

TWO WELLS  
John 4:1-15

Intro: This passage develops out of the situation which are referred to in all 3 of the preceding chapters:

- 1) The concern that the Jews had about the ministry of John the Baptist, as seen in chapter 1.
- 2) The boldness of the Lord in cleansing the Temple, as seen in chapter 2.
- 3) The dispute that John's disciples had over purification, as seen in chapter 3.

Those who became our Lord's bitterest enemies were the Pharisees.

They are the ones who sent the delegation to see John the Baptist in chapter 1. See John 1:24.

They may have heard about Nicodemus by this time -- although we do not know for sure.

Regardless of the situation with Nicodemus, John 4:1 sounds a very ominous note: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John," (then skipping v. 2), "He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Thus, in John 4, we have, first of all . . .

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH OUR LORD FACED AT THIS POINT IN HIS MINISTRY (John 4:1-6, 8).

Several things of interest are mentioned:

- 1) The danger that He faced -- with the Pharisees.
- 2) What He decided to do -- go to Galilee.
- 3) How He had to get there -- through Samaria. Consult a map.
- 4) Where we find Him at this particular time --
  - a) In Sychar, a city of Samaria.
  - b) Sitting on the well, because He was weary.
  - c) All alone, because His disciples had gone into the city to buy food.

From these facts there are several things of interest:

A. The evidence that baptism is not of primary importance.

It is important because both John and the disciples of the Lord baptized, but it is not primarily important because the Lord never baptized. The Lord prayed, and He preached, and He performed miracles, but He never baptized (even though when we put John 3:22 and 4:1 together we can say that being baptized by the disciples

of the Lord was equal to being baptized by Him). But He never actually baptized anyone!

He was like the Apostle Paul in this respect (although Paul did baptize): Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17a).

The Pharisees were not concerned about how many were believing in the Lord; they were concerned about how many were being baptized!

What a tragic thing this was for the Pharisees -- concerned more about outward ceremonies than they were about what was going on in men's hearts.

Where are your interests this morning? It does no man any good to be baptized IF he has not first of all trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour. And then it does not have any saving benefit; it is a witness of what has taken place in your heart!

But let us look at another thing of interest in the circumstances described here.

- B. The route the Lord had to take to get from Judaea to Galilee: "And he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4).

Consulting a map you might say, "Of course, that was the quickest way to get there. Galilee was north of Judaea, and Samaria was between them, so this was the best way to go."

We possibly could be satisfied with that if we did not have the expression, "must needs."

It is the same verb as that which John has used in John 3:7, 14, 30 -- and also in John 4:20, 24.

The emphasis in all of these is not just that which had to be, but that which was especially ordered by the Lord, that which is according to the divine plan -- not just something which happened, but that which was according to the will of God.

Thus, THIS MEANS THAT:

- 1) Though the Lord was getting away from the Pharisees, and
- 2) Though going through Samaria was the quickest way to get from Judaea to Galilee,
- 3) Yet, this was a trip ordered by the Lord -- so that our Lord's main reason was to meet and talk to this particular Samaritan woman!

I hope you believe that! That makes this story even more wonderful. Our Lord had to go through Samaria and He was there at that particular time because that woman would also be there -- and He had to talk to her!

But there is another thing of interest in these first verses:

C. The time of day: "about the sixth hour" (John 4:6b).

This is usually taken to mean at noon -- six hours after sunrise.

But there are those who differ, saying that John is using Roman time here (which was like our own -- or at least some say it was), not Jewish time. So that it was more like 6 in the evening!

And to prove this they cite, for example, Gen. 24:11, where Abraham's servant "made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water."

All of this sounds very good, but the majority of evidence points to the fact that this was noon.

Now, if it were noon, and the evening was the time for the women to draw water (after the heat of the day was past), THEN WHAT WAS THIS WOMAN DOING AT THE WELL AT NOON?

We do not know the human circumstances, but we do know this: She had to be there at noon because that is when the Lord Jesus was there! And all unknown to her, God had made an appointment for her with none other than the Lord Jesus Christ!

And -- to make the picture even more perfect so that the two of them would be free to talk, look at v. 8: (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) The Lord could have performed a miracle to give them food, but instead they were out of the picture for this historic meeting!

How amazing are the ways of the Lord!

Before we go on to the latter part of our text, note in passing . . .

D. The weariness of the Lord (John 4:6).

Contrasting this with Isa. 40:28, we see evidence of the humanity of Christ -- and of the truth of Heb. 2:18; 4:14-16.

But let us move on to the latter part of our text:

II. THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN OUR LORD AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN  
(John 4:7, 9-15).

We won't take the whole conversation this morning because there is too much to it to be considered in such a short time. But let us notice three things:

- 1) Our Lord's request (vv. 7, 9).
- 2) Our Lord's offer (vv. 10-12).
- 3) Our Lord's explanation (vv. 13-15).

A. Our Lord's request (vv. 7, 9).

Will you notice the evidence here of the grace of God?

- 1) He made the approach -- as He always does. We do not seek Him; He is seeking us.

"I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Savior true;  
No, I was found of Thee."

- 2) He approached a woman -- and this is what amazed His disciples. See v. 27.
- 3) He approached a Samaritan -- and this is what amazed her. See v. 9.
- 4) He approached a sinful woman. See vv. 16-18 and vv. 28, 29.

And all of this was involved in the simple request, like Abraham's servant, "Give me to drink."

Her response led to the next thing:

B. Our Lord's offer (vv. 10-12).

It is evident now that the Lord is not only talking to a sinful woman, but that she is ignorant and spiritually blinded. She did not know Him, nor did she understand about "living water," and how He could give it to her!

This may be a reference to the Holy Spirit, as in John 7:37-39. It may be a reference to the Word of God. Both are involved. But basically to drink of the water of life is to be saved!

One of the last recorded words of God in the Revelation is found in Rev. 21:6b,

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

And in Rev. 22:17b,

"And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

She was wondering how He could do it, and He just wanted her to ask for a drink. She was wondering if He were greater than Jacob, and He just wanted her to ask who He was!

And it was all free -- a gift -- "He would have given thee living water."

But let us go on to the last point:

C. Our Lord's explanation (vv. 13-15).

Here the Lord states three great truths -- and we can only learn these by His grace.

1. The first truth (v. 13).

That was true of the actual water she had come to get. See what she said in v. 15. But the Lord was moving her to talk about all of the "water" of this world -- things that people look to for satisfaction: riches, things, pleasure, popularity, power, -- and in her case, fleshly lusts.

It is a true of the greatest importance that nothing in this life ever satisfies us. Nothing in this world has that capacity!

Everybody is thirsty, but most people are drinking the wrong kind of water.

2. The second truth (v. 14a).

This truth actually has two parts:

- 1) Not that the person who drinks will not want to continue to drink and to drink and to drink of the water of life, but that he will never need to seek satisfaction anywhere else! Christ and His salvation is all that he will ever need.
- 2) The truth of eternal salvation is here. He shall never again be like he once was -- thirsty! He "shall never thirst," never, no never, not the slightest possibility! Never -- unto the ages, for all eternity!

3. The third truth (v. 14b).

Again we have at least two truths:

- 1) There is a boundless, inexhaustible supply.
- 2) The thought is also here that there will be water to give to others!

Concl and Appl: TWO WELLS! One outside, in the world; the

other inside, in your heart. The one, for all men; the other, only for those who have come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have taken from Him that free, living water -- salvation through His Name.

— What are you looking to for your satisfaction? To the world, and the things of the world -- OR TO CHRIST?

## IS NOT THIS THE CHRIST?

John 4:16-30

Intro: This is a continuation of the account of our Lord's time in Samaria which began in verse 5 and continues through verse 42.

In fact, the passage before us now continues and completes the conversation which the Lord had with a Samaritan woman just outside the city of Sychar -- this city which was to be so profoundly moved by the testimony of this one woman!

The Lord had been talking to her about water -- "living water."

He first asked her for a drink of the water from Jacob's well, and this led to the Lord's offer to give her "living water," with the explanation and the promise given in verses 13, 14.

He promised to satisfy her eternally -- and that it would be from a well within, not from Jacob's well (and all that that well represented).

She obviously did not fully understand, but we have her desire expressed in verse 15. What follows, especially in verses 16 through 26 is the Lord's response to the woman's request, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw" (v. 15).

And it is what we have in our text from verses 16 through 26 which caused her to go to the men of Sychar to say to them, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did. IS NOT THIS THE CHRIST?"

The Lord may have said more to her about herself than is recorded here, but He obviously did not give her an account of her whole life -- but she knew that He could have done so! And He did reveal that He knew the circumstances which had made up most of her life: five husbands, and now living with a man who was not her husband!

Note the strange way (to us) that the Lord had of dealing with this woman -- and the fact that He would deal with a woman at all! This is what shocked the disciples. See verse 27. And yet John makes it clear from verse 4 that we are to realize that the Lord's main purpose in coming through Samaria at this time was to see this particular woman -- and to save her!

How did He reach her? Note the outstanding details of their conversation:

## I. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HER (John 4:16-18).

This might seem like the wrong thing to do because it would

possibly offend her and drive her away. But the Lord knew what He was doing, and this is given in part to instruct us in the Lord's way of dealing with people.

It is important for people to know that in dealing with the Triune God, we are dealing with Three Persons who are omniscient -- They know all things!

Not only is man ignorant of this, but he counts heavily on the fact that there are certain things about himself that he will always be able to hide.

You notice this repeatedly in the Scriptures.

It is evident every day that we live. No politician in his right mind would take money illegally, or be involved in illicit relationships, if he knew that it would be splashed across the front pages of newspapers all over the world!

However, the Bible makes it clear that the Lord not only knows everything that we have done, but that He knows our every thought! See Psa. 139:1-6.

The point is: This is true of us too! The Lord knows everything that we have done, and everything that we have said, and everything that we have thought!

Does that make you uncomfortable? It should!

But in these very same verses is another factor that we must not overlook in our Lord's dealing with this woman:

## II. THE CONVICTION OF SIN (John 4:16-18).

Not only did the Lord want to impress upon this woman that He knew all about her, but He wanted her to know that He considered what she had been doing, and was doing at that very time, to be SIN!

There is no support in the passage for the idea that she had been widowed five times. She probably had five living husbands, and the man she was living with she had not even bothered to marry.

Does this sound familiar? Millions of people are doing the very same thing today!

What can we say about it? The same that the Lord indicated 2,000 years ago -- that it is wrong. It is sinful. It will bring the judgment of God.

She recognized it -- and had no argument with the Lord.

Notice how graciously He deals with her (vv. 17b, 18b).



She was beginning to realize that she was talking to a special kind of a man -- "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (v. 19). "A prophet" is one sent by God to speak the Word of God. She recognized this much in the Lord.

But there is more, and it has to do with . . .

### III. THE SUBJECT OF WORSHIP (John 4:20-22) -- which she brought up!

Note: her authority:-- "our fathers."  
her concern -- not WHO should be worshipped, but  
where they should worship (v. 20).

Perhaps this is one reason the Lord said, "And call no man your father upon the earth" (Matt. 23:9a).

Let us take her comments as being sincere. She at least had enough light to know that her only hope of peace was to be found in her relationship with God, but she is still bound by the traditions of her "fathers" and more concerned about where and how to worship than WHO she should worship.

In His answer to her the Lord shows His authority in two ways:

- 1) He indicates that a change is coming up (v. 21).
- 2) He indicates also that the Jews have the right answer because worship is a part of salvation, and it was to the Jews that the Lord gave by revelation the truth concerning salvation and worship and all other things that have to do with man's relationship with God.

Worship is not a matter of personal opinion, or of tradition, but of what God has revealed through His Word!

But notice a fourth point:

### IV. THE NATURE OF GOD (John 4:23-25).

This has to do with the preceding point on worship, but we see that the Lord is telling this Samaritan woman that she will never understand worship until she understands the nature of God!

Note the shift from the "our fathers" of the woman to "the Father" (2x in v. 23).

And note that the Father is not passively waiting for men to come to worship Him, hoping that they will do it in the right way, BUT THAT HE IS ACTIVELY SEEKING WORSHIPPERS -- just as we have already seen that the Lord came to this very place seeking this particular woman!

What is God's nature?

Here I believe that the reading in both the NASB and the NIV is to be preferred to the KJV and the NSRB: not "God is a Spirit" (capitalized), but "God is spirit," i.e., God is a spiritual Being, not physical or material, and so "they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

"Spirit" means inwardly, genuinely. "Truth" means rightly, not just sincerely, but according to the revealed Word of God!

In other words, it is not a matter of the place, nor of the forms which we use, but of our understanding of God,  
of our relationship to Him,  
of the condition of our hearts,  
of our response to what the Word  
says.

Now look at her response in v. 25.

She was beginning to feel that she might be speaking to the "Messiah" -- having moved from the expression in v. 19 that He was "a prophet."

And this leads to the final point in their conversation:

#### V. THE LORD'S CLAIM TO BE THE MESSIAH (John 4:26).

Now I want you to notice some very unusual things which the Lord said to this woman which are unique in His ministry while He was here on earth.

THREE OF THE GREATEST THEMES OF THEOLOGY WERE ANNOUNCED TO THIS WOMAN, NOT A JEWESS BUT A SAMARITAN, AND A SINFUL WOMAN AT THAT -- and we really have nothing comparable to these words in any of the other ministries of the Lord. Here they are:

- 1) To her HE ANNOUNCED THE COMING CHANGE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT ORDER TO THE NEW TESTAMENT ORDER. See vv. 21, 23, "the hour cometh."
- 2) To her He gave what Bishop Ryle calls "one of the most lofty and definite says about God's nature which is to be found in the whole Bible" (John, Vol. I, p. 226). "God is spirit." Who can comprehend this? And yet the Lord chose to give it to this Samaritan woman who, in spite of her ruined life, was looking for the Messiah!
- 3) To her He gave what was one of the most positive statements, if not THE MOST POSITIVE of any He ever gave, of His own Messiahship and mission: "I that speak unto thee am he."

What grace!

Concl. and Appl.: Note two things in the last verses of our text -- vv. 27-30:

- 1) The shock of the disciples -- but also their silence!  
It is always best to be quiet when we do not understand the ways of the Lord. He will make it clear later. This was a very great introduction for the disciples to the grace of God -- and it should have made them reflect upon the grace of God to themselves!
- 2) The witness of the Samaritan woman. How simple it was! Not an attempt at a great explanation -- just what the Lord had told her, plus the fact that she was beginning to feel that He was the Messiah, and finally an invitation for them to "Come and see . . ."

I ask you this morning, "Is not this the Christ?" Will you "come and see"?

You say, "How?"

By simply re-reading these verses as though they had been spoken to you. Will you realize that the Lord knows all your sins, that you may be seeking religion without knowing that you need Christ, and that the Lord may have even brought you here this morning because He is seeking you?

Will you read His Word, looking at Christ, listening to Christ? Will you continue to come where you can hear the Word of God, asking the Lord to reveal Himself to you through the Word and to draw you to Himself in salvation?

Oh, how gracious our Lord is, not excusing sin, but uncovering it that He might bring you to forgiveness and to eternal life. Trust Him now. Drink of the water that He gives so that you will never again thirst for that which will satisfy your heart. You will find all you need and want in Him.

THE PRESENT HARVEST  
John 4:31-42

Intro: Our Lord had two ministries toward men while He was here on earth;

- 1) His ministry to the world, i.e., to those who had not believed on Him.
- 2) His ministry to His own, i.e., to those who had believed on Him.

The first of these ministries finds its illustration in our Lord's conversation with the woman at the well in Samaria. This we have in the first 30 verses of John 4.

The second is illustrated in the passage we have this morning -- in our Lord's conversation with His disciples.

The two conversations have one thing in common: they both began with a temporal theme, and moved on to eternal things. Or, to state it another way, they began with the physical and proceeded to the spiritual.

The two themes were water, and food (or, "meat").

It is significant that neither the woman nor the disciples knew initially what the Lord was talking about -- and the same was true in the case of Nicodemus in chapter 3.

The importance of this passage (John 4:31-42): This could easily qualify as one of the most important of all passages for believers that we have in all of the Bible. It really deals with two things:

- 1) The work -- the harvest.
- 2) The workers -- those who are involved in reaping the harvest.

The main points in the passage -- there are two:

- 1) There is a harvest to be reaped -- a present harvest. See v. 35. There is a work to be done in the world, an urgent work, a work that cannot be delayed.
- 2) There is also a continuing work to be done in the hearts of the disciples.

And the Lord, whose ways are beyond our comprehension, is doing both works at the same time!

Let us note how this develops.

I. THE REQUEST OF THE DISCIPLES: "Master, eat" (John 4:31).

They are to be commended for their concern for the Lord. He had been so weary (see v. 6) that He had not gone with them into the city. Even He needed to eat. Sometimes they got so busy that they could not eat. Thus, they were right

in their concern.

But let us move on from this to the present-day emphasis on food. This has become one of the greatest of all interests in the 20th century -- not only food, but good food and good eating! Instead of eating to live, we live to eat! And our interest is disclosed by our looks. Our days are organized around our eating times!

Now there is nothing wrong with eating. We must eat in order to live. But the point the Lord was making here is that this can become too important to us -- so important that it hides from us one of the greatest of all lessons regarding the life that we are living now. Because with food, as well as with other things, we are a generation which indicates that even with all that we have we are not satisfied!

## II. OUR LORD'S RESPONSE (John 4:32).

This is really the declaration of a great spiritual truth! We are so foolishly inclined to believe that there is nothing beyond what we have experienced. And yet the Lord is now leading His disciples to understand that there is a kind of food, which is not really food, but which can cause a person to forget food, and, for a time, not even to need it!

Let me ask you a question: DO YOU KNOW THIS TO BE A FACT FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE? Or, is this something "that ye know not of"?

Note:

## III. THE MEANING THE DISCIPLES PLACED UPON HIS WORDS: "Hath any man brought him anything to eat?" (John 4:33).

This is what we are all inclined to do with the words of God -- to put an earthly meaning on the words of our Lord -- like Nicodemus, and the woman of Samaria, and now, the disciples!

They thought that the Lord had gotten some food from someone else before they could get back from the city.

But the Lord does not leave the matter there. And so He follows His remark with . . .

## IV. HIS EXPLANATION OF HIS STATEMENT (in v. 32) -- (John 4:34-38)

### A. The basic answer (v. 34).

Note what He understood about His life -- and the surren-

der, the devotion, the determination. He knew that He had been "sent" on a mission. He knew that the One who sent Him had a "will" to be accomplished. And it was His intention not only to "do" it, but to "finish" it!

And it was this that gave Him strength just like He would have received by eating food!

Do you believe this?

Think how this is often illustrated by the things that you like to do -- as in sports of some kind, or your hobby, or a special project in your work, or taking care of someone who is very dear to you -- you get so absorbed in what you are doing that you do not notice the clock, and you do not feel the need to eat! You can often see this in the way a person reads a book.

But how many of the Lord's people are like this when it comes to the Lord's work? Are you serving the Lord in any way? What is the most important thing in life to you? As you sit here this morning, are you thinking about the Word, are you anxious to learn something, OR ARE YOU SO BUSY THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE FOR DINNER, OR WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO THIS AFTERNOON THAT YOU ARE NOT REALLY LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD?

Do you believe that this is really the answer to the desires of your heart -- and that the Lord is saying something here that you really need?

How can we get to such a place?

Let us look at . . .

B. THE DETAILS OF HIS ANSWER (vv. 35-38).

There are four parts to the answer -- one in each of the verses from 35 to 38.

1. The way we talk and think about the Lord's work (v. 35).
2. Our desire for the wages, the rewards, for faithful, obedient service (v. 36).

It is not that which men can see, but what God sees as true fruit.

3. The knowledge that we are workers together, not competitors (v. 37).
4. The fact that we are where the Lord Himself has "sent"

us.

We must believe this. It is the only place to start. If we fail here, we are going to continue to wish that we were some place else doing something else! What comfort there is in knowing the truth of John 20:21b, ". . . as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Do these seem to be irrelevant to you, or will you be wise enough to see that right here may be the most important lesson you will ever learn?

Don't pass over it! Read it and re-read it and pray over it until the Lord shows you what is here!

And continue to ask yourself the question: What really is the most important thing in life to me?

But let us go on finally to . . .

V. THE RESULTS OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY IN THIS PLACE (John 4: 39-42)

This ministry among the Samaritans may have surpassed anything that our Lord saw among the Jews. And it does not appear that there was any declaration of faith in all of the Gospel records like the one in v. 42b.

There is a real progression of action from v. 39 to v. 42.

A. The results of the woman's testimony (v. 39).

Note:

- 1) Who the Lord used.
- 2) How little she knew.
- 3) How little she said.

Can you and I have any excuse? She had acted with the same urgency the Lord had manifested -- leaving her water pot behind!

B. The proof of the reality of faith (v. 40).

They wanted two things:

- 1) Jesus.
- 2) More teaching.

C. The continuation of the results (v. 41).

And remember that this all started because the Lord spoke to just one woman! "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

And finally . . .

D. The certainty and strength of their faith (v. 42).

Concl. and Appl.: When you read v. 32, does it create in your heart a desire to know what the Lord knew so that you could find that kind of satisfaction and joy in life?

Have you come to realize that you may be missing the best because there is a truth of the Word of God that you have not learned as yet?

Are you trying to live as a Christian the way people live who are not Christians -- seeking to satisfy yourself first?

What do we need?

We need:

- 1) To give ourselves to the Lord -- to do His will, not our own.
- 2) To begin serving the Lord where we are -- not wishing that we could be some place else doing something else!
- 3) To realize that the greatest opportunities may be in the circumstances that may at first seem to promise nothing.
- 4) To remember that we are a part of the team -- and that it is the Lord who is directing each of us, using us as He sees fit, to accomplish His will, and to finish it.
- 5) To keep our hearts set on the eternal rewards.

See 2 Tim. 4:1-8.



A NOBLEMAN WHO BELIEVED  
John 4:43-54

Intro: One of the things that makes the miracle of this passage interesting is that it was performed on a nobleman's son. The interest should increase when we discover that this is the only instance in the Gospels of such a person coming to the Lord -- and it is recorded only here!

Who was he?

We do not know. The Greek word for king is βασιλεύς. The word in this passage which is translated "nobleman" is βασιλικός. Thus this nobleman had something to do with the king, Herod. He could have been a member of his family, but that is not likely. He could also have been a royal officer or minister -- and this seems to have been the case.

The only person mentioned in Scripture <sup>who could qualify</sup> is Chuza, called in Luke 8:3 "Herod's steward," whose wife, Joanna, was one of those women "who ministered unto him (the Lord) of their substance." But there is no way to prove this.

Whoever it was, we know that this was a very rare case!

When Paul writes in 1 Cor. 1:26 that "not many noble, are called," he uses a different word (εὐγενής), but the idea applies. The Lord did call some from the upper stratum of society. Nicodemus was another. But there were "not many."

But let us look at the passage in detail -- first of all asking the question . . .

I. WHY WAS OUR LORD THERE?

Well, in John 4:3 we read, "He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee." To get there, He had to go through Samaria (where He met the woman at the well). (And incidentally, He performed no miracles in Samaria, and yet had that amazing response to His Word. This is undoubtedly one reason for our Lord's comment in John 4:48, but we do not want to get ahead of our story.)

And it seems that He returned to Cana (where His first miracle in Galilee had been performed) and not to Nazareth (which must be what John is referring to as "his own country") because He was without "honor in his own country"! That is, their hearts were closed to Him because He was one of them.

What a tragedy it is when this happens, especially for a city notorious for its sin like Nazareth was. ("Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" -- John 1:46.)

But, in spite of His rejection at Nazareth, it seems that He was well received in other parts of Galilee, BUT FOR THE REASON MENTIONED IN John 4:45, "having seen all the things which he did at Jerusalem at the feast." It is obvious in this passage that the Lord was seeking to direct the attention of the people from the physical healings to the needs that they had in their hearts!

## II. WHY WAS THE NOBLEMAN THERE?

He did not live in Cana, but in Capernaum, which was 25 or 30 miles away?

And why did he come personally -- instead of sending one or more of his servants?

Oh, here you see evidence of the marvelous ways of God: his "son was sick . . . at the point of death" (vv. 46, 47)!

What an illustration this is of Psa. 103:13, "As a father pitieth his children . . ."

In v. 49 the nobleman calls his son, "my child," which is the Greek word for a small child. It could even mean "an infant just born" (Thayer on , p. 473). Perhaps this explains why the wife was not there, and why this nobleman did not take the child to the Lord.

Do you see the point? Sickness and death touches people in all walks of life. And when it threatens our own, we will lay aside all protocol to see to it that our loved one gets the best help possible.

It is a very heart-moving story.

But let us look a little deeper for the answer to this question, "WHY WAS THE NOBLEMAN THERE?"

Will you notice that the Lord had not gone to Capernaum, but to Cana, and that the nobleman had gone from Capernaum to Cana? In other words, the Lord had not come to him; HE CAME TO THE LORD!

We are moving toward that wonderful verse in John 6:37,  
 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;  
 and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."  
 Especially in view of the outcome, can anyone with any spiritual discernment miss the fact that THE NOBLEMAN CAME TO THE LORD BECAUSE THE FATHER WAS GIVING HIM TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST FOR SALVATION?

But it was not just for this nobleman alone because we read

in v. 53 that not only did the nobleman believe, but "his whole house" believed!

But, again, I am getting ahead of my story.

Let me ask a third question:

### III. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NOBLEMAN WHEN HE CAME TO CANA?

- A. First, note that he came directly to the Lord -- not to one of the disciples.

See the word "him" twice in v. 47 followed by "he" -- all referring to the Lord!

When you have a need like the nobleman had, you will not be satisfied with anyone but the Lord!

- B. Next note that the Lord seems to rebuke him. Cf. v. 48.

This is similar to what our Lord did with the Samaritan woman when He said to her, "Go, call thy husband (v. 16).

But what was the Lord seeking to do -- to turn the nobleman away? NO!

He was seeking to do two things:

- 1) To make the nobleman see that he had a greater need than his child's illness.
- 2) To turn the nobleman from the signs, the miracles, to the sufficiency of the Word.

- C. Thirdly, see how the Lord ministered to the nobleman's faith.

Many have pointed out that there are three definite, observable stages to his faith:

- 1) The faith that brought him to the Lord.
- 2) The faith that made him willing to go back home without the Lord -- just with His promise.
- 3) The faith spoken of in v. 53.

Faith is a gift from God, not a work of man -- and here we see how the Lord brought this man to faith in Christ.

But there were two very apparent deficiencies in his faith:

- 1) He thought that the Lord had to be present with his child, or else He could not heal him.
- 2) He seems to imply that the Lord could heal, but that, if He waited until the child died, it would be too late to do anything. See v. 49.

Note the actual steps the Lord took to minister to the nobleman's faith:

1. As seen before in v. 48, He rebuked his dependence upon outward evidence.
2. He gave the nobleman His Word: "Go thy way; thy son liveth" (v. 49).

The nobleman did two things:

- 1) He "believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him."
- 2) "And he went his way."

What a tremendous illustration of Rom. 10:17, "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

We do not produce faith; the Lord gives it through the Word.

3. He confirmed the Word that He had given (vv. 51-53).

See how carefully they put all of the details together:

- 1) The servants met him, and reported that his son was well.
- 2) He asked when it had happened. Note that his faith is still deficient because he had the idea that his son would gradually get better, but he did not think of an instantaneous healing!
- 3) He knew that it was exactly at 1 p.m. when the Lord had given him the promise the day before.

#### IV. WHAT WAS THE FINAL OUTCOME?

The healing was important, but clearly incidental/

The most important result was this: "And he (the nobleman) believed, AND HIS WHOLE HOUSE" (v. 53b).

Believed what? Cf. John 20:30, 31.

It is like the Lord said about Zacchaeus' family: "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9a).

Concl. and Appl.: Note how carefully the Lord records work done and the results of the work.

The nobleman did not believe that the Lord could heal over a distance of 25 miles -- but HE did! Do you believe the Lord is here this morning? Do you believe that He brought you here? Do you believe that this has been for you? Do you believe that your trials are to bring you to Christ? Will you believe?

## THE HOPE OF THE HOPELESS

John 20:30,31

John 5:1-9

Intro: When we come to the miracles, especially miracles of physical healing, it is important for us to recognize the close connection in Scripture between sickness and sin:

- 1) In the first place, there would have been no sickness (and no death) if man had not sinned. Do you know that?
- 2) Secondly, the Biblical accounts of physical illness and healing give us some of the most wonderful lessons regarding man's healing from sin. In other words, what sickness does to the body, sin does to the soul, the inner man.
- 3) Thirdly, sometimes (and perhaps more often than we suspect) physical illness in a particular person is the result of that particular person's sin. It comes as a judgment from God. Such was the case here. See John 5:14. See also 1 Cor. 11:30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many (the ASV say, "not a few") sleep."

It is important for us to see both of these aspects in our passage this morning. We have before us an actual, historical case of healing -- the healing of a man who had been sick for 38 years, sick because of sin in his life.

Many people were there. When John mentions the "five porches" he tells us, "In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered . . ." Spurgeon once said that to the Lord "the whole world must have been to him like one huge hospital" (Vol. 38, p. 394).

Now some may have difficulty with the manner in which this man was healed, i.e., an angel coming down "at certain seasons" (ASV) to trouble the water, etc., but why should we have any more trouble with that than the fact that the man was healed after 38 years of illness?

And some may also have trouble with the fact that John does not record in this passage the healing of many people, or even the healing of all of them. It seems quite clear from the results which followed that there was the healing of just this one! Why was this so -- especially if this is a picture to us of salvation from sin?

John Calvin has this to say:

"God could have healed them all, at once and in a moment. But as His miracles have thier purpose, they must also have a limit. Just as Christ also reminds them that although many died in the time of Elisha, only one child was raised (II Kings 4.32f), and that although many widows were hungry in the time of drought, only one had her poverty relieved by Elijah (I Kings 17.9, Luke 4.25f). Thus the Lord reckoned it was enough to give a proof of his rpesence in regard to a

few sick people. But the healing method described here shows plainly that there is nothing more unreasonable than for men to subject the works of God to their own judgment. For I ask you, what help or remedy could be expected from troubled water? But it is in this way, by taking from us our own attitude of mind, that the Lord accustoms us to the obedience of faith. We are too quick to follow what pleases our reason, even though it be contrary to God's Word. Therefore, to make us obedient to Him, He often sets before us things that contradict our reason. And we only show our teachableness when we follow the bare Word with our eyes shut, though it does not seem worth our while. We have an example of this in Naaman the Syrian (II Kings 5.10). The prophet sends him to the Jordan to be healed of his leprosy. At first he despises this as tomfoolery, but later he sees that God acts contrary to human reason in such a way that He never disappoints or plays with us" (The Gospel According To St. John, pp. 118, 119).

On the fact that the Lord singles out this one man for healing, see Spurgeon's comments on Rom. 9:15, which is a quotation from Ex. 33:19.

So the passage is full of evidence of the abiding truth of Isa. 55:8, 9,

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

But to return to the miracle, note the record in vv. 6-9, each detail being very important, each statement an accurate historical record of what took place that day! Get it in your mind that this actually happened. The first proof that it did is that it is in the Word of God. The second proof, that it caused such an uproar among the Jews.

The details:

- 1) "A certain man was there."
- 2) He "had an infirmity thirty and eight years."
- 3) "Jesus saw him."
- 4) "Jesus . . . knew that he had been now a long time in that case."
- 5) "Jesus . . . saith to him, Wilt thou be made whole?"
- 6) "The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man . . ."
- 7) "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."
- 8) "And immediately the man was made whole."
- 9) And he "took up his bed, and walked."

Let us look at these under four headings:

- I. THE IMPOTENT MAN.
- II. THE LORD.
- III. THE MAN'S RESPONSE.
- IV. THE MIRACLE.

## I. THE MAN (John 5:5).

Note three things:

- 1) He was a certain, particular man.
- 2) He was a very sick man.
- 3) He had been sick for 38 years -- probably most of his adult years -- certainly long enough that he held out very little hope of ever being well again!

Thinking of this sickness as a picture of sin, this gives us what God sees as He looks upon men, and into the hearts of men.

Man's greatest problem is sin! And, oh, how tragically it has affected him -- for all his life.

We look at man as he is and we see nothing but absolute hopelessness and despair.

But let us turn for a moment from the man and look at . . .

## II. THE LORD (John 5:6).

Note four things about the Lord:

- 1) The Lord was there.
- 2) The Lord "saw him."
- 3) The Lord "knew" all about him.
- 4) The Lord spoke to him, asking him a question.

Every single one of these statements is true about you this morning with respect to the Lord:

- 1) He is here!
- 2) He sees you!
- 3) He knows you -- all about you, your needs, your thoughts, your hopes, your fears -- EVERYTHING!
- 4) He is speaking to you. That is why you are here. And you will not need anyone else to tell you that He is speaking to you -- just as though no one else were here this morning.

And He asks you, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

What is your answer? Are you tired of your infirmity, or do you want to keep it longer? Are you ready to be saved?

How did this impotent man answer?

## III. THE MAN'S RESPONSE (John 5:7).

Listen to it: "I have no man."

See if this is not a picture of some of you this morning.

This man had his mind full of the pool,  
the angel,  
and getting into the water.  
He had tried numberless times to get into the pool -- but he  
could not! He had therefore settled it in his mind that he  
needed a "man," a friend -- and evidently had forgotten that  
the One who had made possible the healing by getting into  
the pool was the Lord!

Some of you may have come here this morning looking for the  
right man. Spurgeon said in speaking on this passage,  
"God save you from a religion that depends upon  
other people" (Vol. 38, p. 390).  
What happens when those other people are gone?

This man was looking at the physical things -- the water,  
the need for a man. **WHAT HE NEEDED TO LOOK AT WAS THE LORD**  
-- and this undoubtedly is why the Lord was there.

Now let us look at . . .

#### IV. THE MIRACLE. (John 5:8, 9).

Again -- note the details carefully. We go wrong when we  
fail to read carefully what God has put in His Word.

A. First, Jesus performed the miracle.

And He is the only one who can! If you miss this, you  
might just as well have not come to this service. He  
is the only One Who can help you. Therefore, look to  
Him, listen to Him!

B. The second thing: The miracle was performed through a  
command.

To make matters worse, the Lord told him to do three  
things which he had not been able to do for 38 years.  
If he could have done them, he would not have been here  
by the pool of Bethesda.

What were the three things:

- 1) "Rise."
- 2) "Take up thy bed."
- 3) "And walk."

Was the Lord telling him to heal himself? NO . . . a  
thousand million times, NO!

And He is not telling you to have even a part in your  
salvation when He tells you, "Believe in the Lord Jesus  
Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).



Spurgeon gives the following account of his own salvation:

"I remember when I sat in the pew as despairing a sinner as ever lived. I heard the preacher say, 'Look unto Christ, and live.' He seemed to say to me, 'Look! Look! Look! Look!' and I did look, and I lived. That moment, the burden of my sin was gone; I was crippled with unbelief no longer; I went home a sinner saved by grace, to live to praise the Lord; and --

'E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
His flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.'" (Vol. 38, p. 393).

This is the way God works. He tells us to believe. And as we believe it is He who is imparting faith to us as He imparted healing strength to this hopelessly impotent man -- and we are saved, just as he got up and began to walk, carrying his bed, his pallet.

But there is one other thing that I want you to see about the healing of this crippled man that applies to salvation. It is this:

C. The result: "And IMMEDIATELY the man was made whole."

He did not begin to get well, and begin to learn to stand on his two feet, and begin to learn to walk, and begin to learn to carry something while he walked. NO! He "immediately . . . was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked" -- three or four miracles all in one.

Salvation is not a process, but a miracle which takes place the very moment we believe.

In John 5:24 we have our Lord's own words confirming this to be true:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but IS passed from death unto life."

Concl. and Appl.: You are as powerless to save yourself as this man was to get himself into the pool. But just as the Lord Jesus met his need, so the Lord Jesus will save you THIS MORNING if you will believe.

Put your trust in Him. He will save you, and He will do it NOW!

THE OUTBREAK OF OPPOSITION

John 5:10-18

Intro: In John's Gospel, this is really the first evidence of serious opposition to the Lord and to His ministry. And the character of its beginning was an indication of the way in which it was going to end. See v. 16 ("and sought to slay him" is not in some MSS).

How did it arise? Through a miracle, a good work, an unbelievable display of divine power: a man infirmed was instantly and permanently healed!

But what was wrong with that?

One thing -- and this led to a second offense:

- 1) First, because the Lord performed this miracle on the Sabbath Day.
- 2) Second, because in ministering to the Jews later He referred to God as "My Father . . . making himself equal with God" (vv. 17, 18).

If the Jews (which refers to the leaders of the Jews) were right in these charges, the Lord would be under a double condemnation -- both of which demanded punishment by death! See Ex. 31:13, 14. Our Lord would have been in violation of the third and fourth commandments!

But the point is that He had not violated either of them!

The miracle actually proved His Sonship. Remember John 20:30, 31.

And He never violated His own Law. He often violated the traditions of the Jews, or their interpretations of the Law, but His command to the man He had healed was in no way a violation of the fourth commandment: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Spurgeon gives an illustration of how ridiculous the Rabbis got in their interpretation of the Law. This is an example:

"'It is unlawful to carry a handkerchief loose in the pocket;' but if you pin it to your pocket or tie it round your waist as a girdle you may carry it anywhere, because it becomes a part of your dress" (Vol. 25, p. 341).

And then Spurgeon adds:

"To my unsophisticated mind it would have seemed that the pin increased the ponderous burden, and that so there was the weight of the pin more than was necessary."

But this is an illustration of the way in which even religious men can be blinded to the real meaning of the Word of God!

But let us look at the passage more in detail, remembering that the main subject is salvation, and that the miracle itself is a type, a picture, to help us to understand the miraculous work that the Lord does in the hearts of men.

Let me point out four things in the passage:

- 1) An additional work about THE OPPOSITION OF THE JEWS.
- 2) THE MINISTRY OF THE HEALED MAN TO THE JEWS.
- 3) THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD TO THE HEALED MAN.
- 4) THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD TO THE JEWS.

#### I. THE OPPOSITION OF THE JEWS.

Two things need to be said in addition to what I have already said:

- A. Men, even religious men, will be blinded to the evidence of God's work by their prejudices.

The miraculous work of salvation continues, but men do not see it and will not admit that such a thing is going on.

- B. Men, even religious men, have an immediate and deep aversion to any teaching that has to do with the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, note how gracious the Lord is -- ministering to the Jews through the man who had been healed, and then ministering directly to them Himself.

#### II. THE MINISTRY OF THE HEALED MAN TO THE JEWS.

In three ways:

- A. Because he was whole. He was well, instantly well, completely well!

Note how many times this is mentioned by John: vv. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15.

They were so concerned about the fact that the Lord had told him to carry his pallet on the Sabbath Day that they were ignoring the most obvious fact: he was well.

- B. Because he was walking.

This, after all, was the greatest proof that he was well.

This is what the Lord does when He heals a person from his sin: The whole life is changed. The one who is saved walks to please God, walks like the Lord walked,

walks as a new creature in Christ. And let us not fool ourselves, or try to fool others, if our walk is not there!

And then he also ministered to the in a third way:

C. By his witness (John 5:15).

Some take this man to task because he went to the Jews and told them who had healed him, but I am inclined to feel that this was a sincere desire on his part to let the Jews know Who the Lord was -- perhaps the Jews (the man may have thought) want to go to Him, too!

Like the Samaritan woman, this man did not know much about the Lord, but he did tell what he knew!

The results here are just the opposite from what the Samaritan woman saw, but the need to witness remains the same.

But there is another point of interest in this story -- and it has to do with . . .

### III. THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD TO THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN HEALED.

You see the Lord has a twofold ministry which is being carried on in the world to this very hour:

- 1) His ministry to those who do not know Him -- that they may come to know Him -- as illustrated in His ministry to the Jews.
- 2) His ministry to those who do know Him, who have experienced His transforming power -- as illustrated in the man who had been healed.

Note: "Afterward (or lit., after these things) Jesus findeth him."

This means two things:

- 1) The Lord had not forgotten him.
- 2) The Lord was looking for him.

And see also where He found him: "in the temple." What a significant thing this is! What evidence that a change had taken place in his life. He went where he could worship the Lord, and he went where he could be with the people of God. Cf. 1 John 3:14.

But how did the Lord minister to him?

A. By speaking to him. How much John puts in that little expression, "and said unto him" (v. 14). The Lord mini-

sters to His people through His Word.

- B. By assuring him: "Behold, thou art made well."

Relate this to salvation. Sometimes it may seem that we are only kidding ourselves, and so the Lord comes to us many times on the ground of the Gospel itself, and says, "Behold, thou art made well."

We all learn more about salvation after we are saved than we knew before.

But there is another point -- and the order between this and the preceding is important:

- C. By warning him: "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

You can always tell when a child of God gets away from the Word and away from the Lord BECAUSE HE GETS CARELESS ABOUT SIN.

And just as we learn more about salvation after we are saved, so we learn more about sin after we are saved.

Every child of God can expect the Lord to be doing the same things for us that He did for this man who was healed.

But let us look finally at . . .

#### IV. THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD TO THE JEWS.

We can only take the first part of this, and trust, the Lord willing, to be able to continue with it next Lord's Day.

Bishop Ryle says of John, chapter 5, beginning with v. 17:

"These verses begin one of the most deep and solemn passages in the four Gospels. They show us the Lord Jesus asserting His own Divine nature, His unity with God the Father, and the high dignity of His office. Nowhere does our Lord dwell so fully on these subjects as in the chapter before us" (John, Vol. I, p. 278).

How did the Lord minister to them?

- 1) Concerning Himself.
- 2) With doctrine.

We could easily take a whole service on just these words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

**What was He teaching them?** Look at the words carefully.

- A. He was teaching them about the nature of God -- that He

was a "Father."

How different God was, then, from the harsh attitude displayed by these Jewish leaders!

- B. Secondly (and this is what offended the Jews), He claimed that God was His Father -- thus, "making himself equal with God."

This would be blasphemy for me to say. It would have been blasphemy for the Lord to say -- IF it were not true. **BUT IT WAS TRUE! IT IS TRUE!** John has been telling us this from the very beginning of the book. And now the Lord is telling it again to the Jews.

Don't ever let anyone tell you that our Lord never claimed Deity. What did these Jews think that He was saying?

- C. Thirdly, the Lord was teaching them that the Father was working -- that this was a work of God.

How slow we are to discern what God is doing! The Jews probably would not want to have been placed on the side opposed to God, but that is where they were.

"And I work" -- thus claiming to be a part of that work that God, the Father, was doing -- cooperating with Him in His work!

- D. Finally, note the word, "hitherto."

This means, up until now, up to this very moment -- with the idea that the work is continuing on and on.

It immediately links the then present with all of the past, and with all of the future. God is working. God is fulfilling His own purposes. God is saving men. God is changing lives.

Our Lord is saying to the Jews, "Don't look at the fact that this man was walking and carrying his pallet on the Sabbath Day, but just note the fact that HE IS WALKING!"

Concl. and Appl.: What has claimed your attention as you have been looking at this account this morning? Do you see anything in it for yourself? Where do you stand in your relationship with the Lord? He is working. The Son is working. They are working in the lives of some here today. We can certainly believe that. Whether for salvation, or for our spiritual growth, may the Lord open our hearts to Himself and to His Word that we may go from here rejoicing in His great salvation.

THE FATHER AND THE SON

John 5:19-30

Intro: This message, given to "the Jews," begins with verse 19 and continues to the end of the chapter.

It resulted from the miracle which is recorded in the first part of the chapter -- the healing of the man who had been sick for 38 years.

"The Jews" had been offended

- 1) because the Lord had healed on the Sabbath, but, then, as the Lord began to speak to them, they were offended
- 2) because He had said of God, "My Father . . . , making himself equal with God."

Consequently, they not only persecuted Him, but they wanted to kill Him!

If He were guilty on either or both of these counts, He would be punishable by death according to the Law. But if not, then it would have been the part of wisdom for "the Jews" to listen carefully to what He had to say about His relationship with God, the Father -- HIS Father!

In this message (down to verse 47) the Lord is doing two things:

- 1) He is giving His own witness concerning Himself -- to show that He did claim equality with God, the Father.  
And so we could give our passage this morning the title, The Witness of the Son, or, The Commission of the Son.  
We see here, in the Lord's own words, what He understood about (1) His relationship to the Father, and (2) His mission in the world.
- 2) From verse 31 down to the end of the chapter we have Four Witnesses Concerning Christ -- i.e., concerning Who He was!  
They are:
  - a) The witness of John the Baptist.
  - b) The witness of the works which the Lord did -- such as the miracle recorded in this chapter.
  - c) The witness of God, the Father.
  - d) The witness of the Scriptures -- the Word of God -- here, the Old Testament.

When we look at the first part of the message (vv. 19-3), which I have chosen for this morning, we soon can see that the Lord has indicated three divisions by His use of the expression, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." (These are the 5th, 6th, and 7th times that John has used these out of a total of 25. The first 4 are in 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11.) The expression means that He is introducing something that is:

- 1) Extremely important.
- 2) Absolutely true.
- 3) A divine revelation.

The three divisions would be:

- 1) Vv. 19-23.
- 2) V. 24 -- standing by itself!
- 3) Vv. 25-30.

In the first we have the work of the Father.

In the second we have the great declaration of the Son concerning eternal life and eternal judgment.

In the third and last we have the truth about resurrection -- both spiritual resurrection to eternal life, and physical resurrection from the grave.

Remember:

- 1) This is the Lord's own testimony.
- 2) It has to be true because it is His.
- 3) It also has to be very important.
- 4) We must not judge this on the basis of our own understanding because we are now dealing with divine revelation -- things which we could never know if the Lord had not seen fit to reveal them!

And all of this explains v. 17, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And back of that it explains the greater significance and purpose of the miracle recorded in the first 9 verses.

Let us look at them in detail.

#### I. THE WORK OF THE FATHER (John 5:19-23).

From what the Lord says in verse 24, it seems very clear that we are to take what the Lord says in this first division as having to do with salvation.

There are six important statements, important truths, which come out of these five verses:

- A. What they have seen in the healing of the impotent man is actually the work of the Father (v. 19).

This is what He had said in v. 17.

Thus, in opposing this work, they were putting themselves against God -- a position which these "Jews" did not intend to take, and did not want to take!

It was concerning this very thing that the wise Gamaliel warned the Jews about interfering with ministry of the Apostles in the early church, saying, that if it were of men, it would come to nothing, but if it were of God, he said, "ye cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:39b).



This is true also regarding salvation: It is a work of God. It is NOT a work which man would know to do, or be inclined to do, or be able to do! LET US PRAY THAT THIS TRUTH MAY BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN OUR MINDS! Salvation is of the Lord!

The second truth:

- B. It is both inconceivable and impossible that the Lord Jesus Christ would ever do anything contrary to what the Father is doing. This also is in verse 19.

Thus, their charge that the Lord had broken the law was not only false; IT WAS PREPOSTEROUS!

The Lord cannot sin. The Lord cannot lie. The Lord cannot deny Himself. NEITHER CAN THE LORD EVER DO ANYTHING THAT IS CONTRARY TO THE FATHER OR CONTRARY TO THE FATHER'S WILL.

Let us pray that the Lord will get this into our hearts. It will save us a lot of trouble. THERE IS ALWAYS ABSOLUTE HARMONY BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON.

The third truth:

- C. The relationship between the Father and the Son is such that the Son always knows what the Father is doing. See v. 20.

"The Jews" may hate the Lord, and want to kill Him, but "the Father loveth the Son."

Dwell on that truth! Pray it into your heart!

What is the proof that "the Father loveth the Son"? It is that He has chosen to work through the Son as He has never worked through anyone else!

If "the Jews" thought that it was something to be disturbed about to see a man healed who had been sick for 38 years, then they should wait until they saw those "greater works" which the Lord mentions in this verse -- which, according to what follows, would have to do with the resurrection of the dead! This comes next.

The fourth truth:

- D. The Father has not only given His Son the authority on earth to give life to the dead, but He has given His Son the authority to determine WHO will be raised. This is in v. 21.

Note: "even so the Son giveth life to whom he will."

This is what John had told us in John 1:11-13! Salvation is not based upon the will of man, but upon the will of God. How significant it is that our Lord went to "a certain man" at the pool of Bethesda!

We are having foundational truth presented to us here. Pray that your heart will be open to them. Remember we are dealing with divine revelation -- not the wisdom of man!

But there is a fifth truth:

- E. All judgment has been committed by the Father unto the Son. See v. 22.

This follows from v. 21. He will determine those who are saved, and those who are lost. He is not only the Son and the Saviour, but He is the Judge as well.

See also v. 27 in the last section of our text.

This would mean that these "Jews," instead of passing judgment on the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to recognize that He is their Judge -- and so humble themselves before Him!

The sixth and last truth in this first part:

- F. The work of God is always designed for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. v. 23.

It is stated positively first, and then negatively -- so we will see it.

There is no such thing as honoring the Father, while ignoring or blaspheming the Son. The Father "sent Him." He is on a divine mission. Therefore, they should hear Him, believe what He has to say, and trust Him!

But now all of this leads to our second main point in v. 24. Here is another of those grand statements regarding salvation which we find so often in the Gospel of John. This is what the Lord Jesus Christ, with the authority of the Father, says about salvation. It begins with that special phrase, "Verily, verily, I say unto you . . ."

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SON REGARDING SALVATION -- HIS GREAT DECLARATION (John 5:24).

It contains two conditions, and two promises.

A. The conditions:

1. "He that heareth my word" -- which, from what we have seen would surely be also the Father's Word.
2. "And believeth on him that sent me."

Very probably the majority of people who read this verse do not notice that our Lord speaks of having saving faith in the Father!

But that also follows from what our Lord has been saying. You cannot trust Christ without trusting the Father, nor can you trust the Father without trusting Christ!

Putting the two together we see the truth of Rom. 10:17, "So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

What about the promises?

B. The promises:

1. Salvation becomes an immediate possession.
2. There is no possibility that the Lord's decision to give life could be reverses.

The word indicates that the case will never be brought up for review, and a new trial!

But let us go on to our final point:

III. THE TRUTH ABOUT RESURRECTION (John 5:25-30).

To pass "from death unto life" is resurrection (v. 24). This is the work of the Father and of the Son. But what is the full extent of resurrection? It is indicated here as being twofold, and we see that in the expressions:

- 1) "The hour is coming, and now is" (v. 25).
- 2) Just the first part, "the hour is coming" (v. 28).

So vv. 25-27 give us the first truth; vv. 28-30, the second part -- with v. 30 returning as a kind of a summary to what the Lord said to begin with in v. 19.

A. The resurrection that "now is" (vv. 25-27).

This is what happens whenever a person is saved -- a spiritual resurrection unto eternal life. Note how it takes place -- a miracle: "the dead shall hear the

voice of the Son of God" -- just like in a physical way Lazarus heard the Lord calling him, and came back from death, and out of the grave!

The authority of the Son is repeated in vv. 26, 27.

B. The resurrection that is "coming" (vv. 28, 29).

Note that in both sections of this last part the word "hour" designates a particular, set time.

If men marvelled at the miracles of the Lord (see v. 20), think of how they will marvel at this even though the Lord says, "Marvel not at this." If we believe what the Lord has been saying, we will not really be amazed at anything that He does.

All who have died, or who will die before He comes, will be raised. They will all "hear his voice." But the result will be just as different as anything could be -- with only two possibilities!

What men have "done" proves what they are -- and the "good" and the "evil" are "good" and "evil" in the sight of Christ and of God.

Concl. and Appl.: This is what the Lord has to tell us about His purpose in coming to the earth. It is not all here, nor are the details (particularly of His coming). But the basic facts are here.

Salvation is a work of the Father, entered into by the Son, a work of raising men from spiritual death to spiritual life through the Word of the Son -- and all according to the will of the Father.

The evidence that a person has heard the Word is seen in the fact that they believe, and their believing results in doing "good."

And the spiritual resurrection of the present time anticipates and requires a physical resurrection to come -- all under the authority of the Son, who came not to seek his own will, but the will of the Father Who sent Him!

More witnesses are to come, but where do you stand at this point? Are you trusting Christ as your Saviour? There is no other way to escape the judgment to come.

THE FOUR WITNESSES

John 5:31-47

Intro: The Lord Jesus is actually on trial!

He has already been condemned as guilty on two counts:

- 1) Breaking the Law by breaking the Sabbath.
- 2) Blaspheming God by claiming that God was His Father.

The Lord Jesus is speaking in His own defense.

Last Sunday, the first part of His message, we saw His testimony concerning Himself in which He claimed:

- 1) Oneness with the Father.
- 2) Authority from the Father.
- 3) His mission in the world was from the Father -- "sent."

But, before calling other witnesses, He states His reason for the other witnesses in v. 31 -- and in doing so He is recognizing an OT principle which is mentioned in Deut. 17:6; 19:15; mentioned by our Lord in Matt. 18:16 -- that it takes more than one witnesses to give a reliable testimony.

Thus, John 5:31 needs to be taken along with John 8:14.

His witness was true, but it was not valid (M. Henry, NIV), not admissible as legal evidence (mg. of NASB). Or, see the footnote in the NSRB, p. 1131.

And so he proceeds to call His witnesses.

Before we look at the witnesses and what the Lord says about them, we need to understand the meaning of v. 32. There seems to be little doubt that the Lord is referring here to the Father -- not to John the Baptist! Actually John is not a main witness, as our Lord indicates in v. 34. He is called in because of what John meant to the Jews. But the Lord's main witness is the Father -- and all of the other witnesses have actually come from Him!

More about the Father's witness in vv. 37, 38.

But let us hear the witnesses in order.

I. THE FOUR WITNESSES (John 5:33-40).

A. John the Baptist (vv. 33-35).

V. 33 indicates the unquestioned popularity of John with the people -- "Ye sent . . . -- probably referring to the delegation in John 1. And here the Lord confirms the ministry of John.

But a very important principle is stated in the beginning of v. 34 -- and repeated in v. 41 -- that the Lord is not dependent upon the witness of men, either their number, or their prominence. He is the Son of God if no one believes, or gives testimony. We, too, must recognize this. We are so inclined to feel that the testimony of men is the most convincing evidence of the Deity of Christ. IT IS NOT! IT IS THE WEAKEST OF ALL TESTIMONIES! And we need to remember this.

But what about John?

See v. 35 -- "burning" speaks of His zeal, His activity, His selfless devotion -- "shining" indicates that he was seen, made known to all Israel -- "light," which is actually a lamp which needed to be trimmed by others, and would eventually go out. See John 1:8.

What effect did he have?

It looked good at the time, but it did not last! How characteristic this is of the works of men -- and so we cannot look upon this as the greatest witness.

But let us call the second witness.

B. The works of the Lord Jesus (v. 36).

This must include all of His works -- His miracles, His messages, and ultimately His work on the Cross.

Four things about those works:

- 1) The Father had sent Him to do them.
- 2) He was doing them.
- 3) He would finish them.
- 4) They were proof that the Father had sent Him.

Even our Lord's enemies did not deny His works. They tried to ignore them, or to attribute them to Satan, but they did not deny them.

This is the main emphasis in John's Gospel. Have you given serious attention to it?

C. The witness of the Father (vv. 37, 38).

There are three possibilities as to what the Lord was referring to, all true, but the text emphasizes one in particular:

- 1) The times that the Father spoke from heaven. But there were very few who heard this, as v. 37b indicates.

- 2) The ability of the Lord to perform His miracles. See John 3:2; 10:25; 15:24. Also 10:37, 38.
- 3) THE WORD. See v. 38. While the Lord goes on to speak of "the Scriptures," yet here He emphasizes that they are GOD'S WORD!

It is not through visible appearances of the Father that He has given His greatest testimony to His Son, BUT IN HIS WORD.

And this leads us to the fourth witness:

#### D. The Scriptures.

He is speaking of the OT Scriptures -- the only "Scriptures" in existence at the time.

Was it a statement, or a command? The forms are the same in the Greek.

The context points to a command, as in the KJV. They had a knowledge of Scripture. And they prided themselves in that. But they had not diligently, continuously, with an open heart, searched the Word from start to finish, plunging into its depths, following out every clue, crying to God for light, opening their hearts to whatever they would find. They had not done this -- nor have many other people. They will condemn Christ while ignoring the evidence in the Word of God. This is the greatest witness of all!

/// It is in the Scriptures that you find eternal life, and it is in the Scriptures that you find Christ. The two are inseparable!

Have you examined the evidence in the Scriptures? Notice this proof that salvation in the OT is the same as in the NT -- all in Christ.

But now notice a strange thing.

It is the Lord Who is on trial. In fact, He has already been condemned to death.

But what does He do? Look back to v. 22. The Lord suddenly becomes the prosecutor, and He brings charges against the Jews.

There may be more than three, but let me mention just three.

## II. THE CHARGES AGAINST THE JEWS.

A. Verse 38: "Ye have not his word abiding in you."

They had the Word, but it was not "in" them. They had

been temporarily influenced by it, but not permanently changed.

A person's relationship to the Word indicates their relationship not only to God, but also to the Son of God.

Consequently, they might be religious, but they did not have "eternal life," they were NOT "saved."

B. Verse 40: Lit., "and ye will not to come to me."

This is the problem. They were not totally ignorant. They were in bondage to their wills!

How can they be liberated? We will see before we are through. But how important it is to see the impossibility of man liberating himself.

Of course, if men will not to come, they are excluded from having eternal life.

But there is a third charge.

C. Verse 42: "Ye have not the love of God in you."

They had accused the Lord of violating the 4th commandment; THEY ARE NOW CHARGED BY OUR LORD WITH VIOLATING THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF ALL!

What were the evidences of this?

There are three in vv. 43, 44.

- 1) Their proneness to accept false prophets instead of the true Messiah.
- 2) Their delight in the praises of men.
- 3) The fact that they did not seek that which was pleasing to the only God.

These are the most serious charges. What hope is there for these Jews, or for people today?

### III. THE CHALLENGE (WHICH IS ALSO A SERIOUS REBUKE) (John 5:45-47)

Our passages begins and ends with two men, one NT and the other OT, who are clearly two of the greatest men in all of the Word of God: John the Baptist, and Moses. The Jews had been deeply impressed by both, and yet they had missed the main emphasis in the ministry of both men -- the fact that they spoke and wrote exclusively of CHRIST!

And note how the Lord identifies His own teaching with that of Moses -- linking together the OT and the NT again!



These Jews did not need to be tried and condemned by the Lord because they already stood condemned by the teachings of the very man they professed to follow: Moses.

But what does this indicate as to their hope?

See John 8:34-36, and also v. 32.

The Lord is calling these Jews back to the Word of God -- as the testimony of the Father to Christ, and as the testimony of Moses to Christ!

Concl: What were the results?

We are not told. Perhaps it is as Matthew Henry suggests: The Lord had shut their mouths.

But why are we not told?

I offer one reason: So that we will be left with the truth, and not feel that it is the truth because all of these Jews turned to the Lord.

The truth of the Lord is not true because men accept it. It is not determined by what men do with it. It is true if no one receives it. Just as our denial of the existence of God does not mean that God does not exist.

But what about your own heart? Do you want to be saved? Are you looking for eternal life? Then turn to Christ. Trust Him. He is your only hope. He is the Saviour of all of Scripture -- OT and NT. "Search the Scriptures" with your heart open to the Lord, and you will see that Christ is your only hope, the only hope of any who seek for salvation. It is the Scriptures that will cause you to cry out for salvation.

THE ABUNDANT PROVIDER  
John 6:1-14

Intro: This is a very important miracle -- the only one that is recorded in all 4 Gospels! Be sure to read the other accounts in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and Luke 9.

The other writers (in contrast with John) put this miracle -- after the beheading of John, and after the disciples had been out ministering and had returned in need of rest.

John is obviously not interested primarily in giving us the order of events. His purpose, as we have seen, is to show us "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that this knowledge might lead to faith in Christ. To do this, John has selected the miracles that we find in this Gospel.

In this connection it is interesting to note that John is the only one who gives us the conclusion mentioned in verse 14.

But John has another purpose related to all of this, for record- this miracle in this particular place -- to lead up to the <sup>ing</sup> message which we find in the latter part of this chapter, a message which Matthew, Mark, and Luke omit altogether! It is the message in which the Lord teaches that He is "the bread of life"!

But let us keep in mind that the main thing about the miracles in any of the Gospels is that we see what they teach us of Christ, ESPECIALLY WITH REFERENCE TO HIS DEITY AND WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD THROUGH THE REVELATION THAT WE HAVE IN HIM.

But before we do that, let us look at some of the more incidental lessons of this passage:

- 1) Our Lord teaches us that we should be concerned about the physical needs of people. He spent much of His time healing them of their diseases. He refused to let them go on this occasion before He fed them.
- 2) Our Lord teaches us that we ought to pray before we eat -- recognizing that our food comes from the Father -- and for it we should give Him thanks.

Spurgeon points out in preaching on this passage that the miracle we see here "is virtually the same miracle which Christ works every year" (Vol. 27, p. 361). He means that the main difference here is that the Lord is speeding up that process of planting, growth, and harvest!

Are we teaching our children this? Do we realize it as we should? Perhaps one reason we are beginning to face shortages is because the Lord is wearied with our acting and thinking that we produce our own food.

Do not let prayer before meals become just a formality.

- Let it be done every time in sincere recognition that that food before you has come from the Lord -- because it has!
- 3) Our Lord teaches us to be orderly in what we do.

Paul taught the Corinthians, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) because "God is not the author of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33a).

Making the people sit down in companies of 50 and 100 (as the other Gospel writers tell us) did at least two things: (1) it made it easier for the disciples to serve them; (2) it would enable the disciples to know when they were finished so that no one would have been missed.

- 4) Finally, the Lord teaches us to be frugal. Just because we have more than we need is no reason for us to be wasteful with what we have. Calvin believes that in the judgment men will have to account to God for the way food has been wasted. Americans have been particularly guilty on this point.

But now let us turn to consider the miracle itself.

Luke tells us in Luke 9:10 that this miracle was performed in "a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida" -- which was at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.

John has already told us that Philip and Andrew and Peter were all from Bethsaida. See John 1:44.

So it is significant that in their home area the Lord seems to have been dealing with Philip and Andrew primarily. If any of the disciples could know where food could be purchased, it would have been one of these three men.

Perhaps the Lord is teaching us even in this that we ought to be genuinely concerned about the city or the area where we have grown up, or even where we are now living. Certainly no one is going to be more concerned for Portland than those of us who live here!

But, now, let us keep in mind that our purpose in coming to this passage is to learn about God through what we can see and hear from the Lord Jesus Christ.

SO -- what is the first thing?

The first thing we see is . . .

- I. THE CONCERN THAT THE LORD HAD FOR THE PEOPLE WHEN THEY WERE HUNGRY. See v. 5.

Those of us who are parents ought to understand this in a special way, as David once wrote in Psa. 103:13, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

This why the Lord continues to give food to men even when they do not recognize that it is what He is doing, and they never give Him thanks -- because He is a God of compassion and of kindness and of mercy!

The second thing that we see about the Lord is in contradiction to the real truth. It is . . .

II. THE APPARENT INDECISION OF THE LORD, OR EVEN WHAT MIGHT BE TERMED, HIS IGNORANCE. See v. 5 again.

But note how careful John is to give us the truth -- and back of John we know that the 6th verse has come from the Holy Spirit. Neither the Holy Spirit nor John want us to get the wrong idea about the Lord -- that He is ever ignorant or uncertain about how to go about doing what needs to be done.

Let these words sink into your hearts: "he himself knew what he would do, or even more literally, what He was about to do!

HE KNOWS!

This all took the disciples by surprise, and overwhelmed them -- but the Lord knew from all eternity that this miracle would be performed here at this particular time. See how He spoke of His works in John 5:36.

Then why did He ask Philip where they could buy food to feed this "great company" of over 5,000 people?

Where would you buy bread for such a crowd? People have been buying up all of the bread they could find this week because they have been afraid that the weather might make it impossible for them to get out to get bread.

What is the answer to the question, Why did the Lord act in this way?

Verse 6 gives the answer. He did it to "prove" or to test Philip. It was to test him in order to strengthen him -- to build up his faith!

And, in doing this, both Philip and Andrew, these home town men, had to be brought to the place where they had to recognize their total inadequacy to be able to do for the people what they needed.

We talk about meeting people's needs -- How can we? Have we learned, or are we learning, how inadequate we are, so we will see how much we have to trust the Lord?

They did not have enough money. They did not have enough food. But the Lord knew what He would do,  
when it would do it,  
how it would be done!

The disciples just knew that there was a need to great for them to meet.

But there is a third point to notice in our passage:

III. THE METHOD, OR PATTERN, OF MINISTRY WHICH THE LORD TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES ON THIS OCCASION. See v. 11.

What do we as the Lord's people do when we realize that we do not have either the knowledge nor the resources necessary to meet people's needs?

Here is the answer: We go to the Lord,  
we receive the bread from Him,  
and then we go to the people to give  
them what the Lord has given us!

I hear a lot about methods in these days, but very little about this way of working.

What does this teach us? It teaches us the sufficiency of the Lord -- sufficient to meet any need. It does not mean the Lord and us, but the Lord alone, for any need!

But this raises the question, How sufficient?

This miracle teaches us that . . .

IV. OUR GOD IS AN ABUNDANT PROVIDER -- ONE WHO IS MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR THE NEEDS OF ALL MEN.

Relate this to salvation. The Bible does not teach that the Lord intended by His death to save all men. All men are not going to be saved. But at the same time we have to recognize the infinite value of the death of Christ -- that if there were millions of worlds just like ours, the death of Christ is of more value in the sight of God, infinitely more, than would be required to save them all!

How is that taught here?

There were twelve baskets left over -- when they only started with five loaves and two fish!

How many of you ladies know the panic that can hit you when you think that you might run out of food for a group you have prepared to serve? That can never happen with the Lord! He is always more than sufficient for the needs of all man.

Concl. and Appl.: What a marvelous lesson the Lord has given us who believe so that we may know that:

- 1) The Lord always knows.
- 2) The Lord has reasons for what He is doing.
- 3) The Lord is sufficient to meet the needs.
- 4) When the provision is made, it is always greater than we had ever expected.

What about salvation?

What are you going to do to meet your own need . . .  
for forgiveness?  
for peace of heart?  
for deliverance from your sins?

There is just as much hope for you as there was for that crowd of people on that day if the Lord had not provided for them. There only hope was in Christ. And your only hope is in Him. Will you trust Him? Will you turn from all that you have been doing to save yourself, and place your faith in the Son of God, and in Him alone?

Christ is the One we need. He alone is sufficient -- and more than we will ever need!

WITHDRAWING AND DRAWING NEAR  
John 6:15-21

Intro: This is the 5th miracle recorded by John.

The first 4 are:

- 1) Changing the water into wine -- John 2.
- 2) Healing the nobleman's son -- John 4.
- 3) Healing of the man who had an infirmity for 38 years -- John 5.
- 4) The feeding of the 5,000 -- John 6.

All of the miracles serve at least 3 purposes:

- 1) Pre-eminently, they reveal the deity of Christ -- thus, encouraging faith in Him as Saviour.
- 2) They meet some need.
- 3) They are designed for the spiritual instruction of the disciples.

Usually the first and the third are linked together for the disciples -- giving them some additional insight into the deity of Christ, and what it is to mean in their lives and ministry.

Archbishop Trench of Dublin, Ireland (1807-1886) says, quoting Chrysostom, that one of the purposes of this miracles was "to train his disciples to higher things than hitherto they had learned" (Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord, pp. 299, 300).

CONTENT  
OF AUGUSTINE

One of the reasons that Archbishop Trench says this is as a result of comparing the first time the Lord helped His disciples in a storm, with this time.

This particular miracle which we are considering is recorded not only by John, but also by Matthew and Mark. See:

- 1) Matt. 14:22-33.
- 2) Mark 6:45-51.

Both Matthew and Mark give a more detailed account, and Matthew includes also Peter walking on the water to meet the Lord.

But Matthew, Mark, and Luke include the miracle of the Lord Jesus going with His disciples in a boat on that memorable occasion when the storm came up and He was asleep in the boat. See:

- 1) Matthew 8:23-27.
- 2) Mark 4:36-41.
- 3) Luke 8:22-25.

The main difference between these miracles that we need to be concerned about is that, in the first miracle, the Lord Jesus was with them; in the second, He was not with them -- until He came to them, walking upon the water!

The additional step that the Lord was making them take here was that they were learning to walk by faith and not by sight!

Another point of interest . . .

It seems that down through the history of the Church expositors have seen in this miracle a picture of this present age:

- 1) The Lord sending His own into the storm of life in this world.
- 2) He departs into heaven to pray for them.
- 3) He sees their plight from heaven.
- 4) He comes to meet them, and to take them to their desired haven.

We need the details given to us by Matthew and Mark to get this complete picture, but there is no doubt but that it is there.

But let us think this morning about the last point I mentioned with respect to the purpose of our Lord's miracles: for the spiritual instruction of the disciples (and what they mean to us today), including with it the special revelation of the deity of our Lord that we have in this passage.

Let us look at the miracle and THE FIVE CERTAINTIES that we see in the record that John has given to us:

- 1) The certainty of temptation.
- 2) The certainty of trials.
- 3) The certainty of the absence of the Lord Jesus -- or, perhaps I should say, His apparent absence. It will seem that He is absent.
- 4) The certainty of His coming to us.
- 5) The certainty of ultimate success.

Here we see the Lord WITHDRAWING AND DRAWING NEAR:

- WITHDRAWING FROM THE CROWDS,
- DRAWING NEAR TO HIS DISCIPLES.

In doing so, let us seek to learn the lessons the Lord was seeking to teach His disciples.

#### I. THE CERTAINTY OF TEMPTATION.

But what a strange temptation this was. It was so strong, and the disciples would have been so receptive to it, that both Matthew and Mark tell us that the Lord "constrained" His disciples to get into the boat, and leave. He forced them to go!

What was the temptation?

It was the temptation of POPULARITY! And what a relief this is from the situation in chapter 5 where "the Jews" wanted



to kill our Lord. Now the multitudes want to make Him "king."

This is at least the second time that this temptation had faced the Lord Jesus. See the third temptation recorded by Matthew in Matt. 4:8-10.

What about this purpose?

- 1) It certainly was ultimately to be the position given to our Lord.
- 2) The timing was off.
- 3) The reason was not spiritual in character, nor for the glory of God.
- 4) It was something that the people were going to do for themselves, when the Lord had said in Psalm 2 that He would do it.

So it had the Word of God on its side in one sense, in another it did not!

- 5) The worst problem is this: What would it have done about the Cross?

Our Lord sent His disciples away. He went into the mountain to pray. And it was all to teach His disciples, first of all, that we must not be turned from the Word of God by a passing popularity with men and the pressures that they will put on us to turn from what God has revealed for us in the Word.

The true teaching of Scripture is not popular with men. It never has been. It never will be. And yet this has always constituted one of the greatest of all temptations for the Church -- and it has robbed the Church of its power today!

Bishop Ryle says:

"Popularity and the good opinion of excited crowds are both worthless and temporary things."

See Vol. I, p. 340.

How pitiful are the world's entertainers who do anything to keep the world's popularity, knowing that ultimately they are going to lose it!

Let us beware!

## II. THE CERTAINTY OF TRIALS.

Remember: It was the Lord who made them get into that boat. And so it was the Lord who sent them into that storm.

And note when this event took place (as it so often does) -- right after a time of great blessing!

Did you become a Christian thinking that that would put an end to your trials? Have you succumbed to the desire to be popular by seeking to get men to accept Christ with bread, but you have not told them about the storms?

How do you consider your own trials -- as something to be avoided at all costs, or as being "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire" (1 Pet. 1:7) -- that is, the trial of your faith?

Trials are not the exception for the people of God; they are normal and necessary. And they will come -- usually increasing in intensity as we get older!

This was a very important lesson that the disciples has to learn -- and so do we!

### III. THE CERTAINTY OF THE ABSENCE OF THE LORD JESUS.

Several things are said about this storm:

- 1) "It was now dark."
- 2) "The sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew."

But the worst is this: "Jesus was not come to them."

If you have known the Lord for any time at all, you have experienced this: You cannot see any evidence that the Lord is present, or that He knows, or that He even cares!

See this in the Psalms.

See this in the story of Mary and Martha in connection with the death of Lazarus.

See this even in what our Lord experienced on the Cross -- "My God, My God, why . . . ?"

#### Are you in a time like this now?

It is a time when all visible comforts are taken away,  
we have to fall back upon what we have  
learned,  
we have to believe promises which seem to  
be empty and meaningless,  
we have to look at the written Word  
because the living Word is nowhere to be  
seen!

God is teaching us to walk by faith, not by sight!

These times are sure to come -- and to come with greater emphasis!

## IV. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS COMING TO US.

And I am not thinking now of the rapture, or of His return in glory -- though those events are certain, too.

I am thinking of those times, which also come, when relief appears, when prayer is answered, when the realization of His presence is restored, when peace reigns in our hearts.

It is expressed here in the words: "They see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship."

This, it seems to me, is the main point in this whole story.

Before, the Lord had been with them in the boat. THEY PROBABLY FELT THAT, IN THEIR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, HE COULD NOT GET THERE. THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT HE WOULD DO WHATEVER HE NEEDED TO DO IN ORDER TO HELP THEM IN THEIR DANGER AND IN THEIR NEED!

What peace we forfeit because we look at circumstances, and see that they are different from what they have ever been before -- and so we cannot figure out how the Lord can possibly help us.

And note: The very thing that the Lord was doing to come to help them, made them afraid: "And they were afraid."

And the first thing that He does is speak to them -- not to the storm: "It is I; be not afraid."

In fact, He did not speak to the storm at all on this occasion. Matthew and Mark tell us that when He got into the boat, the storm was over!

Oh, may this help us to understand that, if the Lord has not yet come, in our present trial, HE IS ON THE WAY! He will not fail; He cannot fail!

He may not come in the way you expect Him. In fact, the way He comes may also make you afraid. But He will come. Be sure of that!

Finally . . .

## V. THE CERTAINTY OF ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

There is a second miracle that the Lord performs here: "and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

Note: Their rowing did not do it. But the Lord did. They had rowed three or four miles. They had about the

same distance to go. It had taken them several hours. They were in the fourth watch -- between 3 and 6 a.m. The rest of the journey took no time at all: "immediately."

For us, for some things at least, we may have to wait until we get to heaven to see the results, but again we can see (and often see even now), that the Lord never fails. What He starts, He finishes. He did not put His disciples into the boat to drown them, but to get them to the other side!

Concl. and Appl.: I have been making the application as I have gone along this morning. May the Lord help you to see the reasons for the Lord's withdrawals, and for those times when He certainly will draw near again.

For you who do not know the Saviour, I cannot promise you a bed of roses without the thorns. I cannot promise you heaven without hardship. I cannot tell you that the Lord will remove all suffering when He forgives your sins.

But I can tell you that there is no hope for heaven, no possibility that your sins can be forgiven, no way of making peace with a holy God, except through faith in a crucified, risen, glorified, and coming Christ!

One reason He would not accept the throne at this time was because He had not yet gone to the Cross for the sins of men. But He did die, and one day He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Is He your Saviour? If not, will you accept Him NOW?

"SEEKING FOR JESUS"  
or  
WHY DO YOU SEEK CHRIST?  
John 6:22-29

Intro: It was the feeding of the 5,000 that led to our Lord's discourse on Himself as the Bread of Life.

As we have seen -- all four of the Gospel writers record this miracle.

It was followed by another miracle -- Jesus walking on the water. It has been recorded by three of the Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, and John.

But only John gives us the message which we in the remainder of John 6, beginning with v. 25.

In this message we have what one writer calls "one of the most remarkable passages in the Gospels" (Ryle, Vol. I, p. 357).

Therefore, I am going to spend 5 Sunday mornings on the remainder of John 6 -- this Sunday, and 4 more, the Lord willing.

Please read it, and re-read it, and pray over it, until the truth of this chapter gets into your heart. There is much here for you if you do not know the Lord, and there is much here for you if you do know the Lord!

In the passage before us this morning, verses 22-29, we have two things:

- 1) John's description of the circumstances, vv. 22-24.
- 2) The beginning of the conversation, consisting of two questions, and two answers, vv. 25-29.

I. The description of THE CIRCUMSTANCES (John 6:22-24).

This obviously only has to do with part of the crowd that the Lord had fed on the previous day -- but they were a very determined part, determined to find Him!

And they seem to have been aware that something miraculous had happened for the Lord to have been able to get away from them.

Note the reminder of what preceded the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 -- "after that the Lord had given thanks" (v. 23b). It had obviously been an answer to prayer, and so a work of God Himself.

Cf. one of my BMA verses for last week: Acts 2:22. Such is the import of our Lord giving thanks.

But John also makes it very clear that the one thing which was motivating the crowd was that they were "seeking for Jesus" (v. 24). That much sounds good! But we are soon to see that it was not all that it appeared to be.

## II. The beginning of THE CONVERSATION (John 6:25-29).

It consists of two questions, and two answers -- the questions were asked by the people; the Lord gave the answers.

### A. The first question (v. 25): "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

It shows that they were still baffled by this, and that they were conscious that something unusual had taken place.

### B. The Lord's answer (vv. 26, 27).

He does not really answer their question, but He does respond to them.

It is obvious that they had not gotten the significance of the first miracle (the feeding of the 5,000), and so the Lord was not going to spend time on the second miracle (that He had walked on the water).

Instead, He gave them His special introduction to something very important and absolutely true: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." So He wanted them to listen carefully, and to understand what He was going to say to them!

He does two things:

#### 1. He rebukes them (v. 26).

The Lord knew that they were looking for Him, but He also knew why -- and that part did not please Him.

The people liked the results of the miracle they had seen, but they did not know the meaning of the miracle. This is what He had in mind when He spoke of seeing the miracles.

The miracles were not designed primarily to meet their needs, but to show them Who He was!

#### Application:

- 1) The Lord is the same today -- He knows why we seek Him, if we are seeking Him!
- 2) Why are you here this morning? Are you seeking

Him? Why are you seeking Him? Do you seek Him for Himself, or to meet your needs? Do you really know what your greatest need is?

But the Lord does a second thing:

2. He exhorts them (v. 27).

In this verse He does three things:

a. He tells them what they are NOT to do: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth."

He is not telling them that they should not work. He is not encouraging them to be lazy. But He is telling them that this is not to be the main, the exclusive, the consuming object of their lives -- to give attention to the satisfaction of their bodily, their temporal, their earthly needs.

b. Then He tells them what they ARE to do: "But for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

So there are two kinds of "meat." There is "meat" for the body, but there is also "meat" for the soul. One remains; the other does not.

Application: Whether you are a Christian or not, there is an application for you here. How much time have you given toward the supply of your earthly needs this week -- 40 hours +? How much to your spiritual needs? How much to the Lord, to the Word, to prayer, to reading things that will edify you, to hearing the Word taught? How do the two compare?

But there is one more thing in this verse:

c. He explains to them some very important truth: "which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

Many commentators down through the history of the church have seen that Joseph is a good illustration of what the Lord is saying here.

What was Joseph's proof that he had the authority to do what he was doing in Egypt -- to be the dispenser of food for the people? He had Pharaoh's ring. See Gen. 41:42. This was his

seal!

What was our Lord's seal -- the evidence that He had divinely appointed, commissioned, empowered to act with such authority, giving eternal life to men? His miracles were His seal!

Cf. John 20:30, 31.

And the word "give" keeps us from thinking that "everlasting life" is a reward for our works. The Lord uses the word, "labour," not to teach works, but to show us that our energies should be directed in this way -- and that this will take time and energy on our part!

This is all made clearer with the second question and its answer.

- C. The second question (v. 28): "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

This does not mean that they wanted to do what only God can do, but they wanted to know what they had to do in order to please God so that they might have the "everlasting life" that He had spoken to them about.

- D. The Lord's answer (v. 29).

Whether the question was sincere or not, the Lord gave them the answer. Let us learn from this in our dealing with men. It is not for us to respond according to the sincerity of people, but it is ours to proclaim the truth.

The answer: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Heb. 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him (God); for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

But WHY is there such an emphasis on FAITH in Scripture, and WHY did the Lord mention this as the one thing necessary in order to please God, i.e., to "work the works of God?"

Here are some of the answers:

- 1) Because faith is the foundation of everything else in our lives.



2) Because faith means that we are trusting the Lord.

And along with this:

3) Because it means that we are NOT trusting in ourselves -- neither in who we are, nor in what we have done or can do

4) Because it means (according to our text) that we are placing our hope in Christ.

5) Because it means that we accept the Word as true. The Word emphasizes faith from Genesis to Revelation.

Concl: There is much more to come in the chapter. When we see just the truth contained in the few verses that we have had this morning, we can understand why this has always been considered such an important part of the NT.

But the important question at this point is, Where do we stand in relation to this truth?

-- Are we seeking the Lord?

-- If so, how, and why?

-- What place does the Lord Jesus Christ have in our daily lives?

-- Are we as concerned about eternal life as we are about earthly life? How do the time and energy that we give to the one compare with what is given to the other?

-- Have we trusted the Lord for salvation?

-- Do we continue to trust Him day by day for the strength, blessing, guidance, and ministry that we would desire for His glory?

-- Do we want the Lord for Himself, and not just for what we want Him to do for us?

May the Spirit of God search our hearts, and try us, that we may know where we stand in our relationship with the Lord, and what is not right in His sight may be made right through His power working in us!

THE WILL OF THE FATHER IN SALVATION  
John 6:30-40

Intro: I would like to use verses 35-40 as my main text this morning, and simply refer to verses 30-34 by way of introduction.

John 6 is actually one continuous story, taking place on two consecutive days.

On the first day the Lord was with His disciples on the northern part of the sea of Galilee, near Bethsaida (according to Luke 9:10). After feeding the 5,000, the Lord put His disciples into a boat so they could return to Capernaum while He went into a mountain to pray. Later He joined them during a storm by walking on the water. The next day the crowd, unable to find Him near Bethsaida, also went to Capernaum, and found Him there. What they wanted to know was, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" (John 6:25). The Lord, recognizing that their main interest was in more bread, more food, rebuked them, and exhorted them to "labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which," He said, "the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27).

How should they labour, if they were to please God, they responded?

And He told them to believe!

And then it was just like He had to start all over again -- just as though He had not done any miracle at all. See v. 30.

In their minds they were comparing Him with Moses, who also had been a miracle-worker. He had not just fed 5,000+, but he had been the instrument of providing for over 1,500,000 for 40 years! They even seemed to have Scripture on their side -- see the quotation in v. 31 from Neh. 9:15.

According to v. 36 most of these people were not believers -- that is, they had not been saved. But it looked like a great movement had started toward Christ. How would He handle them? This is important for us to understand. Would He try to get some commitment out of them first, or would He seek to clear up their lack of understanding?

What would you have done? Would you have been afraid of running them off?

There is no question as to the path which the Lord took. He knew that they could not really believe until they understood the difference between the earthly bread and the heavenly.

And so He tells them 4 things in vv. 32, 33:

- 1) Moses did not give them the bread He was talking about.
- 2) "The true bread" is given by the "Father . . . from heaven"!
- 3) "The bread of God" is a Person -- Christ Himself!
- 4) The offer is made to the whole world, and this is the world's only hope of life -- everlasting life!

And then it seems that they are ready. Look at v. 34.

But the Lord is not deceived (even though we might have been). He knows that they still do not believe -- and He tells them so. See v. 36.

AND THEN THE LORD DOES SOMETHING WHICH VERY FEW OF HIS SERVANTS WOULD DO. HE DRAWS ASIDE THE CURTAIN OF HEAVEN, SO TO SPEAK, AND HE PERMITS THESE PEOPLE TO HAVE A GLIMPSE OF THE DIVINE SIDE OF SALVATION -- AND HE SPEAKS TO THEM OF THE WILL OF THE FATHER!

I know of pastors and teachers, even theological professors, who are hesitant about speaking even to the Lord's people on a subject like this. They feel that it is too divisive, that it is too hard to understand, that it is enough for us to look at the human side of salvation -- and so that is all that a lot of people ever hear, all that they ever know.

But I am going to ask you to look at the heavenly side this morning. I am going to do it because the Lord Jesus did it -- and so I have good authority. And I am going to do it knowing that there may be some here who do not know the Lord, as well as many who do.

If the Lord did this,

and if the Lord led John to write this in his Gospel, then surely He expects that we should be taught these things, and that we should understand them -- as He wanted the crowd on that day to understand these truths.

Let us begin with vv. 35-40 by noting that we need to recognize what we can call

#### I. THE WILL OF GOD IN SALVATION.

Note vv. 38, 39, 40.

Some people (including a lot of believers) never understand that God has a will with regard to salvation.

Some people never see that God, in sending <sup>His Son</sup> guaranteed that certain people would be saved. They only see that He made the salvation of sinners a possibility.

What is the result? The result is that even believers, <sup>who</sup> in seeking to win people to Christ, have only seen the human

side, and so they are really afraid to teach,  
 they will do anything to keep people coming,  
 because they have never seen that God sent His Son to  
 accomplish a specific work with specific people AND THAT  
 THAT WORK CANNOT FAIL!

Now let us look at that will of God --

look at it as it was explained by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 and as it was explained by Him to sinners!

Surely we can have no argument with that -- and I have been pray-  
 ing that your heart would be opened by the Lord to these truths  
 which are obviously important for all of us to know -- glorious  
 truths, truths which will be the delight of every child of God,  
 and truths which the Spirit of God uses to bring lost sinners to  
 the Saviour.

Let us look at:

## II. THE DETAILS OF THE FATHER'S WILL WITH RESPECT TO SALVATION.

Here they are -- all in our text, all a part of the Word of  
 God, a most vital part!

What is that will which the Lord Jesus called, "the will of  
 him that sent me"? Cf. v. 38b.

- A. First, in v. 37, that "all that the Father giveth me  
 shall come to me."

~~Note the word, "all."~~

In order to understand salvation, we must begin with God.  
 He is giving some, not everybody, to His Son, and "all"  
 who are given "shall come" -- a simple future statement  
 of fact, not may come, or we hope will come IF we find  
 the right methods, but "all that the Father giveth me  
 shall come to me."

Nobody else is going to come! No man will come "on his  
 own." The Lord was not trusting the will of man, but  
 He was trusting His Father to give men to Him.

See v. 44 if you need added confirmation.

The Father does not give all men. That is apparent be-  
cause all do not come, But all that He does give, do  
come.

Does this strike a strange note in your ear? If so,  
 then it is probably because you have been looking at  
 salvation just from the human side. But how can these  
 words of the Lord Jesus mean anything else?

Salvation can then be defined as God giving sinners  
 to His Son.

But let us move on to another point.

- B. It is the will of the Father that the Lord should receive all who come.

Note the latter part of v. 37: "and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

There is not the slightest possibility that anyone who comes to Christ will be rejected, turned down. No sinner is too great a sinner.

How do we know the ones whom the Father is sending? By the fact that they come to Christ, and that they believe in Him.

It is not for you and me to decide who the elect are. We will know them when we see them coming to Christ and trusting Him as Saviour. It is ours to seek and to preach. It is up to the Lord to bring them to Christ.

Will you come to Christ this morning? Then do so. Believe in Him. There is not the slightest possibility that you will be turned away.

But there is another wonderful feature about the will of the Father in salvation. It is this:

- C. It is the will of the Father that the Lord would keep, that He would not lose, any <sup>who</sup> come to Him and believe on Him.

See v. 39.

True salvation means everlasting life. It is not something you have today, but could lose tomorrow. It is eternal -- and it is eternal, not because you are always going to do the right thing in God's eyes, but because it is the will of the Father for you to be saved, if you are truly saved, FOREVER!

Some profess, and fall away -- but these have never really believed. True salvation is eternal.

Two more points with regard to the will of the Father.

- D. It is the will of the Father that all whom He gives to His Son should manifest their election by coming to Christ, and by believing in Christ.

See v. 40. Thus, the doctrine of election is safeguarded. Election is not to be an excuse for not preaching the Gospel. It is not to keep men from coming to Christ

and from believing in Him. When men come to Christ and when they believe, it confirms the doctrine of election. No one can possibly be elected by God who does not also believe.

Finally . . .

- E. It is the will of the Father that all who come to Christ should find eternal and complete satisfaction in Christ.

Satisfaction is guaranteed --not by offering to give you your money back (because it is not really guaranteed on that basis).

The Lord gave two double negatives in v. 35 (and another in v. 37). This makes, according to the Greeks, the strongest possible affirmative.

Christ will satisfy you concerning your guilt with full and eternal forgiveness. He will satisfy you concerning your desire for acceptance with God. He will fully provide for your joy and peace throughout this life. He will keep you through all of your future trials and even your failures. He, and He alone, will make it absolutely certain that some day you will be in heaven -- conformed to the image of Christ!

No one but Christ can do all of this for you. No one else can add a thing. Nothing else is needed. So your satisfaction is guaranteed.

Concl: What are we to say, then, to these things? Is evangelism a human work that we are going for God? Is it frustrated and defeated by the rebellion and rejection of men? Is God now a powerless Sovereign who hopes each day that more will wake up to their need and trust Christ?

No -- a doctrine of salvation which does not recognize the sovereignty of an almighty God is not worthy of the Scriptures. God is accomplishing His will. He is giving sinners to His Son. And the sinners are coming -- not of their own free will, but have had their wills turned in sovereign grace to the Lord Jesus Christ, and enabled by God to believe, they are coming to Christ. And all who come are received. And all who are received are kept. But no one is kept or even received who does not believe. And so we are to preach the Gospel. God is calling sinners to Himself -- and they will come!

Have you come to Christ, and do you believe in Him? If not, let me encourage you to do so now. He will save you when you come in faith to Him.

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN  
John 6:41-51

Intro: Bishop Ryle, of the Church of England, who died in 1900, once wrote concerning John, chapter 6:

"Truths of the weightiest importance follow each other in rapid succession in the chapter we are now reading. There are probably very few parts of the Bible which contain so many 'deep things' as the sixth chapter of St. John" (I, pp. 381, 382).

The events and the teaching of this chapter had all started with the feeding of the 5,000.

Following that, the people had wanted to make our Lord their King. See John 6:15.

They even followed the Lord around the sea of Galilee -- and the story continued on into the next day.

Then, when they did find the Lord, He sought to show them that the miracles were sign-posts, indicating Who He was -- and that He had come as the Bread from heaven to give them eternal life. And so He sought to use their interest in literal bread for their bodies to the true Bread for their souls.

And, after the teaching in verse 32 through 40 which we had last Sunday, it became apparent that the people did not like what they were hearing!

And so our text this morning begins with . . .

I. THE MURMURING OF THE PEOPLE -- AGAINST THE BREAD (John 6: 41, 42).

(Read the verses.)

It seemed incredible to them.

They felt that they could explain it (v. 42).

And so they did not like what they were hearing.

They did not believe it.

They did not feel any need for it.

And this is what you run up against all of the time when you witness to people about Christ, seeking to get them to trust Christ for salvation:

- 1) They do not really understand what you are talking about.
- 2) They are unwilling to come to Christ.
- 3) They do not sense any particular need, i.e., spiritual need.
- 4) They do not believe, and will not believe.

There is no situation that is more impossible than this. What can be done about it -- if anything?

Do you remember this in your own life? Haven't you seen this constantly in the lives of others? IN FACT, IS THIS NOT ONE OF THE MAJOR THINGS, IF NOT THE MAJOR THING, THAT KEEPS YOU FROM WITNESSING MORE THAN YOU DO -- THE REALIZATION THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT UNDERSTAND YOU, AND THAT PEOPLE WILL EVEN THINK YOU ARE SILLY FOR BELIEVING SUCH THINGS?

Remember that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18) -- and it always will be! You aren't going to change that! Woe unto you if you try!

What, then, can be done?

Remember that the Gospel is not foolishness. It is the most wonderful, the most reasonable message, that men can ever hear! But the trouble is to be found in the heart of man:

- 1) His ignorance blinds him to its truth.
- 2) His sinful will rejects it, and cannot accept it.
- 3) We may plead with people to believe in Christ, but they will not; they cannot -- in their present state.

How will they ever be saved?

This is where we come to the second part of our text:

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE FATHER -- TOWARD THE BREAD (John 6: 43-46).

We have made evangelism such a human work, with all of our methods and manners, that we have overlooked the one essential part in winning people to Christ -- and that is the Father's part.

The Lord Jesus spoke of it as the Father drawing men to Christ.

And our Lord even says that no man is ever saved apart from this because no man is able to come until the Father draws him.

See John 6:65.

Now, what is this DRAWING work of the Father? Of what does it consist? Three things:

- 1) The enlightening of the mind so that he will understand things which before have been foolish to him.
- 2) The changing of the will -- so that instead of being unwilling man will be willing.
- 3) The imparting of faith -- because apart from this drawing work of the Father man not only will not believe; he cannot believe!



If these words sound strange to you, I only ask you to listen to the Word of God -- and see if you can explain these words in any other way.

A. The enlightening of the mind, the understanding.

Do you remember what Paul wrote in Eph. 4:18 about the minds of people who do not know the Lord? Listen:

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

This is a very real thing. People who are brilliant in other ways are totally without understanding when it comes to the things that have to do with God and with salvation.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says about "the wisdom of God . . . which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7, 8).

How can this be overcome?

1. Our text tells that it is a work of God, not of man. We do not do it for others; they do not do it for themselves; God must do it!
2. Our text also tells us that the answer to the problem is not new. See v. 45. In fact, all of the OT prophets are in agreement as to how the spiritual ignorance is removed by the Lord. In this way the Lord is indicating that the means of salvation in the OT was the same as it is now in NT times.
3. Our text informs us that God does it by His own Word. We may teach the Word, but God must use it -- and He does! "The entrance of thy word giveth light," said the Psalmist in Psa. 119:130a.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6),  
he was referring to the ministry of the Word!

God did this through His prophets in the OT; He still does the same through His people today. This is why it is so important for people to hear the Word of God. The Lord does not always use it in the same way, but if people are going to understand it is ALWAYS through the Word!

But there are two other things that we need to note about the drawing work of the Father.

Note that verse 45 indicate that, when a person is "taught of God," he comes to Christ! So, if a person does not come to Christ, he has not been taught of God. We continue to tell and to teach, and we continue to pray, but if he does not come, he has not yet been taught of God.

But once the Word has reached him, you cannot keep him away. The effect of God's grace upon the human heart is that all resistance to the Gospel is taken away. This may, in the providence of God, take years, but the person who is taught of God will come!

What has happened?

#### B. The changing of the will.

There is no such thing as free will in the Bible.-- if you mean that a person is going to come to Christ "on his own."

Apart from the drawing work of the Father people will stay where these Jews were in verses 41, 42. They will not come, and they cannot come!

See v. 44 again: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." He is not able. It does not come within his powers as to what he can do for himself. The Father changes this.

Matthew Henry describes it this way:

" . . . in the depraved soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a carnal mind, which is enmity itself to the divine light and law. It is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called drawing . . . It is drawing, which denotes not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias is given to to the soul, by which it inclines to God."

See Vol. V, p. 953.

So this does no violence to the Scripture, "And whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17). It simply teaches us that no one wills to be saved until he is drawn by the Father.

But then notice this final point about the Father's drawing. Coming is used in this passage as a synonym for believing. Therefore coming includes . . .

#### C. The gift of faith.

Where does faith come from, saving faith? Does it arise from man, originating with him?

If so, then salvation is not all of God -- it is part of God and part of man.

But this is not what the Bible teaches about salvation. See Eph. 2:8, 9.

We have seen in our passage that the drawing work of the Father begins with the Word, and that the result of the Word upon the heart of man is both a willingness to come and a coming on the part of the sinner. Of course men must believe to be saved, but that saving faith is a gift from God Himself. Thus, God gets all of the glory for every bit of our salvation. Cf. Rom. 10:17; Heb. 12:2.

Oh, that we would recognize this to be true! It would send us to our knees pleading with God for the salvation of men, and it would make us see that only through the ministry of the Word will we see the Father drawing men to Himself in salvation. It is all here -- and the words are given to us by the Lord Jesus Himself!

But we have one other point -- which helps us to understand our ministry.

### III. THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST -- ABOUT THE BREAD (John 6:47-51).

You see, the work of the Father does not eliminate the necessity for witnessing, or preaching, or praying, or even urging people to receive Christ. In fact, God has graciously ordained that He work through us many, many times -- so that our work actually is what He is doing through us. If this were not the case (that it is all His work), there would be no hope that anyone would ever be saved!.

The people did not like what the Lord was saying.

Did He stop saying it? No. Did He change it to make it more acceptable? No. He kept right on with the message -- teaching them that . . .

- they must believe to be saved.
- they have life immediately when they do believe.
- their faith must be in Him, not just in God.
- He had come from heaven to give His flesh, His life, for the world.

Will people like it when we say it? No. Should we stop saying it? No. Should we change it? Absolutely not. What should we do. WE MUST GO ON PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD,

TRUSTING THE FATHER TO USE HIS WORD, DRAWING MEN TO HIMSELF, BY  
HIS WORK IN THEIR HEARTS BY WHICH,  
HE CAUSES THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE WORD,  
HE MAKES THEM WILLING TO COME TO CHRIST,  
HE IMPARTS TO THEM SAVING FAITH.

This does nothing to lessen man's responsibility. But it teaches us that, when people really come to Christ, it is "not of themselves," but it is because the Father has drawn them to Himself.

Where do you stand this morning?

WHO HAS ETERNAL LIFE?

John 6:52-59

Intro: Who has eternal life? There really is no more important question unless it is the question, Do I have eternal life?

This whole discourse in John 6 actually began with our Lord saying, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

How would you answer this question? May I ask, Do you have eternal life? How do you know that you have it?

There are many different answers that people give to this question. What we want is the right answer -- the answer that God has given to us in His Word -- and we have it in our text!

Let us notice how our Lord answered this question in the verses before us.

I. THE ANSWER (briefly summarizing the whole passage).

A. Stated authoritatively (John 6:53a).

This is not just what I am saying -- although this is my answer, too. Nor is it just the answer of the Apostle John -- although he also believed this. But this is the answer given by the Lord Jesus Christ -- the One Whom John has described for us from the beginning of this Gospel as the Son of God, or God manifest in human flesh! Since it is His answer, that should end all argument.

B. Stated negatively (John 6:53b) -- as a warning.

Whatever else a person may do, regardless of his commendable characteristics, IF he has not eaten of the Lord's flesh, IF he has not drunk of the Lord's blood, he has no life in him -- no eternal life!

That was something that the Jews needed to hear. Many of them thought that being a Jew was enough. Or surely their religious observances amounted to something. But no -- the Lord is very clear in what He says. Nothing will suffice but eating the Lord's flesh and drinking His blood. Note how He refers to Himself: "of the Son of man."

C. Stated positively (John 6:54) -- to be reassuring.

There may be times when we are inclined to doubt it.  
 There may even be times when we do not act like it.  
 But, again, nothing could be clearer than these words --  
 if you eat . . . and if you drink . . ., you have eternal  
 life, and the Lord will raise you up at the last day!

D. Stated emphatically (John 6:55).

Note the word "indeed" in this verse -- two times! It  
 is the Greek word , meaning the true, the real,  
the genuine.

Before we go on to verse 56 let me point out from all of  
 these verses we have looked at that we have the truth

E. Stated exclusively.

In other words, the Lord is saying that this is the only  
 way a person can have eternal life -- not just one way  
 among many. This is important when we come to interpret  
 the meaning of the expression, eating and drinking . . .

F. Stated elaborately (John 6:56, 57).

By this I mean that the Lord goes on to enlarge upon  
 what He has been saying -- so that we will know more  
 about what it means to have "eternal life."

There are three things which the Lord mentions:

1. The one who eats and drinks dwells in Him (Christ).
2. The reverse is true: Christ dwells in the one who  
 eats and drinks.
3. The one who eats and drinks continually lives "by"  
 Christ, or through Him.

The Bible does not deal with truths that are any more  
 profound or wonderful than these three!

G. Stated comparatively (John 6:58).

Regardless of how wonderful the manna in the OT was, it  
 is not "that bread which came down from heaven," and it  
 is not as good as "that bread which came down from  
 heaven." Those who ate of the manna died; those who eat  
 of the Bread from heaven "shall live for ever."

So while there are parallels between the two, the two  
 must not be confused.

Having seen all of this, we are ready now to consider . . .

## II. THE MEANING of EATING and DRINKING.

Let us look first at:

- A. The way the Jews to whom the Lord was speaking interpreted it. See John 6:52. They put a literal interpretation on it -- which appeared to them, as it really was, ridiculous! <sup>They got into a big verbal battle with each other over this. The Gospel does make people mad or disgusted - or both!</sup>
- See the evidence of spiritual ignorance and blindness as with Nicodemus and with the woman at the well!

Quite obviously this was wrong.

- B. The way it has been interpreted historically.
1. Ritualistically -- having to do with the Lord's Supper.

But this cannot be right because it would be in conflict with everything else that our Lord has taught up to this point. (More about this in a moment.)

And with regard to the observance of the Lord's Supper, there have been millions upon millions throughout the history of the Church who have taken the Lord's Supper but who make no claim to eternal life, and would not know what you were talking about if you mentioned it to them!

So this is also wrong.

2. Literally.

This is a part of the ritualistic interpretation that has been given, and related also to the way the Jews were thinking as the Lord spoke (even though they rejected it).

There are those who believe that at the Lord's Supper the bread and the wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. But the Lord never taught this, and our senses tells us that this is not true!

Where, then, can we look for the answer? Let us look at:

- C. The context.

Remember that the Lord has been saying that this is the only way: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This

would mean then that, if the Lord had said previously how we obtain eternal life, this must be in harmony with what He had taught before. There cannot be any room for more than one way since He has just said there is only one.

As we go back through the chapter we come to statements like we find in v. 47, then v. 40, then v. 35. Putting these together we are able to understand that eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Lord are equal to:

- 1) Coming to the Lord.
- 2) Believing in the Lord.

From the first of John we have come upon statements to the effect that in order to have eternal life we must:

- 1) Receive Christ -- John 1:12.
- 2) Be born again -- John 3:5.
- 3) Drink of living water -- John 4:13, 14.
- 4) Believe in Christ -- in many passages.
- 5) Come to Christ -- John 6:35.
- 6) And now -- drink of His blood and eat of His flesh.

BUT THEY ALL MEAN THE VERY SAME THING -- THAT SALVATION IS TO BE OBTAINED THROUGH CHRIST, AND ONLY THROUGH HIM!

Why, then, is it stated in so many ways?

Answer: In order that the truth of the Gospel might be presented in a way that would appeal to a person according to his (or her) particular interests at a given time.

SO -- to eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood is another way of saying that you must come to Christ,  
   you must believe in Christ,  
   you must receive Him as your  
   Saviour.

But, before we look at eating and drinking in greater detail, let us consider:

D. The actual terms themselves -- eating and drinking.

What in particular do they teach us about salvation?

Let me just mention three things -- and then we will go on.

1. They teach us that salvation is not from us, but it has to come from outside of us.
2. They teach us that salvation is not from other men, but from God.



3. They teach us that salvation is not something that is external, but it is internal.

But let us look more closely at these terms, eating and drinking, to determine more about the meaning by noting:

### III. THE SIGNIFICANCE INVOLVED IN EATING AND DRINKING.

We cannot have eternal life unless we eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood. What does this involve?

#### A. It involves something doctrinal.

Let me ask you two questions to bring out what is meant here:

- 1) What do you believe about the "flesh" of Jesus Christ?
- 2) What do you believe about His "blood"?

Or, in other words, what do you believe about Him as a Person? Do you believe that He is the Son of God Who came down from heaven, and that He became a real human being -- without ceasing to be the Son of God?

And what do you believe about His "blood"? Do you believe that His death was a sacrifice for the sins of men? Do you believe that His blood alone can atone for your sins? And do you believe that His blood is enough without any further work on your part?

Do you believe that all of this was necessary? Do you believe that you need eternal life?

YOU CANNOT EAT OF HIS FLESH AND DRINK OF HIS BLOOD UNLESS YOU DO BELIEVE WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT CHRIST AS A PERSON, AND UNLESS YOU BELIEVE IN THE NECESSITY AND FINALITY OF HIS WORK.

And let me point out that this is not an either/or proposition, but the words "eat . . . drink" are joined by the word "and."

#### B. It involves something personal.

The Bible does not teach that everybody will be saved because Christ came and died. That would be universalism. Our Lord made it clear that only those people who eat and drink will have eternal life.

Have you?

#### C. It involves something internal.

Salvation is not something that is external -- such as observing certain religious rules, or submitting to certain rituals, or even in seeking to change your outward habits. Salvation is not a work that is outward; it is a work that begins in the heart. You must receive Christ within!

But there is one more thing about the significance of eating and drinking which I must point out:

D. It involves something continual.

The Lord uses a verb tense in v. 53 to indicate that there is a time when a person eats of the Lord's flesh and drinks of His blood for the first time.

BUT THE INDICATION IN THE TENSE THAT HE USES IN THE REMAINDER OF THE PASSAGE INDICATES THAT THE PERSON WHO EATS AND DRINKS FOR SALVATION WILL KEEP ON EATING AND DRINKING FROM CHRIST FOR EVER!

How we have desecrated the Gospel by making it less than this! There is no such teaching in the Bible that you come to Christ for salvation, and then have little or nothing to do with Him for the rest of your life. Such a person has never really come.

But let me conclude with just a few words about:

#### IV. THE EFFECTS OF EATING AND DRINKING.

There are results that are immediate,  
future,  
daily.

A. The immediate results:

1. We have eternal life -- a present possession. See v. 54.
2. We are in Christ -- "He that . . . dwelleth in Me." This is our justification.
3. Christ is in us -- ". . . and I in him." This is the provision for our sanctification.

B. The future result -- absolutely guaranteed. See the end of v. 54: ". . . and I will raise him up at the last day." This is the 4th time the Lord has said this. Cf. vv. 39, 40, 44, and here!

The work of salvation will be completed then -- and there is no doubt about it!

C. The daily result: v. 57, "even he shall live by Me."

When we eat of Christ's flesh and drink of His blood we are not only saved, i.e., have eternal life, but there is a living union established with the Lord Jesus Christ so that He becomes our very life! All that is in Him is available to us -- our wisdom, our strength, our holiness, our peace, our patience, OUR ALL!

Concl: How could the Lord have pictured the wonders, the glory, of salvation any more than He has by His words in the passage we have just considered. It is all here -- a salvation so far beyond what man would have devised that there is no basis for comparison at all.

Do you know this Saviour? Have you eaten of His flesh and have you drunk of His blood? Do you trust in Him? Do you live by Him?

I have set the feast before you this morning -- not a feast for your body, but a feast for your soul. By God's grace, if you have never done so, eat of His flesh,  
and drink of His blood,  
that you may have eternal life!

## THE DISCIPLES WHO DEPARTED

John 6:60-71

Intro: There is a great contrast between the number of people who are with the Lord at the beginning of John 6 as compared with those who are with Him at the end of the chapter! Compare vv. 2, 10, and 66 ("many").

And then we have the Lord's question in v. 67 followed by His comment in verse 70 that even one of the twelve could be expected to leave!

We notice interest and even desire for what the Lord was offering in the earlier part of the chapter, but gradually that all changes.

See the interest in: vv. 24, 28, 34.

But then the opposition began to show itself: vv. 41, 42, then v. 52, and finally v. 60.

By "a hard saying" they meant (and notice that it was "many . . . of his disciples" who felt this way), that the Lord was:

- 1) Too dogmatic.
- 2) Too uncompromising.
- 3) Too harsh, too severe.
- 4) Unwilling to interact.

By the use of the word, "saying," they indicated without any question to the fact that they were objecting to His teaching! And let it be noticed here that those who have been interested in pleasing the crowds have been those who have had very little interest in teaching. Doctrine has been set aside!

But let it also be noticed that our Lord did not set aside the doctrine. Even the opposition of the crowd did not make Him change. And this is an important lesson for the Church to learn and to remember today!

Now -- if they were offended by the Lord's teaching, let us consider, first of all,

## I. THE DETAILS OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING THAT OFFENDED THEM.

See the question in v. 61.

The word, "offend," means "to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey" It is the common Greek word for stumbling and falling (away). How amazing it is that that which draws some people to the Lord should be the very means that turns other people away from Him!

To state it another way, what had scandalized the people -- making the feel outraged at the Lord's teaching?

There were at least six major truths -- which included practically all that He had to say:

- A. First -- they did not like what He had to say about Himself.

This is where it all started, according to vv. 41, 42. They liked other things that He taught, and they liked what He did in performing the miracles, BUT THEY COULD NOT TAKE THIS: HIS CLAIM TO BE FROM HEAVEN, HIS CLAIM TO DEITY.

This was too much!

And yet, as we think about all that the Lord said, none of it is really important if this is not true.

But it is true! No other description of the Lord Jesus Christ is enough. He came from heaven, the eternal Son of the living God.

See what Peter said in v. 69.

- B. Second -- they did not like what He had to say about salvation.

Salvation is actually involved in all that the Lord was teaching, but I have reference here to the fact that the Lord was very narrow in His teaching about those who have salvation -- that the saved are only those who have eaten His flesh and who have drunk His blood, and that this is the only way to have eternal life!

See their question in v. 52. They did not like this. It sounded ridiculous to them.

But this was also true -- and the Lord pointed to Himself over and over again in His teachings as the only way of salvation, the only way to God!

- C. Third -- they did not like what He had to say about them.

They did not like to think that salvation was not in their hands. They did not like to think that they could not come to Christ unless they were drawn by the Father, unless it were given to them to come. See vv. 44, 65.

And the hardest blow of all was the statement in v. 63:

"The flesh profiteth nothing."

And this is not popular teaching today. Most people who are concerned at all about salvation would admit that we need help, but to say that man can do nothing, absolutely nothing toward his salvation -- this was too much!

And yet this is true -- it is still true! And the person who rejects it has not yet discovered the real depravity of his own heart, the extent of the damage done by our sin, and by the sin of Adam.

- D. Fourth -- they did not like what He had to say about the Father.

This is related to what we have been saying. Man likes to feel that he has in himself the ability to resist God. He may declare that salvation is of the Lord and yet at the same time say, in contradiction of John 1:13, that he is born again as a result of what he decides to do about it.

It is true that we must believe, we must will to come to Christ for salvation -- but what the Lord was saying was that man will NEVER in and of himself come, that he will not, that he cannot believe, unless and until the Father draws him, unless and until the Father gives him the will, the desire, the ability to come to Christ.

The people did not like such teaching then, and people do not like it now. BUT EVERY TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST KNOWS IN THE DEPTHS OF HIS HEART THAT THIS IS TRUE -- that he would never have been saved if his salvation had rested upon what he would do for himself!

- E. Fifth -- they did not like what He had to say about the Holy Spirit.

In fact, even the translators of the King James Version of the Bible (as great as their work was) did not recognize the reference to the Spirit in v. 63 as the Holy Spirit -- and so they did not capitalize it!

It is the Holy Spirit Who "quickeneth"! Regeneration comes through Him -- not from us. These disciples could not claim to have life because they were Jews, nor because they had the Law. Life, eternal life, comes only through the Holy Spirit.

The Lord said this to Nicodemus. It is still true. But man does not like to accept it.

- F. Sixth -- they did not like what He had to say about the Word of God.

They did not like to believe that they were drawn by the Father to the Son through the Word -- as the Lord indicated in vv. 44, 45 -- and that this was OT teaching as well as our Lord's teaching!

They did not like to believe that even faith was a gift of God -- that it "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17) -- they did not like this! From their reaction, and from the reaction of people today, you get the impression that faith is one thing a person can do who is dead in trespasses in sins!

But the Lord taught differently. What He said was true! It is still true! But people do not like this.

All of this led to:

## II. THE DEPARTURE. See v. 66.

And will you notice that the Lord did not offer to change anything in order to get the people to stay. In fact, as amazing as it may be, the Lord did not plead with the people to stay.

Now this raises a question, and sounds a warning.

- A. The question: What does this do to the doctrine of eternal security, or a better term, the perseverance of the saints?

Let the Apostle John himself answer the question. See 1 John 2:19.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

These were quite obviously those whose profession was an empty claim. They had followed Christ, and professed to believe in Him, but they did not have eternal life -- and it was the teaching that exposed their hypocrisy! The Bible does not promise that those who make a profession are eternally secure; it does teach that when a person really has eternal life that it will be made evident that he is saved eternally because he will persevere in the faith and with the Lord!

- B. The warning (stated as a question): If there were those

in that day who professed, but did not possess, do you think that it is any different today?

What was the percentage then? Thinking of Judas as a member of the twelve, do you think that there might be as many as one in twelve today who claim to be Christians BUT ARE NOT!

How many do you think there might be in Central Bible Church who are not really saved? How many who are here this morning -- unsaved, although you claim to be? The situation with the disciples would even indicate that you could be a preacher,  
a miracle worker,  
a member of the Church Staff or official board  
and still not be a Christian!

Oh, let me plead with you, as I plead with my own heart this morning, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5a). Or, as Peter has written, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10a).

Young people, make sure! It is not enough that your parents are saved, nor that you were raised in this church. Only Christ can save you!

How do you test it? One way is by your response to the Gospel which the Lord was preaching in John 6.

If there were not a great need for this warning, the Lord would never have asked the question, "Will ye also go away?" as He turned to the twelve!

But before I close, let me consider with you for a moment,

III. PETER'S ANSWER TO OUR LORD'S QUESTION, "WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?"

Peter, answering for at least 11 of them,

- A. Raises the question of the prospects they would have elsewhere. Where can you get what Christ offers.
- B. Tries to anticipate what the results are of going away. Was it better for the many? Was it better for Judas? When you turn from Christ, where to you go -- to heaven another way, or back into your sins and ultimately to hell?
- C. Declares his faith in the message the Lord had given.



Can anything be more wonderful than the doctrine of salvation by grace -- that it is all of God. We come to Christ, but only because the Father draws us. We believe in Christ, but only with the faith that comes to us through the Word.

Finally, Peter

D. Declares what he has come to believe and know (note the order) about the Lord Jesus Christ. See v. 69.

Concl: What an amazing chapter this is -- with its revelation of two things:

- 1) The Gospel of the Grace of God.
- 2) The sinfulness of the hearts of men -- their aversion to the true Gospel.

May the Lord enable each of us to understand the Gospel, and to know that we are trusting Christ, and Christ alone, for the eternal salvation of our souls!