60. The Gospel of John—6:38-40

"The Bread of Life" Pt.6

(2/3/19)

In our verse by verse study of John's gospel we find ourselves this morning in chapter 6 where we have been studying one of Jesus' most important teachings—the Bread of Life discourse.

As we have pointed out, the main theme of this discourse is <u>eternal life</u>.

The reason this message is called the *'Bread of Life'* discourse is because in it Jesus reveals that the manna that fell in the wilderness in the days of Moses that kept the children of Israel alive physically—was a type of Himself. (Ps.40:7)

In other words, it pointed to Him who was (and is) the *true Bread* which came down from heaven (like the manna)—but this Bread wouldn't sustain people physically—it would impart spiritual life to them eternally:

John 6:35 (NKJV)
35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of [eternal] life. He who <u>comes</u> to Me shall never hunger, and he who <u>believes</u> in Me shall never thirst [shall never hunger and thirst in their soul—will be satisfied]. (Explain)

And then He goes on to say—**"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me…" (v.37a)**

In this statement, Jesus is saying that everyone who would get saved during the Church Age (Pentecost to the Rapture) were foreknown and chosen by the Father Who will someday present all of them (the 'Body of Christ') as a love gift to the Son as His Bride.

And notice He makes it a point to say that <u>all</u> of those that the Father gives to the Son—will come to Him (Jesus) for salvation.

This means that no one's salvation depends on you or me—even if we mess up our presentation of the gospel, or chicken out altogether—we are not the issue.

Jesus is clear that their salvation depends solely upon the ability of the sovereign God of the universe to save, sustain (hold on to) and complete the work He began in each of their lives by bringing them from predestination to glorification (Romans 8:29-30).

"…and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (v.37b)

First of all, Jesus is telling us that anyone can come to Him for salvation regardless of how sinful or wicked a life they have lived.

He assures them that they won't be turned away—they will not be refused eternal life if they come to Jesus and ask for it by faith.

But secondly, when the Lord said, **"…and the one who comes to Me I will by no means <u>cast out</u>." (v.37b)**

I believe that not only was Jesus saying that no one who comes to Him for salvation will be turned away but that—once they are saved, they will never be cast out of God's family and lose their salvation.

And so, verse 37 not only deals with the *scope* of salvation (anyone can be saved), but it also deals with the *security* of salvation (those who are saved are never lost).

Now concerning this last point—the Lord Jesus, then goes on to state in some of the strongest terms in all the New Testament that once a person puts their faith in Him and receives eternal life—that life is <u>eternally secure</u>.

Now, let me just stop and state what should be obvious—eternal life by its very definition has to mean <u>uninterrupted life that goes on for eternity</u>.

If someone could *lose* 'eternal life'—that *life* obviously wasn't <u>eternal</u> in the first place!

Years ago, a woman came up to Dr. Harry Ironside, the great Bible teacher, after a meeting where he talked about the eternal security of a believer in Christ's salvation.

She told him that she didn't believe in eternal security but rather that a Christian's salvation was secure only as long as they didn't fall away thru sin—which if they did, they would lose their salvation.

"But Madam", Ironside said, *"God promised us <u>eternal</u> life which by its very definition must be life for eternity."*

"Yes" she said, *"It's eternal until we fall away and lose it."*

Ironside responded: *"Madam, If God promised that if we received Jesus Christ as our Savior He'd give us life for a decade—how long would that be?"*

She said, *"Life for 10 years".*

"Okay" Dr. Ironside said, *"What if God promised to give us life for a century if we received His Son as our Savior—how long would that be?"*

She said, *"That would be life for100 years".*

Alright, what do you think He meant when He said if we received His Son as our Savior, He would give us *eternal* life—how long would that be?

She said, *"Life as long as we stayed faithful and didn't fall away"*—and she walked away.

Some years ago, the author of a book on theology made this statement:
"Some truly converted people have fallen from grace and the danger of doing so threatens every Christian."

Now that is a very important statement—if it's true.

Because if it's true that some Christians have lost their salvation and every Christian is in danger of doing so—that's a very important thing to know.

I mean, if you can lose your salvation—you'd better find out fast how to hang onto it!

This is an issue that's been hotly debated in theological circles over the years.

The main problem I (and many others) have against this teaching that says a Christian can lose their salvation is—it makes salvation *conditional*.

God has saved me by grace through faith (Eph.2:8-9), but now holding on to my salvation is *my* responsibility (these folks tell us) conditioned upon *my* faithfulness in living up to God's standards—if I don't, I forfeit God's grace and lose my salvation.

That folks is a works/righteousness approach to salvation.

This approach to salvation in effect says that, once God has saved me by His grace (apart from anything I have done to earn salvation) I must then work at *staying* saved by living a righteous life (whatever that means)—the very error Paul rebuked the Galatians for embracing (Gal.3:1-3).

And so again, this teaching says that God saves us thru His grace—but then I must keep the law to stay saved otherwise, if my good works fail, so does my righteousness and along with it my salvation.

That is, what some have called—"Eternal Insecurity."

The security of your salvation is one of the greatest truths you, as a Christian, can ever come to terms with because—it will give you a firm foundation upon which to build your entire relationship with God (on grace not legalism).

Because of this, Satan loves to attack this truth by trying to get us to doubt the security of our salvation—which is why we are admonished in Scripture to put on the *"helmet of salvation."* (Ephesians 6:17a)

The 'helmet of salvation' protects our minds, our thoughts, from doubts about our salvation.

If Satan can discourage you as a Christian by constantly pointing out your failures, sins, weaknesses, bad habits, poor health or failing finances—he can, at some point, begin to get you to doubt whether or not you're really saved, because—*"if I was really saved would I have all these problems?"*

Now, if you let him use your circumstances to discourage you to the point of doubting your salvation—he's won! Because you will never live like a victorious Christian if you don't think you are a Christian!

That's why Paul knew the *helmet of salvation* was so vital if we're going to be effective, victorious soldiers of Christ—a helmet he referred to in 1Thess. 5:8 as—the *'helmet of the hope of salvation'.*

In the New Testament, whenever the word 'hope' is used in connection with a promise of God (especially with regard to the promise of eternal life), the word 'hope' is never associated with 'wishful thinking'—it always means *absolute* hope (a sure thing).

Titus 1:2 (NKJV)
…in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

I want to key in on the word 'promised' because it is critical to our understanding of eternal life.

There are two kinds of promises in the Bible—*conditional* (bilateral) and *unconditional* (unilateral). (Explain)

All of the promises in Scripture that relate to eternal life (including the promise Paul is talking about in Titus 1:2)—are all <u>unconditional, unilateral promises</u>.

In other words, they don't depend on our faithfulness to *do* anything—they only depend on the faithfulness of God Almighty to keep *His* promise.

(Use the illustration of being the beneficiary in someone's Will)

How do we know the promise Paul referred to in Titus 1:2, where God promised us eternal life, was an unconditional promise—because he tells us it was a promise given by God **"before time began".**

Of course, that means that none of us were around when He made that promise—so then who did He make that promise to?

Well obviously, He made that promise to <u>Himself</u> (the Trinity) that all who would <u>believe</u> in His Son He would give the gift of eternal life (Hebrews 6:17-18).

That promise was unconditional because to have a *conditional* promise you have to have two parties present—which in this case it would have to have been God and mankind (probably in the person of Adam).

This was exactly what God did with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai when He proposed the Mosaic Covenant (two party, bilateral, conditional covenant) to them, as Moses stood there on behalf of the people representing the nation. (Comment)

But in the case of the New Covenant (Testament), as Paul mentions in Titus 1:2—this promise was given *before* mankind was created which meant that it was an unconditional, unilateral promise or covenant that God made with Himself.

Again, think of a will—which is what the word 'testament' means, as in—*'last will and testament'*.

The New Testament is God's will, where He decreed that when Jesus died, we would inherit eternal life—if we accepted it.

That means it doesn't depend on us to do anything in the way of works—all we have to do is receive it by faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)
[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,
[9] not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Galatians 2:21 (NKJV)
[21] I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

This is why we are told in the book of Hebrews that the new covenant thru Jesus is superior to the old covenant under Moses—

Hebrews 8:6 (NKJV)
[6] But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. (Jer.31:31-33)

And so, the helmet of salvation will only protect us if we put it on every day by basing our salvation—not on our feelings or our circumstances—but on the promises in God's Word.

1 John 2:25-26 (NKJV)
[25] And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life. [26] These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you.

Deceive you how?—by telling you that your spiritual life in Christ is <u>not eternal</u>.

What will that do?—it will put me under the Law, because now I believe I have to earn my salvation every day by keeping the Law (Ten Commandments).

And that's exactly where Satan wants me, under the Law, where he can condemn me—condemn me by deceiving me into believing that eternal life is something I'm working towards—not something I receive by faith and keep thru God's grace!

Now look, there are those who believe we don't actually receive eternal life until we *die*.

These people and groups (like the Roman Catholic Church) teach that we are *'on our way'* towards eternal life and that each day we live a righteous life here on earth (as each group defines it)—we earn little installments of eternal life.

But that we won't fully receive it until after we die having *proved* our worthiness—which makes eternal life a *reward* we earn rather than a *gift* we receive.

And so, much of the argument against eternal security lies in the idea of *when* eternal life really begins.

Now, as have already pointed out—eternal life by its very definition has to mean uninterrupted life for eternity—so that once you have it, <u>you have it forever</u>.

That then begs the question, when do we receive eternal life—at the moment of salvation or when we die?

1 John 5:11-13 (NLT2)
11 And this is what God has testified: He has <u>given</u> us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

[12] Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. [13] I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

John 3:16 (NKJV)
[16] 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.

John 3:36 (NKJV)
[36] He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

And so the Bible makes it very clear that eternal or everlasting life doesn't begin when you die and go to heaven—it becomes yours the instant you receive Jesus into your heart here on earth.

Now listen, how could God promise us *eternal* life if it wasn't secure for eternity once you entered into it?

If my salvation was dependent on my faithfulness in anyway—then the Lord could never have promised me *eternal* life starting here on earth.

The only thing He could have said was—*"Be faithful and live up to My standards every day and someday when you die (and proved yourself worthy of it) you will receive eternal life."*

But the Scriptures say that once someone believes in Christ—they already *have* eternal life, which by its very definition has to be life for eternity!

The real issue isn't "can you *lose* your salvation?" the real issue is "do you *have* salvation?"

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)
[28] And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Verse 28 says that for the child of God all things are working together for our good—which means that if everything is working together for our ultimate *good*—then nothing can work for our ultimate *bad* (condemnation in hell).

In other words, if there was ever a single Christian who lost their salvation—then this verse would be a lie.

Romans 8:1 (NIV)
1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation [judgment/hell] for those who are in Christ Jesus,

In Romans 8 (which starts with 'no condemnation' and ends with 'no separation'), Paul is affirming the security of each believer in Christ.

Romans 8:29-30 (NIV)
29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

You see if you are justified (saved) you must of necessity (by the promise of God) come all the way to future glorification—in other words, if you're saved 'for real' you're saved forever.

You see Paul's whole argument (in Romans 8) for the eternal security of the believer in Christ is based on the truth that there is no such thing as a salvation that is *present* but not future.

Philippians 1:6 (NLT2)
6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)
2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 7:25 (NKJV)
25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost [all the way to glorification] those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

And so, God made us who are His children a promise, a promise that if you are a truly a child of God you will never be disowned, you will never be thrown out of the family of God—

John 6:37 (NKJV)
37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me <u>I will by no means cast out</u>.

But then, as we said earlier, He backs up that statement with some of the strongest language in the New Testament regarding the security of each believer's salvation.

John 6:38 (NKJV)
38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

In other words, He is saying clearly that He did not begin His life in the manger at Bethlehem—but rather, He existed from all eternity with God the Father in heaven (a statement the falls under the second main point of our outline—**II. The Divine Declaration of the Savior**).

But notice that Jesus didn't come down from heaven to rule—He came down to do the will of His Father which was to die for the sins of humanity. (Phil.2:5-8)

John 6:39 (NKJV)
39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose <u>nothing</u>, but should raise <u>it</u> up at the last day.

The **'it'** is referring to <u>all</u> believers as a group—the Church (i.e., "the Body of Christ").

Every believer is a part of this group and this <u>entire group</u> will all make it into heaven without losing a single Christian (**"that I should lose nothing"**)**—**that, Jesus said, was the Father's will!

This is one of the most powerful verses on the eternal security of the believer that you will find in the New Testament.

As far as *Christians* are concerned, the **"last day"** refers to the day when the Lord Jesus will come for His Church at the Rapture.

At that time the trumpet will sound, the Lord will shout and the dead in Christ will rise first—then all *living* believers will be *'caught up'* (Latin-'rapio'-*rapture*) to meet the Lord in the air and receive their glorified bodies. (1Thess.4:17)

John 6:40 (NKJV)
40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

In this verse, Jesus goes on to explain how a person receives everlasting life.

He said that it's the Father's will that everyone who **'sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life…'**

To **'see'** the Son doesn't mean to see Him with physical eyes—but rather with the eyes of faith.

To become a member of God's family, a person must 'see' or in other words *recognize* by faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

They must *believe* that He died for their sins and rose bodily from the grave three days later.

And then finally, he or she, by a definite act of faith, he must *receive* the Lord Jesus into their heart as their own *personal* Savior.

All who do this receive <u>everlasting life</u> as a present possession and also receive the assurance that they will be <u>raised at the last day</u>—which again implies **eternal security** for all those who are "in Christ" (saved).

Notice how the Lord in verse 40 repeats what He said in verse 39, but this time He *personalizes* it—**"and I will raise <u>him</u>** [or her] **up at the last day".**

We are <u>not</u> saved as a *group*—we are saved *individually*.

But once saved we belong to a group called 'the Body of Christ' or 'the Church' which God sees as a <u>unit</u> and then promises us that as a unit we will (all) be taken to heaven someday (rapture) as one Body.

How could God make a promise like that if our salvation was conditioned upon our faithfulness?

Again, this tells us that the promise of eternal life is an unconditional promise that has nothing to do with our faithfulness and everything to do with God's faithfulness to keep His promise.