

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE BREAD OF HEAVEN, PART 2”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: May 24, 2026

SPEAKER: John Mark/Brian

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 6:41-59

Family Dinner Table

What Are Mouths For?

In her *Training Young Hearts* book series, mother and author Abbey Wedgeworth packs these interactive board books for children with theologically rich lessons. One of her books, *What Are Mouths For?* teaches children the simple truth that their mouths are made for more than smiling, talking, and eating; they are also made to worship God and bring him glory.³ Just imagine for a moment the best meal that you've ever had. Whatever it is, that meal is a faint and fleeting experience that ultimately points to the full and final satisfaction of Jesus. Wedgeworth's books teach children that the ordinary desire of your eyes to see points to the extraordinary reality that you were made to see God. The ordinary desire of your ears to hear beautiful music points to the extraordinary reality that you were made to hear the voice of God. The ordinary desire of your mouth to taste points to the extraordinary reality that you were made to "eat" God. As the psalmist declares: "Taste and see that the LORD is good!" (Psalm 34:8).

- In John 6:41-59, we are reminded that our ordinary physical cravings are actually signposts pointing to an extraordinary spiritual hunger. Read Deuteronomy 8:3. How does God sometimes use our physical seasons of hunger or lack to expose what we are truly relying on for life? What does it practically look like in your daily routine to move past seeking Jesus just for "earthly bread" (physical comfort, security, or convenience) and instead feast upon him as the true **Bread of Heaven**?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Hope Unlimited, supported ministry partner for single mothers

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Argyris and Dina, supported missionary partners serving in Greece

There's a story about the famous children's author Maurice Sendak, who wrote and illustrated the classic *Where the Wild Things Are*. In 1986, Sendak was interviewed by Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air*. He was asked to share some of his favorite fan comments. Sendak responded, "Oh, there's so many. Can I give you just one that I really like? It was from a little boy. He sent me a charming card with a little drawing. I loved it! I sent him a postcard and I drew a picture of a Wild Thing on it... Then I get a letter back from his mother and she said, 'Jim loved your card so much he ate it.' That to me was one of the highest compliments I've ever received. He didn't care that it was an original drawing... He saw it, he loved it, he ate it."¹ This is precisely what Jesus invites the crowd to do in John 6:41-59. Yet, instead of receiving Jesus with childlike faith, the people in the synagogue push the **Bread of Heaven** away. Bound by earthly thinking, they refuse to devour the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, stumbling first over his divine origin, and ultimately over his radical offering.

Stumbling Over Jesus' Origin (vv. 41-51)

The crowd's first roadblock is their familiar, human perspective of Jesus' identity. They grumble because he claims to be the "bread that came down from heaven." Operating purely on physical sight, they object: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (v. 42). Because they think they know his earthly family, they completely blind themselves to his heavenly origin. Jesus confronts their murmuring by revealing that true recognition requires divine intervention. No one can truly see him unless the Father "draws him" and teaches him (vv. 44-45). He contrasts himself with the temporary physical provision of the Old Testament. While their ancestors ate manna in the wilderness and eventually died, Jesus offers a permanent, spiritual reality. He is the living bread, and the supernatural life he offers requires believing in him as the One sent directly from the Father.

- In John 6, the apostle portrays Jesus as the New Moses bringing about a New Exodus. The setting of chapter 6 is during Passover and within the narrative there is a mountain, manna, and a new Moses. Read Exodus 16. Discuss the parallels.
- Augustine wrote, "Believe, and you have eaten."² How does shifting our definition of 'eating' to 'believing' change the way we approach Christ? What makes 'consuming' Jesus through faith a deeper, more demanding reality than just acknowledging his miracles? (cf. John 2:18, 4:48, & 6:30)

Stumbling Over Jesus' Offering (vv. 52-59)

If the crowd struggles with where Jesus came from, they are entirely scandalized by where he is going. The tension escalates when Jesus declares that the bread he gives is his flesh (v. 51). Taking him literally, the people dispute among themselves, asking, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52). Instead of softening his language to ease their confusion, Jesus intensifies it. He insists that unless they eat his flesh and drink his blood, they have no life in them (v. 53). Jesus is forcing them to see that spiritual life requires a total consumption of his life and sacrifice. His flesh is true food, and his blood is true drink because they facilitate mutual indwelling: "Whoever feeds on my flesh... abides in me, and I in him" (v. 56). The crowd stumbles because they want a Messiah who provides free physical bread, but Jesus offers himself as the ultimate true food and drink.

- Read Leviticus 17:11. How does the passage help unpack the mystery of verses 53-58? Why must we spiritually 'consume' the blood of Jesus to have eternal life? (cf. Hebrews 9:22)
- How do John 6:56, Genesis 2:10, Psalm 36:8-9, John 4:14, and Revelation 7:17, 22:1-5 collectively connect Jesus to the garden, the cross, and eternal life?
- At every stage of redemptive history, food plays an important role in the Christian story—from God's abundant provision in the Garden of Eden, to humanity's fall in eating the forbidden fruit, the Passover meal to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the miraculous manna God provided in the wilderness, the meticulous dietary laws in the OT, the gift of the Promised Land that flowed with milk and honey, the wedding feast at Cana, the feeding of the 5000, the Last Supper, and the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. Read John 6:35, 51. Why do you think food is such a central motif?

¹Shaun Usher. *Saw It, Loved It, Ate It*. January 24, 2023. LettersOfNote.com. <https://news.lettersofnote.com/p/saw-it-loved-it-ate-it>
²Augustine. *Tractates on the Gospel of John: Tractate 25, section 12*. NewAdvent.org. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701025.htm>
³Abbey Wedgeworth. *What Are Mouths For? A Training Young Hearts Book*. 2023, The Good Book Company, Ltd.