

## John 6:25-59

### Read Scripture.

**Transition:** Today we're going to look at three character-narratives in our story today: (1) The crowds, (2) Jesus, (3) and the Disciples.

**Main Idea: Jesus tests our faith to prove the genuineness of it.**

**Let's make some observations about the Crowd...**

### 1. The Crowd is exposed: They are false disciples. We are 2 ½ yrs. into his mission.

- The crowd wants Jesus on their own terms.
  - They wanted a **purely political Messiah. An earthly solution** to what they perceived to be an earthly problem: **The tyranny of Herod and the scarcity that tyrannical economy can bring.**
  - They wanted a **magical Jesus**—who performs for them on cue, who gives them what they want when they want it.
- The crowd is not interested in the deeper significance of anything.
  - They fail to see the **significance of the Sign**—the Son of Man waved his hand and multiplied bread and fish.
  - They fail to see the **significance of the Sayings**—Jesus tried to use similes, metaphors, word pictures—but they are too spiritually obtuse to go beyond the wooden literal meaning of any of it. They can't see the connotation (implications of Jesus' words) and only see the denotations of those words (their literalistic referents). So when Jesus uses colorful metaphors calling himself the bread and all the rest, they can't get their minds around it. Pressing further is just too much work, too much effort.
  - **The Crowd isn't interested in going beyond a shallow, easy-believism.**
- The crowd never gets beyond mere "audience" status.
  - An audience merely **consumes a product.** They consume bread and fish in excess.
  - An audience demands **signs before believing. "What sign will you do?"**

The crowd is nothing more than **fickle spectators** who are there to be tickled by another cute story of trees and sheep and moneylenders. **They do not seek a deeper understanding, they are content with the pabulum of parables and short stories and the fireworks of the miracles. And they never, ever graduate beyond being an audience.** And this story, Jesus' interaction with them, exposes the fact that they are just stuck in spiritual neutral. They want to stay a receiving, consuming audience.

**They're response:** vv. 60, 66 "On hearing it, many of his disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?' From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him."

## 2. Jesus is more than a mere messiah.

If they expected to usher Jesus into Herod's palace and replace the Tyrant with the Shepherd-King—if they expected him not only to rule in justice but with endless miracles, providing for their every need and easing the burden of taxation—then they have missed the point of the Messiah!

- **Jesus is more than a mediator.**

Now, let's be clear—*Jesus is God's mediator*. This is why we do not **have special priests** in the Church, because a priest is a mediator...

- 1 Tim. 2:5 "For there is one God and one **mediator** between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."
- Heb. 9:11, 15 "For this reason Christ is the **mediator** of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."

**But hear me well**—Jesus isn't simply a mediator. Now, the crowd of false disciples bring up Moses. "Moses gave us the bread from heaven, so what sign will you perform to show us that you are the new Moses?" **Jesus' response? Let's go to school—Moses did no such thing. He was merely a mediator of something that God alone gave you.**

- **Jesus is the Messiah-King and Savior.**

They didn't understand that he came to be their Messiah-King ruling over their rebel hearts.

- **Jesus is the Manna from heaven.**

The bread of their OT stories, the endless supply of bread that left them stuffed and satisfied—that bread is temporary, it spoils and doesn't keep. But the "bread" the "manna" of the Son of God is life eternal. And that is what their hearts so desperately need.

- **Jesus is the Passover Lamb.** He challenges them: "**You came to me seeking bread and fish, but now I am offering you the blood and flesh.**"

- Leviticus 17:11 "For the life is in the blood, and I have given it for you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar, it is the blood that makes atonement."
- Ex. 12:7-8 "Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. <sup>8</sup> That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and the unleavened bread."

This lamb, its blood as a sign of God passing over a household for judgment, this flattened bread—are all symbolic of the ultimate lamb who was slain on a cross for our sins, **of the man who was the manna come down from heaven to give us that which we most desperately need—eternal, everlasting, never-ending life with God.**

So we can see that the statement "eat my flesh and subsist on my blood" is **paschal** in nature—it is intended to signify the kind of death he would die and how a person is saved. By communing with the slain and risen King.

### 3. The Disciples are those who remain in Christ.

Now, this text refers to both the crowds of people and the twelve and their immediate circle—*both are referred to as “disciples.”* But the true disciples remain and pursue Jesus.

- **Despite the controversy over Jesus.** It would be so much easier to abandon Christ due to the heat and the controversy he generated. But they don't. They remain. **(Magazine Covers)**
- **Despite the social pressure to abandon Jesus.** As they see the fickle crowds withdraw and go back home, the disciples remain in Christ in spite of group pressure to do the same. **There is an intensity that group decisions can make on us. They affect us psychologically. We naturally want to be in the “inn group”, we want to be in the majority.** And there is a great deal of social pressure to simply follow majority opinion. But they don't. They remain with Jesus.
- **Despite their lack of understanding.** John repeatedly characterizes the 12 as having misunderstood the significance of what Jesus was doing or saying. At the end of the Gospel, they receive the Spirit—*and after receiving the Spirit they are enlightened to the significance of all Jesus said and did.* **A true disciple is drawn and summoned by the Father, is born again by the Spirit, and his dead heart is made alive and blinded eyes can see the truth of Jesus. At this stage, they pursue Jesus even when they don't understand everything he is doing or saying.** A true believer pursues the glory, the majesty, the praise of Jesus despite not understanding all that he is up to. **It is not a person who demands to understand before he believes, it is a faith that seeks understanding.**

**Their Response:** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to **believe and to know** that you are the Holy One of God” (6:68-69).

**Notice Peter says “we’ve come to believe and know.”** Because once you come to **know him** then nothing else—no other bread you’re trusting in can satisfy like Jesus.

**Closing Illustration: Jamin Roller campus pastor at The Village Church,** When he was younger he wanted to be a storm chaser. He was captivated by their awesome power. Right out of highschool he got a job working for a company that required him to drive in a massive white truck with a Huge Gold Texas Star logo right on the hood.

One weekend they were driving on **interstate 40**, into **Oklahoma City**. On the outskirts of town, he noticed the weather had changed somewhat.

- The gray sky turned an eerie orange and purple
- The wind and hail picked up
- He noticed they were the only car on the road.

He turned on the radio and the weather warning said, **“There is a tornado touched down by Interstate 40, between mile marker 90 and 91.”**

He looked up and they were right at mile marker 88. And he said to his partner “Let’s go see it.”

He punched the gas and things got really hectic. Wind, hail pelting the vehicle—his eyes peeled open, he can feel the truck sliding and shifting on the road. He’s looking all over for it, debris flying everywhere, and suddenly they punch through the storm and it was calm, a streak of orange on the horizon. Beautiful really.

He looked behind him and “Nothing” he says. He looked everywhere and never saw the tornado.

They drove in to Ok. City and finished business—later checked into the hotel, and Jamin Roller says, “On the news, they’re showing this feed from earlier in the day. It’s a shot of the tornado and you can see Interstate 40 right where we were in the background. And I kid you not, I see this White Truck with a Texas Gold Star drive right by the tornado on the Interstate. Hmm. Missed it.” He was right there. Felt all the effects of the storm.

Was moved by the wind. Emotionally affected by the power of this thing. ***But completely missed the source—the reality, never saw it for himself.***

And that’s where the crowd in this story is. They wanted Jesus to be their never-ending supplier of bread and fish. A politician who could rid them of the tyranny of an earthly ruler.

And while they felt his affects, they were moved by his words—they missed it. They drove right past the true significance of Jesus, the God-man.

**Application:** And you and I can be around here, sit here every week and be impressed by a story or two, moved with emotion by a song, warmly greeted by a person or two—and we can miss Jesus—the power of his life-transforming grace and truth.

### **Communion.**

The symbols we partake of today signify something so much greater than the symbols. The emblems of broken bread and poured wine—they point to a savior who was crushed, bruised, lashed, and broken for our sins.

They point to a King whose hands were pierced through for our transgressions, whose side was lanced to the heart for our rebellion.

And when we take and eat this meal we proclaim that we are not consumers, we have come to commune, to partake of his life giving sacrifice.