

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XX.

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[0 : 00] This morning we are going to be talking about metaphors, and we continue that theme from what we began in our last session together from John's Gospel chapter 6.

And while you are turning to that, I would like to simply point out that the very first verse of Psalm 23 contains a metaphor. The Lord is my shepherd. That's the use of figurative language, and it is a metaphor.

Are there many of these in the Bible? There are not dozens, not hundreds, but thousands from the Old Testament to the New.

It is a utilization of figurative language that is not meant to be taken literally, and when figurative language is taken literally, you run into some very severe doctrinal aberrations, and we will see how that works out in John chapter 6.

And if you haven't turned to that already, or while you are turning to it, I want to share with you some propositions, and we often do this. It is designed to just give you something to think and meditate about while we are working our way toward the message, and this will, I think, provide some kind of an entry into that.

[1 : 25] The theme we have been pursuing since the beginning of the year focuses on why Christians differ doctrinally. The world could not possibly care less.

Even many who call themselves Christians could not care less. Why is this? It is because the present world, and Western culture in particular, is bathed in postmodernism.

And some of you are thinking, well, what's that? Postmodernism is the central tenet, contains the central tenet of which all is relative and absolutism is not acceptable.

This is the kind of thinking that has inundated our present world. And if you are not aware of it, it is simply because you have not been moving in the circles where this kind of thinking is applied.

But I can assure you, it is out there especially in academia and in government on all levels. This kind of thinking prevails.

[2 : 47] It is the idea that relativism rules and there are no real moral absolutes. And of course, out of moral relativism, there issues forth the predictable curses of political correctness and a warped, redefined view of what they call tolerance.

All of these are predicated upon the supposed unavailability of truth. Francis Schaeffer warned us that this was coming 40 years ago.

It just took it about 10 or 15 years longer than he thought it would for it to get here. But it is here. And it permeates all of Western culture and society.

We here in the United States are right now living in the thick of this kind of thinking. Why Christians differ doctrinally cannot possibly matter unless truth exists and is capable of being known.

Historically, the Western world has always been committed to that concept and has formulated its value system, its norms and standards on that concept.

[4 : 15] But no longer. There is truth and there is error. For one cannot exist without the other.

Now, this is just plain and simple logic. But don't expect plain and simple logic to prevail in our culture because it doesn't.

It doesn't. We are committed from a biblical point of view to the idea that truth exists and error exists.

And both are needed. Both are a reality because you cannot have one without the other. However, that is no longer regarded as true. Truth has become what each of us makes it to be.

Which means you have your truth and I have my truth. Truth, for many, is personalized and individualized while being reduced to subjectivity and the personal preferences of the holder of one's truth.

[5 : 30] Previously, we have always believed and operated on the basis that there is truth and there is error. And you need to pursue the one and avoid the other.

No longer is this the thinking. As I said, especially in academia. And academia is where you would expect the best and the brightest to shine forth.

But they have fallen into this philosophical trap. Previously, there was truth and there was error.

Today, that whole thinking is skewed and reduced to one word that best describes it and it is this.

Whatever. That's it. Whatever. Everything is up for grabs.

Nothing is fixed. Nothing is solid. Nothing is permanent. There is no central point of reference.

There is no North Star. Everything is just whatever.

[6 : 45] That's where we are. While this is the postmodern way of thinking, it is impractical and unworkable and impossible.

To be consistent with it in a real world situation. Consider this kind of thinking. Can you imagine trying to apply this kind of sloppiness and logic to a court of law?

Can you call a witness to the stand and question the witness on the basis of his having his own truth about what happened or about what he saw?

So that objectivity is removed and the witness describes what he experienced from the standpoint of his preference or his bias.

Can you imagine a jury trying to reach some kind of a conclusion with that kind of shenanigan going on? They are committed to the reality that, hey, there is truth.

[7 : 56] Truth does exist. And the responsibility of this court is to determine what the truth is in this case so that justice can be rendered.

Because if you can't arrive at truth, there's no possibility of arriving at a just decision or verdict. So the whole thing is nonsensical and it breaks down.

But that doesn't stop people from thinking along these lines. And they do. And as I suggested, academia is leading the charge.

This is where you would expect the most solid kind of philosophical and logical thinking to prevail. And yet they have succumbed to this nonsense.

We are working with the Gospel of John and we are operating on the basis in John chapter 6 that there is truth and there is error.

[8 : 50] And we are looking at the dichotomy between flesh and spirit or body and spirit or material and immaterial. And all of this is predicated upon the idea that there is truth and there is error.

That there is meaning and purpose and value in the text. And the reason that I have selected this particular text is because in dealing with the theme, why Christians differ doctrinally, I do not know of any single area where there is a greater difference that exists between Christians.

And I'm using the term Christian loosely so called as this particular area and these few verses that we are considering in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John.

Now, when we talk about Roman Catholics, it ought to be understood that there are many Roman Catholics who are not Christians at all.

They are just Roman Catholics. They are not true believers at all. But religiously, they belong to the Roman Catholic Church. They are really into churchianity and perhaps don't even know it.

[10 : 12] However, at the same time, there are many Roman Catholics in the Roman Catholic Church who are genuine, true believers. And their faith and trust is in Christ.

And you realize the same thing needs to be said about Protestant churches. There are many people in Protestant churches of every stripe who are real, genuine believers in the person of Christ.

However, there are also multitudes of people in Protestant churches who have nothing but churchianity. They just go through the motions.

Their name is on the roll. They consider themselves a Christian. But they are not Christian at all.

And many of them don't even know that. But they think that their being in the church is good enough, etc., etc.

So in Catholic and in Protestant, there are the real and there are the unreal in both of those. And probably it goes without saying that neither of us has the ability or the wisdom to determine which or which, in many cases.

[11 : 17] All we can do is go on the basis of what they tell us. And only the Lord knows who real believers are and who are not. But this passage in John's Gospel, chapter 6, provides the basis for

creating, I think, in my opinion at least, the greatest distinction that there is between Christians.

And that's why I have selected this portion, is simply to give you an illustration of the great variation that I'm talking about within Christendom.

Let's look, if we may, at John, chapter 6, and verse 32. And we'll just try to rehash this a little bit and stimulate your thinking.

And by the way, last week you did not have the opportunity for Q&A.; And I'll try to make that up to you today and allow ample time for that because I suspect this will generate a lot of questions.

Bear in mind now, one of the principles under which we are operating is the repeated distinction that our Lord makes between the spiritual and the physical.

[12:29] If you miss that point, you miss a great deal of the burden of the whole New Testament, in fact, all of Scripture for that matter. There is a clear-cut dichotomy between flesh and spirit, between body and spirit, or between the material and the immaterial, or between the physical and the non-physical.

These are both real entities, but they are vastly different from each other. Yet each has its own legitimacy. In John, chapter 6, and verse 32, for instance, What kind of life?

We insist, spiritual life. Not physical life. The physical life is already there. It's already in place.

Jesus Christ is referring to himself as the true bread of God, which came down from heaven to give life to the world.

He is talking about his own person. And the life that he is going to provide for the world is spiritual life, not physical life. There is a clear-cut distinction between these two.

We have labored in the time past to point out to you that man is a spiritual entity as well as a physical entity. You are more than your body.

[14:18] You have another dimension of reality. You have another dimension of reality to your being apart from the physical. But it is one that is seldom appreciated because it is not subject to the senses.

We know with our body what we feel, hear, smell, taste, and touch. No question about that. But that which is spiritual, which exists within the body of every human being is not subject to those senses. Yet it has a very definite reality. It is that part of our being that is able to connect with God.

We do so on this spiritual plane. You do not connect with God with your body, but with your spirit. We relate to each other with our body and our spirit in interaction, in recognition, in acknowledgement, in appreciation.

[15:29] All of these things come into play and they constitute the totality of our being. We are able to relate to each other physically and spiritually.

We relate to God spiritually. Here he is contrasting himself in a spiritual sense with the physical bread.

He said, yes, you receive manna from heaven and that satisfied your physical hunger. And your body needs that. But Jesus said, I came to satisfy that dimension of man's being that cannot be satisfied with bread.

It is that God-shaped vacuum in the heart that nothing else can fill but God himself. We try to fill it with money, fame, success, sex, drugs, all kinds of things to no avail.

Because only God can fill that. While we are here, and we will not have any reason to leave John's gospel because it is just loaded with illustrations for what we are talking about.

[16:47] If you will come over a couple of pages to John chapter 8 and verse 12. Here we find another metaphor. Christ is utilizing light.

And he is saying in verse 12, Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. What does that mean? Certainly it doesn't mean that there was no such thing as sunshine until Christ came into the world.

Of course not. The earth was bathed in sunlight thousands of years before Christ came in. What he meant was, I have come to bring a different kind of light to the world.

Spiritual light. There is an old spiritual that goes, Praise the Lord, I saw the light. What does that mean? It doesn't mean somebody flipped the switch in the room and all of a sudden you see the light.

Of course not. It means you came to an appreciation or understanding of spiritual truth. You connected with God. And that's what we mean when we say, I saw the light.

[17 : 58] It wasn't this kind of light. It was the kind of light that you really are at a loss to describe. It connects with your inner person.

That's the light. And when Christ says, I am the light of the world, he who follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Does this mean that somebody who is physically blind is going to be able to see when they receive Christ? Of course not. If you are physically blind when you come to faith in Jesus Christ, you're going to still be physically blind after you come to faith in Christ.

Because physical blindness and spiritual blindness are two entirely different things. Spiritual light is not something that you can see with your physical eyes.

How do you see spiritual light? With your spirit. And your spirit is connected with your mind.

[19 : 01] It is a mental thing, not a physical thing. We do not understand the intricacies and the differences that separate the mind from the brain.

But I am convinced they are there. The brain is physical. The mind is not. They use and are dependent upon each other.

But each has its own realm of service. The brain is a three-pound gelatinous, massive, putty-like substance that is contained in our skull.

But nobody has ever seen the human mind. Because it isn't matter. It is spirit. And that is that which can appreciate the spiritual light.

He who follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life. And there are some other references. Let's get them out of the way and into the record for just a moment.

[20 : 06] Come over to John chapter 8 and verse 44. These are all examples of metaphors. And you are going to see this again brought out when we get back to chapter 6.

And it is very, very important that you understand this because it is key to interpreting the scripture. Now, notice, if you will, verse 44.

Jesus said, You are of your father, the devil. Is that to be taken literally?

Well, of course not. Nobody understands it that way. This, too, is a metaphor. He is saying that the devil is their father. This does not mean that the devil physically contributed sperm to some female recipient.

And as a result, these people were born. That's not what Christ is saying at all. And nobody thinks that for a moment. What it means is your attitude and your disposition and your behavior is right in league with Satan himself.

[21 : 15] It is as if he is your father and he has begotten you. And you think just like he does. That's what Jesus is saying when he says, You are of your father, the devil.

And everybody, I think, pretty much takes it to mean that way. Nobody thinks that these people are offspring physically of Satan. And if there are others that are needed, you could look at verse 51, for instance.

Here is another perfect illustration of the distinction between the physical and the material. Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death.

What does that mean? What about his disciples? What about the apostles? All 12 of them, or at least 11 of them, if you want to discount Judas.

What happened to them? Well, they all died. They're dead. They're dead. They're alive to God.

They're alive in heaven. But as far as earth is concerned, they're dead.

[22 : 20] They all died. Most of them a violent death. Well, what does this mean? If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. All Jesus is saying is, listen. There's two kinds of death.

Just as there are two kinds of life. There's physical life and there's spiritual life. There's physical death and there's spiritual death. And what he clearly means is, those who keep my word will never see spiritual death.

They will never die spiritually. They will have eternal life. The same is true of believers today. We are not promised that we will not die physically.

Frankly, I'm kind of looking forward to it. It will be an incredible experience that I've never had before. Never been that way before. And I'm always interested in trying new things.

So when that time comes, it will be a real exciting journey. I just hope I have enough of my wits about me so that I can kind of plug into it a little bit on this side. As well as on the other side.

[23 : 27] But it's going to really be something. We are not in any way, shape or form promised an escape from physical death. We are told that it is the valley of the shadow of death.

And I'm not going to prevent you from going through that. But I will go through it with you. I'll go with you through that valley of the shadow of death.

How could you not look forward to it? Notice, if you will, chapter 10 and verses 7 through 11 over just a page. Jesus said unto them, truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

This is a metaphor. It's different from a simile. A simile is there for the purpose of comparison. But a metaphor is there for a stronger reason.

It never uses the word like or as. It treats the thing as if it is the thing. Let me share with you from the pen of E.W. Bollinger a few comments regarding the metaphor.

[24 : 33] Because this is precisely what we are saying the passage in John 6 is all about. When Jesus said, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

What an incredibly enigmatic statement. Do you take that literally or figuratively?

Many take it literally. And as a result, they have constructed an entire ecclesiastical system in order to make this work physically.

And some of you here, a number of you have a Roman Catholic background. And you know full well what I'm talking about. It is one of the great distinctions over which Christians differ.

And it divides believers. All in how it is interpreted in this one passage. Well, there are other passages that come into play as well. But this is the principal passage that provides that division.

[25 : 51] And Dr. Bollinger says, for instance, The metaphor. And the word metaphor is a compound Greek word.

And meta means across or to transfer. And the for comes from the forain, which means to carry.

And it means to carry across or to transfer. We're all familiar with the word meta in some instances.

If you've ever heard the expression about someone having a malignancy, there is always a concern as to whether the tumor has metastasized.

Metastasized. And the word meta is there. And what that means is, is the tumor confined to a small given area?

Or has it metastasized? That means has it been carried over into other parts of the body, which is far more serious?

[27 : 06] And this is a process of metastasis. So to carry over one thing to another means to assign one to another.

So and to make a distinction between the simile and the metaphor, the simile says all flesh is as grass. First Peter one twenty four.

That's a simile. All flesh is as grass. And by the way, the simile, S-I-M-I-L-E, is the word from which we get the word similar.

And it always uses the word as or like. Always. Are there many of these in the Bible?

Thousands. Thousands of them. And it begins in Genesis. And it carries all the way through to Revelation. There are thousands of uses of this simile. And one I've just given you.

[28 : 05] First Peter one twenty four. All flesh is as grass. That's the simile. The metaphor, however, is found in Isaiah.

Forty and verse six. And it doesn't say all flesh is as grass. The metaphor says all flesh is grass.

More pungent. More pointed. Harder hitting. The other is the basis of comparison. This is carrying it over as if it is it.

The simile says all we like sheep. But the metaphor declares that we are the sheep of his pasture.

The metaphor is, therefore, not so true to fact as the simile, but is much truer to feeling.

That is, it is stronger. We have recourse to metaphor when we say of a picture. You look at a picture on the wall and you say to the person sitting next to you, this is my mother.

[29 : 15] Well, it isn't your mother. It's a picture of your mother. But when you say this picture, this is my mother, that's using a metaphor. And nobody expects the person in the picture to start talking as if it were your real mother.

But you just know you are using figurative language without even thinking or knowing that you're using figurative language. Yes, this is my mother. Or this is my father.

The verb is means, in this case, represents. There may not be the least resemblance. But this represents.

And that's what the metaphor is all about. At the communion service, which I do not believe is being invoked in John chapter 6, as we mentioned in a previous message, when Jesus said, this cup is the New Testament in my blood.

That is a metaphor. And what he means is, this cup represents the New Covenant in my blood.
[30 : 34] This bread represents my body. He's not saying, it is my body. He's saying, it represents my body.

It stands for my body. But if you take that literally, as our Roman Catholic friends do, then you have to find some way to make that work physically.

And do you know? They have. And they do. And we'll explain that momentarily. So, while we are here in John 10, let us, well, I do want to give you one other, and it's back in John 19.

It's back, and this is a very obvious one. It's one I think with which you can readily identify without too much question. It's in John chapter 19. It is a beautiful expression of a metaphor.

And again, this is one of thousands of uses of metaphors as figurative language in the scriptures. And I'm thinking about Matthew, or John chapter 19.

[31 : 53] And let's begin with verse 25. This is at the crucifixion. This Christ is on the cross, and he is speaking from the cross.

And we read in verse 25, Therefore the soldiers did these things. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciples whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son.

He was not saying to his mother, Woman, look at me. He was her son.

That isn't what he's saying at all. He is speaking with reference to John. The beloved disciple whom Jesus loved.

[33 : 04] And if you look at the context, it becomes quite obvious. He said to his mother, Woman, behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother.

What is that all about? John, son of Zebedee, brother of James.

John was not the son of Mary. Mary was not his mother. But, representatively speaking, in connection with the use of this figurative expression, which everyone understood, what Jesus is saying from the cross, to his mother, Mary, is, Mother Mary, here is John, your son.

Well, he wasn't her son. But he referred to him as her son. Why would he do that? For emphasis.

He was making an assignment. He was saying from this point on, you are to regard this man, John, as if he were your actual son.

[34 : 25] And John, son, I want you to regard my mother, Mary, as if she were your actual mother.

He is not at all implying that either is that. He is saying that under the circumstances, he wants each to treat the other as though that's the way it is.

That's a metaphor. It is not literal, and it is not intended to be taken literally. John did not think, well, how about that?

Mary is my mother? Gee, I never knew that. He's not thinking that at all. He's thinking, this is my adopted mother and I am her adopted son.

And we are to relate to each other in a mother-son kind of relationship. And it was perfectly clear to them what they were saying. in verse 53 of John 6, and now we must come back there to finish so that I can get this open for Q&A.;

[35 : 38] In John chapter 6 and verse 53, let's just go over this passage again. Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.

Now, you may take that literally, which is rather grotesque, and it is some kind of a ridiculous invitation to cannibalism, which we can't even begin to fathom.

So, can we not, on the basis of logic and on the basis of what the Old Testament forbids, and on the basis of the fact that Jesus was very obedient to the scriptures, can we not dismiss that and say that it cannot be taken literally?

What Jesus is saying is this, unless you partake of me, you have no life in you.

And again, he's talking about spiritual life. So, how do you partake of Christ? Spiritually.

[36 : 57] How do you do that? With your mind, with your will, with your intellect, with a deliberate volitional decision, you choose to partake of Christ.

Christ. And you do that as an act of faith, or commitment, or trust, or reliance upon, it is all a spiritual act, and it is a deliberate volitional act.

This is what it means to exercise faith in Jesus Christ. He is using this as a metaphor, and it is very vivid.

In fact, it is so vivid that some stumbled all over it, they just could not get their brain wrapped around this. And they said in verse 52, the Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat?

This is crazy. What is he saying? And then he comes back and compounds it in verse 53. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourself.

[38 : 13] He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. Well, what kind of life is eternal life? It is spiritual life.

And when you partake of Christ spiritually, as an act of your will, as an act of your mind, not as an act of your body, and therein lies the rub.

how do we receive Christ? We receive him by faith. How does the Roman Catholic Church and hierarchy receive Christ?

By the mouth. What? that's right. By the mouth. They receive Christ by partaking of eating the wafer that the priest puts on their tongue, which has been consecrated by the priest and mystically turned into the literal, not spiritual, not metaphorically, but the bread turns into the literal flesh of Christ. I know it looks like a piece of bread, but it isn't. It is really the physical body of Christ, and they believe they receive Christ by mouth.

[39 : 53] That's the Eucharist. And when the priest drinks of the cup, he is drinking the literal, actual blood of Christ.

Never mind, it looks like wine, smells like wine, tastes like wine, it has nonetheless become the literal, physical blood of Christ.

And they are receiving Christ by mouth. This is the very backbone of Roman Catholic theology. This is the cornerstone of the sacrifice of the mass. And these people do this with great sincerity, earnestness, and all the rest.

We do not in any way, shape, or form impugn their motive or their sincerity. We just believe that they are wrong.

[40 : 59] Now, what the typical position is regarding this. And this is so tempting to take because it's nice.

It's nice. Say, well, if you are a Roman Catholic, that's right for you. If you are a Protestant to receive Christ by faith, that's right for you.

So, which one is right? They're both right. Isn't that wonderful? There's nothing to fuss about. Nothing to argue about. And nobody has to be wrong. Well, as I've said before, both of those positions may be wrong.

But they can't both be right because they are mutually contradictory. contradictory. You cannot have, if A is A, non-A, if A is A and A is right, non-A cannot also be right.

That is illogical, nonsensical thinking. You can't function that way. A thing is or it is not. And, of course, their position is, well, we Roman Catholics, we're right, you guys are wrong.

[42 : 16] And our position is, well, we Protestants, we're right, and you guys are wrong. So, the beat goes on. And I don't suspect that either is going to convince the other of their position.

But I do know that there have been a number of crossovers. There have been people who've moved from one tradition to the other, back and forth. There are Catholics who have come to faith in Christ in what we consider to be a biblical kind of way.

And there are numerous Protestants who have left the Protestant church and have joined the Roman Catholic church and partake of this. in this way. So, do you see what I mean when I say this is one of the, probably the greatest area of doctrinal distinction that exists among those who call themselves Christians?

Christians. Now, there are numerous other places where this is played out and the reality of it becomes very apparent.

When Jesus says, and let me return to this passage in John 6, Christ. And, well, let's just jump in with verse 63.

[43 : 36] I can't take the time for it as I would like, but verse 63, it is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing.

Does that ring a bell with anybody? Remember when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus? and he said, that which is of the flesh is flesh, that which is of the spirit is spirit.

Even there, he is making a clear-cut distinction between the physical and the spiritual, the material and the immaterial.

He is saying that which is of the flesh is flesh. And what that means is, man who is born of woman is the flesh. flesh. And that's born of the earth.

And when he said, except a man is born again, and the word again there in the Greek is the word another, another, and it means literally above.

[44 : 38] It means except unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. What that means is this.

Look, everyone who is alive as a human being is born of the flesh. The material, physical, earthly, mother, father.

That which is of the flesh is flesh. So it is not adequate that man be born of flesh only. He must be born from above.

That is, born of God. That is the new birth. He must be born in addition to being born physically. He must be born spiritually. Because that which is of the flesh belongs to the domain of the flesh, and that's all it ever will be.

But because man is more than just the flesh, he needs connection with God that comes only from above. And that's what he meant when he went on to say that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit, the spirit becomes pretty obvious.

[45 : 53] Then in verse 63 of John 6, it is the spirit who gives life, that again ties in with John 3, the flesh profits nothing. That means the flesh profits nothing in so far as the spiritual is concerned, because it's removed from it.

The flesh cannot do you any good spiritually. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. And what he is building up to here is the absolute necessity for believing the words that he has spoken.

Because in believing what God has said, there is life. Look at the next verse. But, verse 64, but there are some of you who do not believe.

What does that mean? means you have no spiritual life. You have not partaken of me. All you have is physical life.

You've got a heart within your chest that beats about 70 times a minute. You're able to ingest food, get up and walk and talk and interact one with another, but you are dead spiritually.

[47 : 10] You have no spiritual life in you. You're not connected with God. You're connected with other people, but not with God. That's what it means to be spiritually dead.

And if you are going to be quickened, if you are going to be made alive on the inside where the real you is, you have to exercise your will, your volition, and place your trust and your confidence in the person of Jesus Christ.

He alone has life to give. This ought to settle all arguments insofar as the exclusivity of Christ is concerned. Why is Christ the only way of salvation?

And the answer is because he is the only one who is able to impart the life that we need. Buddha can't do it. Muhammad can't do it. No one else can do it.

Only Jesus Christ possesses the life that man desperately needs. that's why he's called the way, the truth, and the life. Either that is just hype and oversell and overstatement, or it's true.

[48 : 32] Take a choice. Some of you do not believe, for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him.

These are words to be believed. And then, as a result of his saying this, and they're not picking up on it, about drinking his blood and eating his flesh and not really understanding it, they were just turned off by it.

It was repulsive to them. It was repugnant. And some were curling up their lip and saying, I don't think I want to be involved with this guy anymore.

I'm peeling off. I mean, this is off the wall. I can't handle this. This is crazy. This is too much. And this is exactly what verse 66 says.

As a result of this, many of his disciples withdrew. And we're not walking with him anymore. I can't handle this.

[49 : 34] I'm out of here. I'll see you guys. This is too much for me. And Jesus said, therefore, to the twelve, you do not want to go away, also do you? And Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. You understand that eternal life is connected to and hooked up with words to be believed and embraced.

This is precisely why Jesus Christ is called the word of God. He is the one in whom we are to deposit our belief, our trust, our confidence.

God is to take this passage literally, like our very sincere and I'm sure very devoted Roman Catholic friends do, you have to find some way to make this work so that you can apply it in a literal fashion. How are you going to do that? And as I've said in our last session, I would love to have been a fly on the wall and listen to some of the discussions that took place in some of these religious councils and I'm talking about going back to the second and third century when these things developed.

[51 : 17] They were very sincere people and I think very desirous of being well pleasing to the Lord drink my blood.

How can that be? And as they meditated and cogitated and debated and I'm sure argued probably long and hard over this, they came to the conclusion that what Jesus is speaking of here in John 6 is the Eucharist the communion and we told you in our last session we are convinced that that is not so at all what Jesus is speaking of in John chapter 6 is not communion at all it is his death on the cross that he's talking about and all of the context supports that later he will be talking about communion and that is near the end of John's gospel when he does clearly take bread and say this is my body and he takes the cup and says this cup is my blood in the new covenant and as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you do show forth the

Lord's death until he comes that's the establishment of communion but in John 6 it is all about his going to the cross and providing life for the world through his death burial and resurrection so if you are insistent on taking this literally you have got to find some way to make what looks like a piece of bread smells like a piece of bread tastes like a piece of bread you've got to find some way to change that bread into the real actual literal flesh of Christ how are you going to do that well one thing is for sure it would seem to me at least it's going to require a miracle I mean honest to goodness miracle to do that now think think through this with me and

I've thought long and hard about this I think there is a plan there is a methodology I don't think they reached this conclusion overnight I think it probably took quite some time as I said a lot of debate and a lot consider that the official position of the Roman Catholic Church and not only the Roman Catholic Church but almost all of the Reformed Church probably all of the Reformed Church and I'm talking about Lutheran and Episcopalian and Presbyterian and all of them as well as Roman Catholic they take the position that they are the replacement for the nation of Israel in the plan and program of God that Israel is permanently moved aside and they as the church have become the new Israel and the original Israel is completely out of the picture for good so we have time to go to it but there is that passage in

Matthew chapter I think it's 16 it's either 16 or 19 if it hasn't moved but Jesus said whom say ye that I am and Peter answered and said thou art the Christ the son of the living God and Jesus said blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood has not revealed the son to thee but my father which is in heaven and I say unto you that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church the gates of hell shall not prevail against it now follow me follow me if the church is the replacement of Israel and if Peter is recognized as the first hope and the vicar of Christ and if Peter has had handed down to him by Christ apostolic powers and the ability to perform miracles and if

[55 : 48] Peter has the opportunity and responsibility of speaking ex cathedra that is from the chair of Peter then his pronouncements become demanding authoritative it is as the voice of God and as the vicar of Christ and all of the priests in the Roman Catholic Church guess who they are replacing they are replacing all of the Jewish priests that were in Judaism that is now regarded by them as defunct and out of business and what has taken the place of the Old Testament priesthood the Roman Catholic priesthood and all of the powers that were possessed by the original twelve apostles to whom Christ gave the ability to work miracles etc it has been handed down by apostolic succession and that

Peter was the first pope etc etc etc and today recently it was John Paul II and now it is Pope Benedict whom they believe to be a direct descendant not physically but by virtue of having been chosen by God they believe through election of the cardinals is the present pope and if they have the power of the miraculous guess guess what the priest is able to do when he consecrates the wafer he changes it into the body of Christ and the cup is changed into the blood of Christ by virtue of the miraculous powers vested in the priesthood so do you see how vital this makes the priesthood without the priest consecrating those elements you cannot receive

Christ there is a dependency factor that is so strong it is just incredible this becomes sacerdotalism sacerdotalism is just a fancy word for saying of the priest or the priest craft this makes salvation an institutional thing so that every good catholic believes if you are in good standing with the roman catholic church your destiny for heaven is secure because it is viewed as a sacramental thing and you are not in good standing with the roman catholic church if you are not obedient to the sacraments which are baptism and the eucharist and well there are seven of them all together and we listed those and this makes salvation a sacramental thing they believe you are saved by grace but grace is administered through the sacraments and if you don't partake of the sacraments you cannot have

God's grace and where we differ with that is we do not see salvation as sacramental at all or sacerdotal it is personal personal and what I mean by that is no other human being apart from yourself is in charge of your eternal destiny you are I am not don't look to me as being in charge of your eternal destiny because I am the pastor and I stand in this pulpit I am not and my shoulders are not nearly big enough to handle a responsibility like that I am in charge of my eternal destiny salvation is a personal thing it is not a corporate thing if you are related to Jesus Christ it is because you made a personal deliberate volitional decision with your will and we are told in

Romans every one of us shall give account of himself to God now there is a sense in which I as a pastor have a degree of accountability for all of you in my shepherding ministry and my teaching and preaching ministry but not for the destiny of your soul not for your salvation my responsibility ends with teaching and edifying and I cannot do anything or say anything that will place you in heaven you are in charge of that God has he's given a volition to every Roman Catholic and to every Protestant and to every Muslim and to every Mormon and to every Buddhist each one has a volition God given and each one will be responsible to God for how they use that I'm not finished but I quit we've got about three four minutes left for Q&A; anybody have a comment or question Ron that's true and that is the official position but here you need to make a distinction here that is the official position of the

[61 : 50] Roman Catholic Church and that is this there is no salvation apart from the Church period now today however you will find a lot of Roman Catholics who will say I don't believe that I don't agree with that I believe that there are other ways of salvation and there are a lot of Roman Catholics who take the same position about the exclusivity of the Roman Catholic Church as Protestants do about the exclusivity of the person of Jesus Christ and faith in him in other words in the Catholic Church there are liberals and conservatives and some in between just like there are in the Protestants and in the Jewish faith these people fuss and fight constantly there are liberals and conservatives in Judaism every faith has liberals and conservatives in Islam who do you think those people were who flew those planes into the towers in New York City they were Muslims they were radical

Muslims who took the Koran very literally but there are a lot of Muslims who don't agree with that who don't see it that way and it's true with every denomination and every belief system someone else yes they have referred to as the Rames Dewey version of the Bible it's a very good translation I wouldn't be opposed to using it at all I think that some of the footnotes in it are very dangerous because they explain in the footnotes what I think the text is not teaching but by and large the Rames Dewey version of the Bible is a pretty good translation they of course include the 14 books of the Apocrypha between the Old and New Testament which we do not believe are and Judith and Tobit and the rest of Esther and 14 of them all together that we do not accept as canonical but they do someone else yes

Mike and then Gary well that's a very good question and there are several references but for time's sake would you would you mind holding that over for one week and I'll be glad to answer that it's a very good question it deserves a thoughtful answer Gary you had a comment or question what do the Catholics do if they believe that when they eat the wafer it becomes the flesh of Christ what do they do with verse 52 how can this man give us his flesh to eat yeah well that too is a good question but

I'm sure that they've got an answer for that and I'm sure that they would say well the preponderance of the verse is there oh yes yes yes and our Roman Catholic friends would probably say well the Jews there are just coming from a position that reflects their unbelief and and when they say how can this man give us his flesh to eat they don't know how he can give us his flesh to eat he does it through transubstantiation the conversion of the bread and the conversion of the wine and of the

bread into the blood and body of Christ that's how he gives us his flesh to eat and they believe that very sincerely believe that with them it's a required element of faith you better believe when you're receiving that wafer that you're receiving

Christ because it would be an act of disobedience if you didn't believe that and yet I think it's safe to say that there are probably numbers of Roman Catholics who don't believe that at all when they take that wafer they do it because of ritual and tradition and it makes them feel better but they don't believe that it is the actual body of Christ there are many that way but there are many who do as well someone else Carolyn oh absolutely right no no no no non Catholic is able to receive the the elements at a Roman Catholic service you you are not qualified and they're just being consistent with their position that's all you know this is this is only for the faithful and you know and and yet at the same time

[67:16] I am sure I am sure Carolyn that there are renegade Catholics and renegade Catholic priests there are there are Catholic priests who give the Vatican fits you know that and there are some bishops who are really hard to rein in and they give them fits too these are considered renegades or bulls in the china shop or whatever and they really they really stir up things and I'm sure there are Roman Catholics to extend the Eucharist to a non-Catholic now don't ask me for any names I can't find but I bet you I could come up with a couple but I don't know any off the top of my head that's just how liberal some of them are and yet you find Roman Catholics who are clear over at this extreme very very conservative and they oppose the saying of the mass in English or the vernacular they think and then there are

Roman Catholics clear over here on this side of the spectrum just like there are liberals and conservatives among Protestants and among Jews and among Muslims it works that way so may we stand please Father we want to thank you for the simplicity that is in Christ how that we are justified on the basis of faith simply believing in who Jesus Christ is and what he did and why it matters thank you for the privilege of being able to exercise with our mind and with our spirit a personal trust and faith in Jesus Christ and Father we pray for any dear soul here today whether Protestant Catholic or nothing but looking for answers and looking for truth we pray that they will see the person of Jesus Christ and his substitutionary death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection as being the very thing necessary in order to secure their eternal life and may they as an act of their will even now say

Lord Jesus there's much about this that I don't understand but I do understand one thing I am not worthy to stand in your presence my sin would prevent me from ever being accepted by you but because Jesus Christ died for my sin to pay the penalty that I could never pay I want to put my trust in your blessed son as an act of my will I write here and now want to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ask him for his eternal life and thank him for dying on that cross for me pray that you will open my heart and mind allow me to appreciate and understand these truths and to be sent on my way rejoicing for the great forgiveness that I have in Christ in Christ alone amen a to be as as as as as as as as