

The Hard Saying

John 6:41-60

Many of Jesus' hearers, including some of his disciples, found that the teaching of the Lord was becoming a matter for concern. They found that they were having trouble believing his teaching in every part.

The Jews who heard the Lord's teaching grumbled because they rejected his claim that he was essential to eternal life, and his claim to a heavenly origin. They knew that he was the "son" of Joseph. How he could make a claim involving a heavenly origin was offensive to them.

The Lord had compared his incarnation to the bread from heaven which God had given to Israel in the wilderness. That supernatural intervention was the sustaining of life for the people. That Christ was comparing himself to that bread from heaven, was unacceptable to them. And so they rejected the very truth that could have meant eternal life for them.

Their reaction was not a gentle one, it would seem. The Lord cautioned them to stop grumbling among themselves. He went on to teach them about their spiritual inability. The Father who had sent him must effectually call sinners to salvation. The Lord put it in an unmistakable way. *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.* (6:44a)

Men and women often feel certain that salvation is in their hands. The Lord Jesus Christ may have died for sinners on the cross but now, they believe, everything is left up to the sinner to see that salvation is applied.

In fact, we lie dead, spiritually dead, in trespasses and sins. We are unable to help ourselves. To make matters worse, we are responsible before God to repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are responsible to depend on Christ and him alone to save us.

Everyone who "looks" on the Son by faith will find salvation. But in order to do that we still must have the intervention of God's Spirit. God must come to our rescue. He must draw us to himself. He must open our eyes to see his truth and to hear his call to salvation. And, clearly, we should then worship him, and praise him for a salvation that has been worked by him for us. He is the beginning and ending of it all.

And, as to the uniqueness of the our Lord Jesus Christ, only he knows what God is really like, and therefore only Jesus can reveal God to us. God's people are those who are taught by God (6:45). They are the ones who humbly accept his hard sayings. And they alone come to understand the heart of God, the love of God toward undeserving sinners. They do so by having their eyes opened to see that love, as it has been expressed in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is therefore faith, dependence on Christ, which is the means of our being fed by him. He becomes our spiritual food. We find in him all that we need for daily sustenance. When we fail to trust him, when we fail to believe his word and depend on him to give us leadership for our lives day by day, things do not go well for us. We have not merely made a decision to follow Christ. We are the beneficiaries of the gracious intervention of

God on our behalf. He had to come and save us and he must keep us. It is out of our

hands. We believe, but we do so because God has enabled us. We continued to have faith in him because he is sustaining us spiritually.

With this work of God on our behalf in mind, consider the assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ toward us. *Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.* (6:54-55)

We must examine ourselves and ask the question, "Am I a grumbler who denies the clear teaching of the Lord? Or, am I a recipient of God's grace who believes that we are dependent on him for the sustaining of life and for guidance? Am I a believer who has been drawn by God, and taught by God, and therefore has come to Christ?"

by Joe Nesom

