

## Faith In Christ Saves.

Text: John 6:47-57

Suggested Hymns:

268, 259, 265, 840, 530

1) Jesus asserts that faith in Him saves

2) Jesus illustrates that faith in Him saves

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 6:47-57, <sup>47</sup> *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*

<sup>48</sup> *“I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup> “This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”*

<sup>52</sup> *The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> “For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus asked people to believe in Him. It was something definite that He wanted them to believe concerning Him, namely, that the Father had sent Him, that He was the only-begotten Son of God, and that He has come to save that which was lost.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus gave them ample proof for His claims by showing how He fulfilled the prophecies of old, by performing miracles, and by preaching the Gospel. His

redemptive work through suffering and dying was still to come. But the people in general did not believe in Him.

Jesus still asks people to believe in Him today. And they still refuse to do so. They will not believe the things that Jesus wants them to accept. They say they cannot believe these things.

Others maintain that such a faith cannot accomplish the desired results. They say that because they cannot see, therefore faith makes no difference. Yet even in the affairs of this world you can see something of the difference faith makes. Why does a farmer sow wheat in the autumn? He has no definite assurance that He will get so much as his seed back. But he hopes, he believes that the seed will multiply and produce for him an abundant harvest.

Every building that stands today stands because someone believed it possible to erect such a building. Every road constructed, every invention perfected, every scientific discovery is the fruit of someone's faith that these things might be. And still people refuse to believe Christ, refuse to believe things of which He definitely assures them.

To us a sermon on faith almost seems unnecessary. We have heard this so often that faith in Christ is the only way of salvation. ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”***<sup>2</sup> <sup>16</sup> ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”***<sup>3</sup>

Would not some other sermon, on works, for example, be more appropriate? Not at all. In fact, you cannot preach good works except as the fruit of faith. Faith alone can produce the desired works. Not, indeed, a faith that is a mere confession of the lips, but a living faith that comes from the heart. This is the faith that saves, and it is, as our text so powerfully sets forth, *Faith In Christ*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Jesus Asserts That Faith In Him Saves**

Our text begins, ***he who believes in Me has everlasting life***. Who said that? Jesus did. Surely this is a far-reaching statement. However, it makes a difference who makes a statement or a promise. If someone has failed to keep his

word to us, we grow sceptical of any promise he makes. And sometimes people with the best of intentions cannot keep their word.

But here is Christ, the Truth, who makes this claim. Show me just one word of His which He failed to keep, which proved untrue. Even though His enemies tried with utmost cunning to catch Christ in His words, they utterly failed. They themselves had to admit that they could find no fault in Him.

Jesus who had come into the world to testify to the truth, is Himself the Truth. And being God Himself, the perfect, holy, almighty God, how could He speak anything but the truth or fail to keep His Word? Nor could it ever be impossible for Him to keep it.

And note well how solemnly Christ makes the assertion that faith in Him saves. <sup>47</sup> *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.* Could He say it more definitely, or more emphatically? To make assurance doubly sure the God-Man introduces His statement with *“Most assuredly.”*

And what is it that Jesus ascribes to faith in Him? *“Everlasting life.”* *“He who believes in Me has everlasting life.”* What will people not do for life, the life that now is, to maintain it, and to make it happy! But here Christ promises everlasting life. It is the life abundant, the life that begins here and endures forever. It is the life that to all eternity knows of no pain, no tears, no parting, and no fear lest it come to an end.

Note, too, that Jesus says that the believer **“has”** this life. He has it now. It begins here but continues beyond this vale of tears forever. You as a believer in Christ have that life now and here. Do you say to ourselves, *“But I see only sin and its consequences, I feel sin in myself, and I see sin all around me”*? True, your life is necessarily defective as long as you live in this sinful world, and as long as you still have sin in you.

But you can note already here the vast difference between the life of the Christian and that of the unbeliever. And does not the Holy Spirit assure you of the great things to come?

The object of the faith of which Christ speaks is not something general, something indefinite and hazy. On the contrary, it is something very specific, and very definite.

What are people to believe? Jesus says, “*he who believes in Me.*” Faith apprehends Christ. So when Christ tells us that He has come down from heaven, that He and the Father are one, that He is the only-begotten Son of the Father, that whosoever sees Him sees the Father, we are to believe that.

When Jesus tells us that the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many, that He is “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,*” that by His sacrifice on Calvary’s cross He has finished His work of redemption, and has reconciled the sinner to the Father in heaven, we are to believe that. To those who believe, Christ gives the assurance of everlasting life.

See furthermore how general, how all-embracing this promise of life to the believers in Christ is. It reads, “*he who believes in Me.*” There is no distinction of age, colour, nationality, or station in life. The promise of Christ’s Gospel is always for all who will have it. The joy over the Saviour’s birth, says the angel, shall be “*to all people.*” Jesus has come to seek and to save “*that which was lost.*”<sup>4</sup> He died “*for all.*” So it is that *whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*<sup>5</sup>

Does someone say, “*I cannot believe that faith in Christ saves eternally?*” Since Christ Himself states His atoning work expiates and cancels sin, cannot you believe it? True, you cannot believe this by your own reason or strength. Man, by nature, is spiritually blind and dead.

But faith is wrought in us by that blessed power of the Word which Christ was here vainly putting forth in trying to save the Jews. Do not frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit which even now, as you hear the blessed Word of Jesus, is going on in your heart.

So because Jesus Himself solemnly asserts in our text, “*he who believes in Me has everlasting life,*” we are certain that faith in Christ saves.

## 2. Jesus Illustrates That Faith In Him Saves

See, in the second place, how Christ illustrates the truth that faith in Him saves.

Jesus had fed the Five Thousand in the wilderness in a miraculous manner. The people had been so deeply impressed by this miracle they wanted to make Jesus their king, their “bread king.”

On the following day, in the synagogue at Capernaum, Christ preached the sermon to them of which our text forms a part. The people sought Jesus with apparent interest. But He tells them, *you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.* And then Jesus continues, *“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you.”*<sup>6</sup>

Asking for His credentials, they say, <sup>31</sup> *“Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”* Then Jesus said to them, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.”*<sup>33</sup> *“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”* ... *“I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”*<sup>7</sup>

That the physical body needs material food, people know. They know, too, that the body must have this food in the right quantity and that it must be of the right quality. The feeding of the Five Thousand the Jews could understand.

Yet so many do not understand that spiritual life, too, needs food, spiritual food, which, too, must be provided in the right quantity and must be of the proper quality.

Now Jesus says, *“I am that Bread of Life.”* He reminds the Jews that the manna, which their fathers ate in the desert, was to sustain this life only and that that life came to an end.

*“I am that Bread of Life,”* there is none other, Jesus says. Christ chooses the figure of bread because of the miraculous feeding of the Five Thousand and because of the ensuing demand that He do a sign to comparable with that of the manna eaten by the Israelites in the desert.

And now Jesus further describes this bread in our text. *The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.*” Christ gave His flesh when He gave Himself as a sacrifice on the Cross. This fact is stated over and over again in Scriptures. We read in Galatians 2:20, *I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*<sup>8</sup> Jesus says in John 10:17, <sup>17</sup> ... *I lay down My life.* Thus we can clearly see that *The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many.*<sup>9</sup>

Now, if bread, if flesh is to do any good, if it is to sustain and nourish, it must be eaten. So, too, with the spiritual food, which is Christ. But how can we eat His flesh and drink His blood? Jesus is not speaking of the eating and drinking that takes place in His Holy Supper. For He says explicitly, ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.***

The little children do not partake of the Sacrament of the Altar, nor did the faithful in the Old Testament, nor did the repentant thief on the cross. Jesus cannot mean that eating and drinking. Thus eating His flesh and drinking His blood means to believe in Him.

Jesus Himself says in John 6:35, ***“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”*** So we eat, come to Jesus, by believing in Him. The coming is inward. It consists in the confidence and reliance of the heart.

And see the results of eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood, in other words, of believing in Him. ***If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.*** Eternal life, the true life, unites us who were dead in sin once more with God, the Fountain of life. Apart from Christ there is no life; joined to Him we have true life, and faith is the tie that unites us with Him.

Christ as the Bread of Life does not only sustain spiritual life, He gives it, and strengthens it. He is the living Bread. Who eats of this bread shall ***“not die.”*** This refers to eternal death. We who eat the heavenly bread of life die according to this bodily life, but in this dying we are different from all those who have not eaten of that bread.

Recall how Jesus said to Martha, ***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”<sup>10</sup>***

So we must eat this bread, which is Christ’s flesh, to have life. We must eat His flesh and drink His blood, that is, by faith partake of His sacrifice for us. Thus faith in Christ saves; so we have eternal life. As the food I eat and assimilate, becomes a part of me, my life, so this spiritual food, Christ, becomes a part of me when I take Him by faith.

As Jesus states it, <sup>56</sup> ***“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.”*** This living Bread, Christ, His flesh as sacrificed on the cross, is a fountain so deep, full, abundant, and overflowing with Me and salvation, that all the world may take and drink and live forever.

Does someone still say, *“How can this be? I cannot understand that?”*? The Jews made the same complaint. Can you not believe the words? We believe many things which we do not comprehend — medicine, electricity, growth, and life. Why let human reason and limited knowledge keep us from believing the clear statement of our almighty Lord?

What, in short, are we then to believe concerning Christ? What He says, His Word. Peter declares in John 6:68, ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”*** The Gospel contains Christ and eternal life. Through it new life is created and sustained. Why? Because it testifies of Jesus, who gave His flesh, that people can have eternal life. Faith appropriates Jesus and His work. Christ becomes a part of me by faith. Thus faith in Christ saves.

Will people heed this call of the Saviour to eat His flesh and drink His blood, to believe in Him that they might have eternal life?

When Jesus spread His table in the wilderness with earthly bread, five thousand people were only too glad to sit down to eat, but when He invited some of these same people to eat the heavenly Bread of Life, they turned away — it was not what they wanted.

People today are still are very anxious to care for and to feed their poor earthly bodies, soon to be turned to dust, but their immortal souls seem not to trouble them at all.

And yet what shall it profit a person even though he gain the whole world but lose his own soul? Thank God for earthly bread, but thank Him a thousand times more that in Jesus Christ, He has spread for us the feast of the soul.

What was the result of this sermon which Jesus preached to the Jews at Capernaum? We are told in John 6:66-69, <sup>66</sup> ***“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”*** <sup>67</sup> ***“Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”*** <sup>68</sup> ***“But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”*** <sup>69</sup> ***“Also we***

***have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”***

May God grant us grace that we may always say to Jesus, *We believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* We ask it in His precious name. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 18:11

<sup>2</sup> Acts 16:31

<sup>3</sup> John 3:16

<sup>4</sup> Luke 19:10

<sup>5</sup> John 3:16

<sup>6</sup> John 6:26-27

<sup>7</sup> John 6:31-35

<sup>8</sup> See also Eph 5:2

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 20:28

<sup>10</sup> John 11:25-26