

TOO MUCH TO SWALLOW?

(John 6:56-69)

- Intro: We have had a steady diet of John 6 for the last month.
- We began with Jesus feeding the multitude.
 - #With:
 - *5 loaves of bread.
 - *2 fish.
 - #John 6: 1-21.
 - Then we received the Bread of Life.
 - #In the person of Jesus.
 - *Coming down from heaven.
 - *To give life to the world.
 - #John 6: 24-35.
 - Then we received more Bread of Life.
 - #Wonder Bread offering eternal life.
 - *To all who eat in faith.
 - *To all who believe.
 - #John 6: 41-51.
 - Finally we were offered a dietary supplement.
 - #To eat the flesh of the Son of Man.
 - #To drink his blood.
 - *In the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.
 - *So that we might live forever.
 - #John 6: 51-58.

Was all of this too much to swallow?

- For some it was.
 - #Some complained.
 - *Teaching was too difficult.
 - #Some did not believe.
 - #Some turned back.
 - *No longer willing to follow Jesus.
- For some the Bread of Life come down from heaven.
 - #Was simply too much to swallow.

I. Who Had The Problem?

A. We Might Be Surprised At The Answer.

1. It was Jesus' disciples.
 - a. Look at John 6:60.
 - “When many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This teaching is too difficult; who can accept it?’”
 - b. Look at John 6:66.
 - “Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him.”
2. It was not simply:
 - a. Religious authorities.
 - Who had a problem with Jesus.
 - #Because he challenged their precious traditions.
 - b. Political leaders.
 - Who saw Jesus as a threat.
 - #To their power and authority.
 - #To their control over the people.
3. It was Jesus' disciples who had a problem.
 - a. Jesus had 12 disciples.
 - Inner core of:
 - #Students.
 - #Followers.
 - b. There were many more disciples.
 - Others:
 - #Who had seen something.
 - *That sparked their interest.
 - #Who had heard something.
 - *That spoke to their heart.
 - Others:
 - #Who wanted to believe.
 - #Who wanted to follow.
 - Some did.
 - #Believing in Jesus.
 - #Feasting on the Bread of Life.
 - Many didn't.
 - #They complained about Jesus' teaching.
 - #They didn't believe.
 - #They turned back.
 - #The Bread of Life was too much to swallow.

- B. Jesus Began To Wonder About The Twelve.
1. Jesus asked them:
 - a. "Do you also wish to go away?"
 - b. John 6:67.
 2. Simon Peter answered:
 - a. In the words we sometimes sing.
 - Right before the Gospel reading.
 - In our traditional worship service.
 - #In case you were wondering where those words came from.
 - b. "Lord, to whom can we go?"
 - "You have the words of eternal life."
 - John 6:68.
 - c. "We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."
 - John 6:69.
 3. This is one of those hallmark confessions of faith.
 - a. In the Synoptic Gospels.
 - Jesus asks his disciples:
 - #"Who do people say I am?"
 - They answer:
 - #John the Baptizer.
 - #Elijah.
 - #One of the prophets.
 - Then Jesus got personal.
 - #"Who do you say that I am?"
 - Peter answered for them all:
 - #"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."
 - *Matthew 16:16.
 - *Mark 8:29.
 - *Luke 9:20.
 - b. In John's Gospel.
 - When Lazarus died.
 - #Jesus said:
 - *"I am the resurrection and the life."
 - *"Whoever believes in me, even though they die,"
 - + "Yet shall they live."
 - *"And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."
 - + "Do you believe this?"
 - #Martha.
 - *Who gets such a bad rap in Luke 10:38-42.
 - +Where she's more concerned with cooking dinner.
 - +Than listening to Jesus.
 - *Who makes the confession of faith:
 - + "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."
 - = "Who is coming into the world," (John 11:27).

4. They all swallowed it.
 - a. Martha swallowed it.
 - b. Peter swallowed it.
 - c. The Twelve swallowed it.
- C. Do We Swallow It?
1. Do we believe?
 - a. Jesus is the Christ.
 - The Son of the Living God.
 - b. Jesus is Holy One of God.
 - Who has the words of eternal life.
 - c. Bread of Life.
 - Who comes down from heaven.
 - Who gives life to the world.
 2. Do we believe?
 - a. Not just when it's easy.
 - Things are going well for us.
 - b. But when it's hard.
 - When we have health issues.
 - When we have financial difficulties.
 - When we have relationship problems.
 - When we are disappointed in our hopes and dreams.
 - When we lose a loved one.
 3. Can we say?
 - a. With Peter.
 - “Lord, to whom can we go?”
 - “You have the words of eternal life.”
 - b. John 6:68.

II. What Is So Hard About That?

- A. It Would Get Harder For Those Disciples.
1. Jesus said:
 - a. “Does this offend you?”
 - Believing that I came down from heaven.
 - Eating my flesh.
 - Drinking my blood.
 - b. “What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”
 - John 6:62.

2. In John's Gospel.
 - a. Ascending or being lifted up involves:
 - Cross.
 - Resurrection.
 - Returning to the Father.
 - b. If those early disciples saw that?
 - Would that dispel their doubts?
 - Would that make it even harder?
 - #To follow their Lord to the cross.
 - #To be willing to lay down their life for what they believed.

B. Jesus Has Done The Hard Part.

1. Look what he had to swallow.
 - a. Emptying himself of his divine perks.
 - To take on the role of a servant.
 - To be born in human likeness.
 - #Philippians 2:7.
 - b. Enduring life in this fallen, broken, sin-filled world.
 - Hungering.
 - Thirsting.
 - Suffering.
 - Dying.
 - #Dying not just any death.
 - *Living to a ripe old age.
 - *Then dying peacefully in his sleep.
 - #Dying the death of the cross.
 - *Whipped with a lash.
 - *Crowned with thorns.
 - *Scarred by nails.
 - *Pierced by a spear.
2. But just when it looked like Jesus was swallowed by the grave.
 - a. Jesus swallowed up death.
 - b. Death was swallowed up in victory.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:54.
 - c. Grave spit him out.
 - On the third day.
 - d. There was life.
 - New life.
 - Resurrected life.
 - Eternal life.
 - #For Jesus.
 - #For us.
 - *Is that so hard to swallow?

- C. We Are Tempted To Swallow So Many Other Things.
1. Our Evangelism Committee.
 - a. In the process of contacting our inactive members.
 - Folks we see maybe at:
 - #Christmas.
 - #Easter.
 - *If then.
 - We'll be making phone calls.
 - Those members will also be receiving a mailing.
 - #Inviting them:
 - *To Rally Day.
 - *To our 5x5 small group Bible studies.
 - *To more active participation in the life of our congregation.
 - b. One of the things we want to do is to listen.
 - To ask what might be getting in the way.
 - #Of regular attendance at:
 - *Worship.
 - *Bible Study.
 - *Sunday School.
 2. What do you think we might hear?
 - a. We might hear about time.
 - Or the perceived lack of it.
 - b. We might hear about commitments.
 - Competing for that precious time.
 - c. We might hear about priorities.
 - Other activities that are seemingly of greater importance.
 - d. We might hear about personal or family struggles.
 - e. We might hear about bad experiences with the church.
 - Here.
 - Or elsewhere.
 3. We might even hear about crises of faith.
 - a. Folks who might say:
 - “A God who lets bad things happen to good people?”
 - #“Who needs it?”
 - “A loving, merciful, and forgiving God?”
 - #“I don't see it.”
 - “A God who promises eternal life when I need help in this life?”
 - #“I just can't swallow that.”
 - b. What do we have to offer those people?
 - Who find the Christian faith too hard.
 - Who don't believe.
 - Who want to turn back.
 - Who find it all too much to swallow.

- c. We offer the Bread of Life.
 - One who has the words of eternal life.
 - Only one to whom we can go.
 - #Some will believe.
 - #Some won't.
 - *That's the reality of our Gospel lesson.
 - +Bread of Life is for all.
 - +But some won't swallow it.

Concl: But we can.

- God opens our:
 - #Hands.
 - #Mouths.
 - #Hearts.
- To:
 - #Believe.
 - #Know.
 - *Holy One of God.

It's really not too much to swallow.

