

The Foundation of Faith
John 6:47-58
Pastor Ty Blackburn
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Would you please turn with me in your Bibles to John 6? We'll be reading Verses 47-58 this morning. I'm planning on looking at this passage again next week. It is one of the passages in John's Gospel that sometimes is really misunderstood and misrepresented, and is taught very badly by a lot of people, especially the Roman Catholic Church. They misunderstand the intent of the passage. Eating the flesh, drinking the blood, this is used to teach that horrible perversion of transubstantiation which is not at all what the passage is talking about. We're going to look at that more next time, why the passage is clearly teaching a metaphor. Eating is a metaphor for faith. The passage, ironically, is not teaching about engaging in the sacraments. That passage is teaching us to believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ. A way to understand what faith is. Jesus' method is always to take spiritual truth that is elusive and elucidate it by something very practical and tangible. He teaches what saving faith is like by teaching you that it is like eating. Real faith that saves means that you receive Jesus in a deep way. We're going to look at that more next time. Since I mentioned it, I had to just go there a little bit. So next time we'll look at that, Lord-willing, more carefully.

Today we're going to look at the passage and the particular thrust of the passage is the need for faith and what saving faith looks like. But today we're going to look at one part of that which is the object of our faith. The title of our message could be 'The Object of Our Faith' or 'The Foundation of Our Faith' because that is of the utmost importance that we have faith in Christ and in Christ alone.

The passage we're reading is John 6:47-58.

John 6:47-58

47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." 52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "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. 54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we come to Your Word, to that which gives life because the written Word, inspired by the Spirit of God reveals to us the Living Word, the Lord, Jesus Christ Who is the Bread of Life. We pray, Father, that You would help us this morning to open wide the mouths of our hearts that You might fill them with the sufficiency of Your Son. We pray in His Name, Amen.

It's not a show I really like that much, but I do see it from time to time on the PBS channel Tavis Smiley. I don't really find a lot I agree with on it, but sometimes you just see who is on and what's going on. He always ends his show with one three-word phrase. He says, "Keep the faith." That's how he ends every time, and I don't know where Tavis is as far as spiritually. I haven't heard him talk about what his faith is, but the fact that he would say, "Keep the faith," to an audience of Americans just across the board, shows that he's not really thinking very clearly about faith. Because I wouldn't go up to an unbeliever and say, "Keep the faith." If you've got the wrong faith, don't keep it, get rid of it. What you need is true faith in the One Who can save you.

In our culture today, slowly we've sort of imbibed this mindset that faith in itself is a good thing. Just having faith. Your faith, that's what matters. You've got your faith and I've got my faith. What you see in the New Testament is that the most important thing about faith is not its intensity or the depth in which you hold it. Those are important, they're very important, but the most important is the object of your faith. What is your faith in? You can have faith. You have to have faith as a part of life every day. If you get on an airplane you have to have faith in Delta and their mechanics, and their pilots, and just the whole theory of flight, which is pretty amazing. When you think about an airplane that weighs that much flying 3,000 miles up in the air at 30,000 feet, it doesn't seem like it would work but it does. So you get on the airplane and you trust that it's going to take you where you want to go. But faith in itself is not the ultimate arbiter of how you're going to do. I mean

if you need to be rescued. Imagine you're on a mountain somehow. I don't know how you got up there, just go with me on this. You need to get down and there is a rope. You have to have faith that that rope is going to hold you to lower you to safety, right? You have to have faith or you'll stay up there in peril. You have to have the faith the rope is going to hold you to start lowering yourself down. But if you have faith that the rope is going to hold you, and the rope is frayed, your faith does not matter one whit. You're going to fall to your death. Because the ultimate determining factor is the strength of the thing that you're putting your faith in. The message of the New Testament, indeed the message of the whole Bible is that the only object of faith is Christ and Christ alone. That's exactly what Jesus is hammering home in this passage. This whole Gospel of John, indeed Jesus' whole ministry, this chapter and this passage, are a summons to faith. God is calling people to believe.

We want to look this morning at the foundation of saving faith. We have here, in Verse 47, a striking summons to faith. The urgency of it underscored by Jesus' introduction with the phrase, *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life*. If you want eternal life you have to believe. There is no other way. Salvation is by faith alone, but it's by faith alone in Christ alone. It's not just by any old kind of faith.

I actually heard this week, I don't know if John MacArthur was the one who shared this, but I heard two things. Both of them relate to Joel Osteen. I heard that Joel Osteen had been asked about Mitt Romney. Mitt Romney is the Mormon that is running for president. He was asked, "What do you think about Mitt Romney?" And Osteen said, with typical theological ignorance, said, "I believe Mitt Romney believes in Jesus Christ." So if he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior, then we're on the same team. He's my brother basically. It's just astonishing, the ignorance, isn't it? The God of the Mormon faith is not the God of the Bible, and the Jesus of the Mormons is not the Jesus of the Bible. It's a false Jesus. That brought up the John MacArthur thing. I had conflated two stories in my mind. A pastor friend of mind was telling me he was listening to a tape by John the other day, and John mentioned Joel Osteen. He was talking about some of the false teachings of Osteen and he said, "You know, it's really kind of ironic. His big book, Your Best Life Now, if you really think about it, the only people by definition who are having their best life now are those who are destined for hell." We're not looking for our best life now. Faith is looking for our best life in the future. Through the Gospel, through the hope of what Jesus Christ has accomplished, in our place at Calvary, through His resurrection.

So it's not just about believing, it's what you believe in. More precisely, Who you believe in, the Lord Jesus Christ, that makes all the difference. I want us to consider this morning under the heading of 'The Foundation of Our Faith', three aspects of the glory of the person of Christ. Three points. First of all, we're going to look at the perfection of Christ. Secondly, the power of Christ. And thirdly, the provision of Christ. The perfection of Jesus Christ, the power of Jesus Christ, and the provision of Jesus Christ are what we have unfolded in the first few verses of our passage. Verses 47-51 are what we are going to focus on this morning, looking more at the last part, Lord-willing, next week.

1) The Perfection of Christ:

So, Verse 47, *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. I am the bread of life.* That phrase, that sentence, *I am the bread of life.* It's one we've encountered already. The whole passage has been about bread. In fact, 21 times in the sixth chapter of John you encounter the word 'bread'. We see this in Verse 35, *I am the bread of life.* We want to unpack that a little bit here again. It's emphasized and repeated and we want to go back and look at it again, a little deeper this morning. Three times in the passage Jesus uses the 'I AM' formula. We've noted in the past that that is essentially the meaning of the name Yahweh or Jehovah, the Old Testament covenant name of God that He revealed to Moses in Exodus 3 and 6. In Chapter 3, Moses said, "Who shall I say sent me?" And God said, "You tell them I AM. I AM sent you." The name 'I AM' spoke of God's self-existence. He is the One Who is. Everything else in the world is dependent upon Him and draws its life from Him, but He is in Himself life. He exists from within Himself by Himself apart from anything else. The name itself, 'I AM', God revealing Himself to fallen men, was really an invitation to rely upon Him. He's telling us in His name, "I am the only One Who is independent. You are, the way I made you, dependent. And by Me revealing Myself as the independent One, I'm inviting your dependence." He's inviting relationship. It's an invitation to rely upon Him as our 'I AM'. "You are unable", God says, "I am able. You are empty. I am able to fill you. You are dead. I am life." So the 'I AM' that Jesus is using throughout His ministry that John records for us time after time in his Gospel, is an invitation to rely upon Him and an expressed, clear claim of deity. Jesus is Yahweh. This is emphatically clear. Now he says, "I AM. You are in need. You are empty. You are dirty. You are sinful. I AM everything you need." That is essentially the foundation of faith. Faith is believing and trusting in Christ and resting upon Him. So the perfection of Christ is seen in the name 'I AM'.

Secondly, though, a sub-point under the perfection of Christ is the perfection of Jesus as a Savior. The fact that He is exactly what we need is not just seen in the name 'I AM' but it's also seen in the metaphor, 'The Bread'. "I AM the bread." Here it is repeated again. In Verse 35 we encountered this phrase very clearly, *I am the bread of life*. He says exactly that again to this crowd. *I am the bread...* Look at Verse 35, *I am the bread of life*. Verse 48, *I am the bread of life*. Then Verse 51, *I am the living bread...* Three times Jesus says, "I am the bread." One of the things that we've learned as we study the Scripture is that the emphasis of God is in the text if you observe it carefully. When you see repetition it is always significant. Three times, 'I AM' and three times 'I AM' is followed by 'bread'. "I am bread." A threefold emphasis in the Scripture is superlative. It's not just important, it is to the highest importance.

God is praised by the angels in Isaiah, the seraphim. What do they say? "Holy is the Lord"? No, they don't say, "Holy is the Lord." Do they say, "Holy, holy is the Lord"? No, they don't say, "Holy, holy." They say, "**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts**". Thrice holy. Ultimately holy. Here Jesus is saying three times, "I am the bread. I am the bread. I am the bread," to emphasize to the highest degree that He is everything that we need because bread pictures that. Bread is a glorious and wonderful metaphor, chosen by the Lord to show us how He is a perfect Savior. How He is a perfect object of our faith. That He can meet all of our needs.

There are two things about bread that I want to call our attention to this morning. The metaphor of the bread. When He says, "I am the bread," one of the things that He's emphasizing is the accessibility of the Savior. You don't have to go looking for Him. He's not high on a mountaintop that you've got to climb the mountain to find Him. No, He's come down and then brings the metaphor, "I am bread," I mean think of all the things He could have said. Think about my favorite foods. I could come up with some suggestions for what He might have chosen, and other people might have suggestions too. But He didn't pick things that were far from us. I've never had caviar, and I don't really think I want to have it. People say it's great. I guess you acquire a taste for it, and you can, but fish eggs, just the concept, I'm okay without it. Some people really love caviar. Caviar is the food of those who are more affluent. In America we have that kind of affluence, but many cultures, most people have never had access to things like that. That's the food of the wealthy. Jesus didn't come saying, "I am the caviar of life." He came saying, "I am the bread of life." It's something you find on the poor man's table and the rich man's table. From the poorest to the richest, all across the world, bread is a reality, the staple food of life.

Our Savior, when He comes down from Heaven, is not some mysterious, gnostic God that reveals Himself only to those who are properly initiated. No, He comes making himself known in the most basic, evident, available kind of way. He is completely accessible to any man. That is the kind of Savior that we have. He, as a leader, was not some elitist politician who is removed from the people. No, he came as a servant. The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. As a teacher, He's not an ivory tower scholastic, He came speaking in simplicity of language. He spoke and taught in parables. He was making the difficult known through the common experience of man. As a ruler, as a king, He came not as a fearsome and unapproachable conqueror, but the prophet Zechariah told us about way before He came, "Behold your King gentle and mounted on a donkey." And the bread tells us this. He came to be accessible. His name is Emmanuel, which translated means 'God with us'. Even His priesthood, the priest, the Old Testament imagery which there is so much that has to be taught to us to understand how we come back to God. So the Old Testament imagery is precious, all of it. But the high priest, set apart from men, washed his high priestly garments. He alone can go behind the holy of holies. He seems so distant. He's the only one, the veil separates us. But Jesus Christ, when He comes to be the ultimate High Priest, what does he do? He comes all the way down. This is the argument of the author of Hebrews. Since the children share in flesh and blood He partakes of the same. He comes so that He can sympathize with us, feel what we feel, therefore He's tempted in every way, yet without sin. He comes fully into our experience so that He can fully deliver us. This is our great hope. We have a High Priest who is not untouched by our infirmities. He knows them. He knows the frailty that we sang about in the song earlier, 'Frail children of dust', because He's taken the dust to Himself. He knows what it's like to be a man and to be frail and feeble. Therefore, He can be a great Savior to all who hope in Him. The bread pictures the perfection of Christ as Savior because it shows us His accessibility. Secondly, it shows us His sufficiency.

Reviewing what we said a few weeks ago, bread when it's done the way it was then, when Jesus uses this metaphor, people made bread. They kept their grain and they ground their grain very close to when they used it. When you grind wheat grain or barley grain, and you cook it within 24 hours, it maintains incredible nutritional value. I think it was that 90% of nutritional value is lost after 48 hours after it's ground into flour. 90%! If you do like they did, they're grinding their grain and then they make the bread and eat it, it contains 40 or 44 essential nutrients. Bread is the perfect food. It's not Chiquita bananas, no, bread is the perfect food. So Jesus says, ***I am the bread of life***. I am everything that you need. Every spiritual nutrient that you are lacking, I am. Christ is all that we need. So He

is the bread, the perfection of Christ is seen in the phrase *I am the bread of life*. Now that leads us into the second point because what is the great need that we have? There are so many needs. We need to be cleansed from our sins. We need to have our blind eyes opened, our deaf ears opened so that we can see and hear. Ultimately, we're dead, and our great need is life.

2) The Power of Christ:

So that brings us to the power of Christ. The reason He is such a perfect Savior is because He has power. That's what His bread brings to us. It's the bread of life. The power of Christ is the power to give life, to impart life. That's the message here. He and He alone has the power to impart and sustain spiritual life. This is what John's great message is. This is what thrilled the heart of the apostle John. He began in John 1. He said, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*". The same was with Him in the beginning. Through Him all things were created. Then he says, "*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness,...*" In this man the Word, Whom we find out is Jesus of Nazareth, He possesses life within Himself. In fact, Jesus had told us just this in John 5:26. He said:

John 5:26 ~ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

Life, the power to animate, vitality. Jesus Himself is that which makes alive. He's actually sustaining everything that's alive. Everything that is alive in the universe is made alive, and I love that hymn, "Borrows its life from Thee". All that has life, "Borrows its life from Thee". God *is* life. There is no life apart from Him. Physical life, that's true. We can do a lot of things, but we can't make things alive.

One of the sad things, this is an illustration of this, is that when you get some toy, and this has probably happened a time or two in my parenting. You get the perfect toy, or you think the perfect toy for your kids but you forget batteries. In the old days, there was nothing open except the Waffle House and they don't sell batteries on Christmas day. Nowadays there is usually somebody open, but in the old days, you were out of luck. You'd call someone up and say, "Have you got batteries at your house? I need nine-volt." If you don't have batteries it's no good, the toy sits there lifeless. You might as well not have the toy as to have it without the batteries. That's a dim picture of the reality of what it is to be a human being and not have life. And the Bible tells us basically, we come into this world battery-less. Going through the motions but not really alive at all. But the good news is, there is a

Savior Who has life, Who can impart life, Who has the power of life in Himself. Then if you come to know Him, you will possess life. That's the emphasis of the entire Gospel that John is writing so that we may believe, and in believing you may have life.

Thirteen times in this passage you hear the word life or living. Jesus has the power of life. In 1 John 1:1, his first epistle, the same author. He writes:

1 John 1:1 ~ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

He's given a very clear picture. He's talking about a man that we could see, and we could hear. "I touched Him." ...***what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning*** (and then he gives us the glorious name of Jesus) ***the Word of Life—*** We've seen Him, we've heard Him, we've touched Him, and we know that He is ...***the Word of Life—*** He has life. He imparts life. And the life was manifested, John says:

1 John 1:2 ~ and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

That was his message and that is our message that life is in Christ. You must have faith in Jesus for He alone possesses life. Everything else is just an imitation. It's some kind of false, emotional high that you might be able to sustain if you're a Buddhist or if you're an excited Hindu or whatever you are. You can have a feeling of life but in reality, if you don't know Jesus Christ, the Jesus of the Bible, you are dead. You are even twice dead because you're trusting in something else instead of Jesus Christ. He has the power of life.

What is life? What does it really mean to be alive spiritually? Jesus tells us in John 17:3, He says:

John 17:3 ~ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

That life is to know God. That to not know God is to be dead. But to know Him experientially, in a living relationship, this is life. Now the Lord uses this image of bread and this idea of the reality of life. Even though we're physically alive and

there is a time when we come to be physically dead, we know the difference. When you have been in the room with a loved one who has died, you know the agony of seeing the spirit, the physical life, depart from that person. But He's saying that in reality, the only way that you're really alive is if you know God.

I think one of the things that helps me to understand this is to meditate on the fact that knowing God is what you and I were created for. We were created to know the Living God. It's in your wiring.

We have a puppy now that's about four months old. We got a boxer. I've probably mentioned it. The dogs come up a lot. I don't know why that is. We got the puppy two months ago. About four months ago our 12-year-old boxer died. The kids were with me when we put her to sleep, and it was something to see that. Even a dog breathing its last breath, the breath goes out. That dog had meant a lot to us and I was struck by how emotional I was getting over a dog. You all can pray for me. But we brought a little puppy into our home, and I want to tell you, that puppy is alive! I mean she jumps and jumps and jumps. We have her crated. I get her out in the morning and she comes out jumping. She's so vibrant and so alive. I take her outside, and it's funny to watch her run through the woods as fast as she can in one direction, and then stop, turn around, and run back again. "Where are you going?" She doesn't know. She's just running because she was made to run. "I'm alive and I want to live." She's thrilled because God made her for that. My other dog is always bringing me things. She's a half golden retriever. I come out and we're walking around and the other dogs are just running and running, but Ginger is showing me what she's got. Sometimes it'll be a rock. I'm like, "Go get a stick. It's easier on the mouth." She's like looking for something when I drive in in the car. I can see her thinking, "What can I get to show him?" Why? Because God made her to do that. The dog's been bred to do that, to retrieve. You and I were bred, we were made, we were wired for worship. We are unique among all the creatures. They worship in their own way, but not personally. They worship by doing what they were created to do. You and I have the opportunity to do what we were created to do and to worship God face to face. We are made in the image of God. We are made to look like God in the image and likeness of God.

In Genesis 1:26-27, the image means to replicate and also to reflect. We're made to mediate His rule to the universe. The idea is that He's put us here to manifest His reign, to manifest His glory over His creation. And the picture is that if we were looking at Him, worshipping Him, adoring Him, seeing Him as the only self-existent One, the I AM, we are dependent, He IS, we're not, but if we're looking at Him, then we reflect His glory beautifully and wondrously and we reign over

everything. This is what it was made to be like. Everything in harmony under God's headship, under man as his head. We failed and we fell far from that, and we are not what we were made to be. We live in a world where things don't work like they ought to, and we feel frustration with that. It's amazing how frustrating it is when things don't work. And isn't it like that so much? We're made for things to work to be under our dominion, and we're made to know the Living God. So we come into this world dead, messed up, knowing things are not right, something's wrong, and the thing that would make us run like my little boxer puppy, the thing that thrills the heart to bring what we have, is when you and I come to know the Living God, and see Him as He is, in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Then something awakens, and it's like the crates been thrown open and you rush out because that is what you were made to do. You were made to worship the Living God. And the only way that you can come to experience that is when you come through Jesus Christ to God the Father. He is the One who enables that, who awakens your heart, who calls forth the dead and makes you alive. He has the power within Himself to speak and to make that happen. When we are worshipping Him, that is life. That's what we were made to do. We were made to worship Him, the Living God, to see His glory. There's something about man where we love to see beauty, we love to see things well done. We clap. We applaud. When you see artwork done well, it thrills your heart.

Kim Pitts, one of our deacons who heads up our children ministry, turns 50 today and he looks like he's about 32. He's an artist and one of the things that really blessed my heart was when he received a gift last night from Charlie Winsell who is an artist in his own right, who makes bowls out of wood, an amazing thing, and he gave him something last night that was just astounding in craftsmanship. There were imperfections in the wood that Kim really likes, there were holes that he somehow made into this bowl. People were coming around just wanting to see it because we were made to see excellence and beauty, and to applaud that and delight in that. God put it in our wiring. We hear someone sing well, we see a symphony done marvelously, and our hearts thrill. Even if somebody hits a shot at the buzzer in a basketball game, our hearts leap.

When you see the Living God, you see the One who does ALL things well, and everything else is a dim shadow. When we stand before Him, and our eyes, the scales, finally fall off completely and we see His glory, our hearts are going to thrill. In fact, Malachi uses that image. It reminds me of my little puppy. He says, "In that day when the Lord comes back, it's like the calf has been released from the stall." We're going to skip like the calf released from the stall, and we're going to run and we're going to feel His pleasure. That's what we were made to do. Nothing

else satisfies. Nothing else meets the needs of our heart, but seeing, and loving, and adoring, and affirming, and praising the Living God. And in doing that, He delights to bring us around His throne and to fill us with His goodness, and then to crown us. He shares His glory with us. That is the power of Jesus Christ. He has done everything necessary to restore man to his rightful place. He is our head. He took humanity on Himself. He came into the world and became the last Adam. What the first Adam failed to do, Jesus has done, and He has maintained that perfect walk with God, loving and adoring the Father throughout His life, never failing, so that He radiated His glory in His humanity, He Himself possessing glory inside of Him, but living as perfect Man in dependence upon the Father in the power of the Spirit. He fulfills the whole mission and makes a sacrifice for our sins, and then brings us to God and invites us into the joy of the triune God, the communion of God. We have glimpses of this in our Christian life, and the Old Testament saints had glimpses as well. I love what David says in Psalm 27:4. David the King says:

Psalm 27:4 ~ One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

David says, “The one thing I want to do is I want to sit in God’s temple and look at His glory, His beauty, and bask in it.” Another psalmist says in Psalm 73:

Psalm 73:25 ~ Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

He’s saying, “All that I want is to see You,” and Jesus Christ makes that possible. He makes that a reality. He provides that in Himself and He’s telling these dead Jews, these lifeless, religious people, “I have life in Myself and I’m offering it to you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe on Me.” So we see the Perfection of Christ, the Power of Christ, and then thirdly, the Provision of Christ.

3) The Provision of Christ:

John 6:51 ~ "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

He is a perfect Savior because He has power and He gives the power of life to us. But how does that power come to us? That’s what He explains here in this verse.

The Provision of Christ. The word 'provision' is chosen because He talks about what He gives. *...and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.*

I want you to note three things about the Provision of Christ: The Giver, The Gift, The Goal.

The Giver in Verse 51 is Jesus Himself. *...the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.* It's interesting to note this, because Jesus has introduced us to the fact already in His teaching that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And very often the emphasis in the Gospel message is what God the Father has given. God the Father gives His Son, but here the emphasis is on what Jesus gives, so that Father and Son are in perfect harmony. Jesus is not giving against His own will. No, on the contrary, He is delighting to give Himself. He's not going against His own will to the cross, but He has come for that very purpose. In fact, the language is emphatic. I've mentioned how it doesn't come out in the English sometimes. In the Greek, you have the pronoun in the verb already. I will give. This really says, "I myself will give," because you have the extra pronoun 'ego' (ἐγώ) there, and then the verb 'didomi' (δίδωμι). Didomi already says 'I will give' but 'ego' added means 'I myself will give'. *...and the bread also which I myself will give for the life of the world is My flesh.* It's emphasizing the fact that Jesus is giving Himself. He is completely offering Himself. This is what He tells us in John 10:11.

John 10:11 ~ "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:15 ~ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

John 10:17 ~ "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it up again. 18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

Never think that it's an accident that Christ is at Calvary. No, He is there of His own will and His own volition. The Lord Jesus Christ gives Himself.

John 3:16 ~ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

1 John 3:16 ~ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.

God the Father is giving in John 3:16, and God the Son is giving in 1 John 3:16. So the provision of Christ is that He Himself is the Giver.

What is the gift? What is the bread? ***...the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.*** The careful reader of John that's not reading into it with his own questions, which is really the problem of why this gets misinterpreted by Roman Catholicism is because they come with their own agenda rather than let the text speak, but if you're reading this in light of what you've been reading in John, the first thing you think about here, the first thing that rings in your mind, is John 1:14, where it says: ***...and the Word became flesh...*** What's being emphasized is His taking upon Himself real flesh and blood. Jesus is giving His flesh. This is an emphatic way of saying He's giving His true body, Himself, for the world—all that He is. It's a picture of the cross. The gift is not teaching, though He had wonderful teaching. The primary gift is not the example that He is for us, though He is a wondrous example. The gift of Jesus Christ to the world is His life, His death. He offers up Himself. That's the object of our faith. That is the ultimate epicentre of what Jesus Christ came to do. The seismic dimensions of His ministry are at Calvary, and nowhere else. That's the center. The gift that I give for the life of the world is My flesh. The Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life. He didn't come to be an example, and He didn't come to teach, though He did both. He came to give Himself at Calvary. You see this in the layout of the Gospel.

Someone has said that all four of the Gospels are basically passion narratives with long introductions. You look how much time is spent by the different Gospel writers, and John is leading the way in this. He writes 21 Chapters. The first 12 Chapters cover from the beginning of Jesus' life and even back into eternity, all the way through the first 3.5 years of His ministry. The last 9 Chapters of the Book are the last week of Jesus life. You see that? It's all about the cross. Everything is pointing to Calvary. All of Scripture has been pointing to Calvary, and all of Jesus' ministry and life is pointing to Calvary. He does not turn to the right or to the left, but He goes straight to Calvary. His gift is Himself on the cross, bleeding for us, bearing our sins, the Man Christ Jesus there, stricken for our sakes, bruised for our

iniquities, bearing our sins and carrying them far away, under the wrath of God, so that we would not bear the wrath of God.

So we see the Giver, we see the Gift, and we see the Goal. And here He gives His flesh for the life of the world. His gift is purposeful. It's clear. It is vicarious. It's for us. His death is for us. He suffers in our place. It's substitutionary. He offers Himself not for Himself. He doesn't need to die for Himself. His death is for everyone who would ever believe, for the elect. He offers Himself for that purpose. We see the Gift, we see the Giver, and we see the Goal.

I love the song 'How Deep the Father's Love for Us'. The second verse pictures the vicarious picture of Jesus' death, and the power that His death as an offering brought life: *Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon His shoulders, ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers, "It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished."* The reality is that the goal and the gift happened at the moment ultimately of His death. What is life? It is breath. Matthew 27 says that when Jesus gave up His Spirit, when He breathed His last, the breath went out of His body, and at that very moment, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. The moment that He breathed His last, the victory was won. The moment that He died, we were made alive. His death imparts life. The veil being torn means you and I can go directly into the throne room of the Living God. The way is open, but it had to come through the death of the precious Son of God. He is a perfect Savior. He is the I AM. He is exactly what we need. He is the only One that we need. He is our Bread, accessible and sufficient. He's sufficient because He has the power to impart life, to give life, and the way He imparted life was through His provision. His provision was offering Himself up in our place, bearing our sins, being stricken, and beaten, and abused, and maligned, and mistreated, and abandoned by God at Calvary, all the wrath of hell poured out against Him which was God's wrath. He judicially abandoned His Son there. His provision was Jesus bearing the weight of our sins. The punishment of every sin of everyone who would ever believe, He bears in His body on the cross, and then He says, "It is Finished! Paid in full. Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit," and He breathes His last, and at that moment, the veil is torn. Thousands of years of world history, man separated from God, men dead in their sins, one Man breathes His last and He brings many sons to glory in an instant. That's the Savior that we have. Jesus Christ: the Bread of life. You need not look anywhere else for salvation. There is salvation in no other Name among Heaven. There is only the Name of Jesus Christ, because He is the Bread of Life. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by Him.

Let's pray together.

Father, we praise You for the glorious salvation plan that You have brought about that spans the ages and that perfectly addresses the almost infinite need of sinners like us. We have stained ourselves, we have polluted our souls, and we have damaged the very fabric of who we are. We are without hope and without God in the world apart from You doing something. There's no way we could have ever found our way back to You. In Fact, whenever You came close, we ran from You. We were made to know You, we're dead apart from You, and yet we run from You who are life. We marvel that You, in Your infinite love, still pursued us. Indeed, You have made Your glory known to all men. You have invited all men to be saved, and yet, Father, when we still wouldn't come, You pursued us through Your electing love, and You called us to Yourself by Your Spirit. You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world—very God of very God, and yet true Man, flesh and blood, bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh—to save us. Lord, help us to glory in our Savior.

I pray for those in this room who have not yet truly embraced Christ, that they today would have their eyes of their heart opened, and they would see His glory and run to Him, and turn away from everything that would hinder that. Nothing else satisfies, Lord. Let them run to You. Help them run to You today, right now, and to come to see that You are the only thing that satisfies. Father, we come rejoicing in the gift of salvation that You've given us, that You have made us alive, and we come confessing how blind we still find ourselves, how distracted, how disinterested in what really matters. Lord, we forget that all that we need is Jesus, that all that we want is Jesus. Forgive us for our knowing dishonor, our lovelessness, and make us treasure Your glorious Son with every fiber of our being. Help us glory only in the cross and only in Christ, for then we will be satisfied, and then You will be magnified. We pray this in His marvelous Name, Amen.

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