, feed you the 5,000, and he's going to talk to five different groups of people.

[24:18] And we're just going to touch on him briefly this morning. I want you to think on these things. I want you to marinate. I want you to come back to John 6 and just pray and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you, to help you remember what you've read, what you heard, and try to understand where you fit in those five groups of people that Jesus interacted with.

Because this is really important stuff. This is explaining to us what the life is that we have in Christ and how we can get a hold of it. And Jesus does it by feeding people.

So a quick background, if you recall, I'm sure you do, from our study in Mark, that right before this scene, Jesus had sent out the disciples two by two to carry on his ministry.

So Jesus stayed in the area around Nazareth, which is on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was floating around and he had his guys floating around and they're teaching and healing and performing miracles.

So at this moment in time, when Jesus says to Philip, hey buddy, I want you to feed these people. Philip had already performed miracles himself.

[25:35] He hadn't just witnessed them, he performed them with whoever his partner was. And actually, I don't know if this is true or not, but maybe it was Philip and Andrew that went together on that trip because they're mentioned in tandem here.

Maybe, don't know, doesn't really matter. Just food for thought. So number one, miracles were not new. And yet remarkably, clearly, Philip still didn't get it.

If you don't relate to that, you should. We are always caught off guard by what Jesus is doing in our lives, even though if we look back just a few minutes, we'll see, oh, oh, that's what you're doing.

Now I remember. So they were familiar with miracles, but the heart of the passage is verses five and six. Look back there. Therefore, Jesus lifting up his eyes and seeing the crowd was coming to him, said to Philip, where are we to buy bread so that these may eat?

So 5,000 people. Now you have to put that in context. For us, a crowd of 5,000 people is big, but it's not overwhelming. I mean, if you go to a Bears game in Soldier Field or a Packers game up on the frozen tundra of Lambeau Field or if you go up to, I have to include everybody here, I have to be ecumenical in my football analogies, if you go up to Minneapolis and watch the Vikings play, there's 70,000, 80,000 people in those stadiums.

[27:05] So to understand what Philip was seeing, imagine Jesus came to you and said, I want you to feed the stadium full of people. Right. That ain't happening.

I can't do that. So that's what Jesus was saying to Philip. Where are we to buy bread so that these may eat? This he was saying to test Philip. Now this is important.

We think of testing because of the way we're educated as pass-fail. You take a test to see if you've absorbed the material that your teacher has given you well enough to regurgitate it onto a test and go on to the next level.

It's really about did I understand what was being taught, period, and there's a lot of angst, anxiety that we associate with being tested.

that's not what Jesus was doing here. There's another type of test. I do this when I'm discipling people or training somebody is I'll test them to see how much progress have you made in order to adapt my teaching to their need because I have a goal that I want to move them toward whatever that goal happens to me.

[28:16] I want them to become more like Jesus in the case of discipleship or if I'm training somebody, I want them to acquire a skill and I learn where they're at by testing them.

Hey, do this task. Okay, you missed this, you got that right. Wow, you came up with a creative solution that's actually better than what I had and so I'm testing and then out of that test I draw out what's the next step, what's the next part of our journey to help them learn what they need to learn. That's what Jesus was doing with Philip. This wasn't a pass-fail test. This was a where's Philip, what did you learn from being out in the wilderness with Andrew or your partner for those weeks?

What did you pick up? And Jesus knew what he intended to do. It's not just the feeding of the 5,000, it's a lot more than that. So, let's look at the first group. The first group is the people he fed and let's look at their response.

I didn't read this on purpose. Look at verse 15. Actually, let's back up to 14. Therefore, when the people saw the sign which Jesus had performed, they said, this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.

[29:30] So, Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone. That was addressing a complicated problem.

How do I get food? By forcing somebody to provide for me. That's what the crowd was doing. They're doing a, they're seeing this as a complicated challenge, which isn't wrong, but Jesus could provide.

I like to eat. Food was pretty good. Let's make him the king. Jesus doesn't even respond to that. Did you notice that? He doesn't respond. He just withdrew again.

There's another scene in, I think it's in Matthew's gospel where the people are angry with him. This is in Nazareth and he just slips through the crowd. It's like he put on a cloaking device from Star Trek and he just walks past him.

Doesn't even bother giving these people a response. Isn't that interesting? They were after the wrong thing. One thing I can tell you from sales when I'm selling a product, I worked at Mattress Firm for years.

[30:45] If someone comes into Mattress Firm, they're buying a mattress. That's why they're there. It's a real easy conversation because I know that they're seeking what I'm selling.

But if I went door to door and tried to sell mattresses, you know what the odds are of me making a sale? Really, really, really low. And so I just have to go through all the people who were in the market for a mattress because they're not going to be interested in what I'm selling.

Jesus was not selling free lunch. Jesus was offering life and they weren't getting it. They didn't see, they didn't even bother to ask.

And so Jesus just slipped past them. Take a lesson from that. Most of the people you deal with are so focused on the hardships that they're facing in life today that they're not looking after these bigger questions.

They'll come back to them because the hardships of life lead us to the complex questions. Why is my life the way it is? But if they're just looking for a free lunch, beating them over the head with the Bible isn't going to change their mind.

[31:52] Just have a nice day and move on. Trust that God is involved in their life. which is a lesson for all of our efforts to share the gospel.

So that's the first group, the people who are being fed. The second group, turning your Bibles over to verse 25, we're going to skip the section where Jesus is walking on the water because we only have so much time.

And believe it or not, I am trying to shorten my sermons with very little success, but we're working on it. Do I hear an amen? Amen. So, so we're going to look at verse 25.

And we're going to read verses 25 to 40 of John chapter 6. This is the second group. So Jesus walked from the east side of the Sea of Galilee over to the west side.

He walked on the water. They saw that he was gone and that they is probably people who are actually more motivated to seek beyond a free lunch.

[32:56] We're gauging that on the conversation that Jesus has with them. But they loop around. So we're at the point where they're reunited with Jesus the next morning. This is verse 25. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi, when did you get here?

What they're really saying is, how did you get here? He doesn't even answer the question. Jesus answered them and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate of the loaves that were filled.

Do not work for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you for on him the Father God has set his seal. Therefore they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God that you believe in him who he has sent. So they said to him, What then do you do for a sign so that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness as it is written, he gave them bread out of heaven to eat. Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven but it is my Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

[34:07] For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world. Then they said to him, Lord, always give us this bread. Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

That's the money line from this chapter. I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger and he who believes in me will never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet you do not believe.

I'll explain why in a second. All that the Father gives me will come to me and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

This is the will of him who sent me that all that he has given me I that of all that he has given me I will lose nothing but raise it up on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him will have eternal life. And I myself will raise him up on the last day.

[35:11] So Jesus asked a hard question right at the initial part to jar them. Sometimes a shock to the system makes you stop and think.

And the question was oh I know you people you're just like the ones that stayed on the other side of the lake. You just want a free lunch. And then he followed up by saying do not work for the food which perishes free lunch for the food which endures to eternal life.

And they respond well what work do we have to do? So they're in essence saying no no we really want more than a free lunch. What work do we have to do?

What's Ephesians 2 8 and 9 say? For by grace you see through faith and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God not of works. They are trying to find a complicated solution to the problem.

They want to give me a list. Give me a list. Well we know from Paul dude you have the list you failed at it utterly. We can't keep a list.

[36:29] But they're asking give us a list. They're trying to find a left brain solution. They want a formula. What does Jesus say? This is the work of God that you believe in him who he has sent.

Let's go over to the right side of your head. This is a complex issue. So what is belief? Belief is rooted in relationship with God.

It has a beginning point when we recognize in the barest possible way my way of doing things doesn't work. my formula my left brain solution doesn't work to answer the problems of my life.

It doesn't work. And so that's part of it. Okay this doesn't work. We hear the gospel. God sent his son to show us the right way to live to die on the cross to deal with our sin problem and to be raised to new life that we can then walk with him.

Remember our first value? To be followers of Jesus? That we can walk with him and learn to be like Jesus. That's belief.

[37:46] It starts when we repent and turn and we start walking with Jesus. We start looking like Jesus. We start responding like Jesus. but it's going to go on forever.

It's an ongoing process rooted in relationship. That's what Jesus is telling the second group. You need to follow me. So then they ask for a sign.

If I was there I would say I just fed you. What do you want? Well it's so funny how they set themselves up. You see that. Well Moses gave us man in the wilderness.

Oh funny you should mention that. I am the bread of life. That was just a free lunch. I'm the bread of life. But you still don't believe.

You still don't get it. You're still looking for a formula. I said to you that you have seen me and yet you do not believe and God is drawing in all those who see the sun.

[38:49] This is verse 50 40 excuse me for this is the will of my father that everyone who beholds the sun and believes in him walks with him

repents of their sin accepts the free gift of eternal life and then walks with Jesus will have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

So that's the second group. Still trying to solve things with their left brain and formulas. Now the third group we're going to just touch on them briefly. I'm not even going to read the passage for the sake of time. There's a subset of this group that are specifically identified as Jews who think they already know the answer.

Jesus didn't line up. They're just there to test Jesus in the educational sense. We know the answers. Jesus, you got it wrong. You know what's funny is how Jesus responds to them.

Oh, you didn't like that I called myself the bread of life? How about this? You have to eat my flesh. You have to drink my blood. Ponder that, gentlemen.

And that's the end of the conversation. Then the Jews began to argue, verse 52, with one another saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.

[40:12] This is the bread which came down from heaven, verse 58, not as the fathers ate and died, that's a reference to the manna, he who eats this bread will live forever.

Jesus says, your formula doesn't work, gentlemen. You need to really think about this metaphor of bread and what does it mean to eat something.

Dig into that as a complex problem to think through and, pardon the pun, to digest. So now there's a fourth group. The fourth group, starting in verse 59, is Jesus gets along with his disciples.

Now, not just the 12. This is probably, I would guess, the 12 and also the 72 that Jesus also sent out. So these are still people who are pretty close to him. These things he said in the synagogue, verse 59, as he taught in Capernaum.

That's on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Therefore, many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, this is a difficult statement. Who can listen to it? But Jesus, conscious that his disciples grumbled at this, said to them, does this cause you to stumble?

[41:20] What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? You think, this is hard. It gets worse. It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and are life.

But there are some of you who do not believe. The reason I emphasize that is there is a doctrine rooted in Hebrews chapter 6.

There's other places that if you read Hebrews 6 briefly, especially the, I think it's 4 through 7, you might think, oh my goodness, I could lose my salvation. Because it describes things that we associate with Christian behavior.

I could lose my salvation. No, no. Hebrews 6 does not teach you can lose your salvation. Hebrews 6 is teaching you better be sure you're saved. Because you could be a chameleon and look just like any member of this congregation that is headed for heaven.

Fooling even yourself, but you haven't actually believed. That's what Jesus is talking about.

Remember who he's talking to. He is talking to men that he had already sent out, who had already done Christian things.

[42:36] God in his grace chose to work for them, but they did not believe. Paul said at the end of 2 Corinthians to examine yourself to be sure that you're in the faith.

That's a good practice, brothers and sisters. Jesus' will for you is that you do what? Remember John 15 that you bear fruit? Examine your life.

Ask your friends and your family, am I bearing this fruit? Be sure that you believe. But when you're in Christ, you can't lose your salvation.

I don't want you to ever fear that. I know that I'm that I'm saved. I don't have time to tell you why I know that, but I know it. Nothing can take me from the hands of the Father.

Nothing can take you from the hands of the Father. But examine yourself. Be sure. So, but there are some of you who do not believe for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe and who it was that would betray him, referring to Judas Iscariot.

[43:42] Verse 65, for this reason I have said to you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him from the Father. As a result of this, many of his disciples withdrew and were not walking with him anymore.

They wanted a formula. They wanted something that was clear, easy to understand. I'm going to go with that pun again because it just works. Easy to digest. They wanted free lunches and Jesus said, no, it's not that simple.

It's a relationship with me. And they couldn't stomach it and off they went. Now the last group.

Verse 67, so Jesus said to the 12, you do not want to go away also, do you?

Simon Peter, you know, a broken clock is right twice a day. You remember that expression? You could say that about Peter. This is one of those times. Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

Always remember that. Always. Take your questions and turn to Jesus. Lord, to whom shall we go? you have words of eternal life.

[44:56] We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. I think that knowing that Peter's talking about isn't the left brain knowing.

It was the right brain knowing. The relationship. We have come to know you are the Holy One of God. Don't miss what Peter said there.

We have kind of degraded the meaning of the word holy. A first century Jew would not refer to another man as holy, transcendent, entirely above me, absolutely pure.

But Peter saw Jesus. You are the Holy One of God. Jesus answered them, Did I myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?

Now he meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

That's the fifth group. That's the group we want to be a part of.

[46:04] Who recognize that these are complex challenges that we face in grabbing a hold of this life that Jesus is offering. So I'm going to wrap this up by quoting for you the most important, I believe, the most important verse of the New Testament.

It is above everything else and my struggle with it. The most important statement in the New Testament, in the Bible, is John 14, 6.

Not John 3, 16, because John 3, 16 follows it. Not the Romans road, it's John 14, 6. The context is, Jesus said, I'm leaving, where I'm going, you will come.

Philip said, show us the way. We don't know how to get there. And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one gets to the Father. No one comes to the Father, but through me. I have wrestled with that verse for decades. It's the first verse I memorized. I wasn't even a believer yet.

[47:04] But I've wrestled with it because I want to jam my left brain thinking into that verse. So, if I'm looking for the way to get home, if you want to get to my house, what do I do?

I send you a pin that gives you step-by-step directions on your Google Maps or your Apple Maps to get to my house. I'm not the way.

Google Maps isn't the way. Those little notes. That's what I'm asking Jesus. Jesus, you're not, I need the checklist. He goes, no, I am the way. I'm the way.

This is on the truth. Okay, give me your truth points. Give me your truth claims. Jesus says, no, I'm not going to, that's left brain thinking.

You're trying to break me down into a formula. Jesus says, I will not be broken down into a formula. I am the truth. I am. The life.

[48:08] Happiness, this wholeness that we've been talking about. Again, give me a formula. Jesus says, I'm not going to give you a formula. I am the life. I am.

So how do we apprehend this, this nebulous thing? How do we fit what we normally put in boxes into Jesus' claim that he was the way, he was the truth, he was life, he is the way, he is life, he is the truth.

How do we, how do we get that understanding? We have to wrestle with God. We have to wrestle with God. What do I mean?

We exercise the disciplines. You can go and put that slide up there for me, Martha. We take these disciplines, we read the Bible, we pray, we're in community, we worship, we go on mission doing the works of Jesus, but not as a checklist.

If you see this as a checklist, you're missing the point. These are the means that God uses for us to experience a relationship with God. God, my big takeaway for you this morning is to challenge you to wrestle with God.

[49:24] What does it mean for you to be my personal friend? What, how do I get there? I don't have an answer for you. I don't have a formula.

You've got to step into that and step and step for the rest of your lives. wrestling with God, accepting the life that he's offering to you, believing that he is the only source of it and he will feed it to you because you can't, you can't summarize it, you can't distill it down to a formula, you have to live it and in the living it, you come to understand it.

Jesus so brilliantly demonstrated that by taking these five groups of people from the concrete of free lunch to what they really needed and wanted which was true life, shalom, peace with God.

We get there by going through the messiness of life and continually wrestling with God. it doesn't stop but in the wrestling, the wrestling, you come to where Peter was.

Only you have the words of life. Only you. And not only that but we see you, Jesus, you and you alone are the Holy One of God.

[51:02] God. And as you enter into that, that's where the transformation of life that we talk about begins and continues. That's the people of God there.

That's what I'm calling you to be. A person who's walking, literally walking with Jesus, that's life.

Let's pray. God, you're just beyond our understanding and yet you have come down in a way that we can at least begin to grasp and begin to understand.

Lord, help us to take a hold of these things and to walk with you, to trust that you will reveal yourself to us. Amen. God, bless and change our lives as we enter into a relationship with you.

God, we praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.