

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 8, John 6:1-71

6-Min. Video Overview

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Alright, today we're diving into one of the most pivotal and, let's be honest, one of the most difficult chapters in the New Testament, John chapter 6. Using Dr. David Turner's analysis as our roadmap, we're going to unpack a miracle meal that leads to a teaching so shocking it caused a mass exodus of his followers. So what exactly happened? Let's get right into it. So when you open up the New Testament, you've got the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

They tell a lot of the same stories, of course, but each one has its own unique moments. But there's one miracle in particular that really stands out from all the rest. And that's this one, the feeding of the 5,000.

The fact that this event shows up in all four Gospels is a huge clue from the authors. They're basically screaming at us, hey, pay attention, this one is absolutely essential. But it's what happens after the meal in John's telling that makes everything so incredibly complicated.

Okay, so Jesus just miraculously fed this giant crowd with a tiny bit of food. You'd think this would lead to some huge spiritual breakthrough, right? Well, that's not what happens. Not even close.

The crowd's reaction actually sparks a major conflict because they see the miracle, but they completely miss the meaning behind it. And here is the fundamental disconnect. The crowd sees someone who can solve their physical problems, you know, a political king who can provide endless food.

They even try to force him to be their king. But Jesus's whole point was something else entirely. For him, the miracle was a spiritual sign supposed to point people toward God.

He just wasn't the kind of Messiah they were looking for, so he literally had to escape from them. So the crowd eventually tracks him down. But instead of giving them another free meal, Jesus confronts them head-on about their motives.

He pivots from their obsession with physical bread to a metaphor so bizarre and challenging it would have been deeply, deeply offensive to everyone listening. And there it is. That's the line that changes everything.

I mean, the language just sounds like cannibalism. And for his Jewish audience, the whole idea of drinking blood was a horrifying violation of their law, something strictly forbidden. This statement was absolutely designed to be shocking, which of course leaves everyone scratching their heads and asking, what on earth is he talking about? Is this a literally insane command? Is it some kind of secret code? This is the puzzle at the very heart of the chapter and it has massive, massive consequences.

The fallout from this teaching is immediate, and it is dramatic. The crowd is so offended, so unable to process the bizarre imagery, the people just start leaving in droves. We're not talking about a few confused people here.

This was a major shift, a huge turning point in his ministry. You know, Dr. Turner actually calls this a centripetal force. You can literally see how the audience gets funneled down.

First, the huge crowd just walks away. Then, and this is a big deal, even many of his dedicated disciples, people who had been following him for a while, leave too. And in the end, all that's left is his most intimate core group, the Twelve.

So how are we supposed to decode this? Well, Dr. Turner's analysis really makes it clear that this jarring physical language is a powerful metaphor for a deeply spiritual reality. Jesus isn't talking about literal cannibalism, of course. He's using the most visceral, gut-punch of an analogy he can think of to explain what it really means to follow him.

And the key is right there in the structure of the chapter itself. Just look at this. In verse 40, Jesus says that whoever believes in him has eternal life and will be raised up.

Okay? Then, just a handful of verses later, he says, whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood gets the exact same rewards. See? The text itself is showing us that the spiritual act of believing is what he means by the physical metaphor of eating. But why? Why use such an extreme metaphor in the first place? Theologian John Calvin, whom Dr. Turner highlights, really puts it bluntly.

The crowd was just chasing after physical satisfaction. They run to their fodder like cattle. So Jesus uses the language of food to force them to think beyond their stomachs and start considering a much deeper spiritual kind of nourishment.

So that funnel finally narrows all the way down to just the 12. Just try to picture the scene. The huge crowds are gone.

Even some of their friends have left. And Jesus turns to this tiny group and basically asks, so are you guys going to leave too? He forces them to make a choice. And right there, we see two completely different paths emerge from inside his closest circle.

First up, Simon Peter has this amazing, heroic moment. He speaks for the group, and he essentially says, look, this is confusing. I get it.

But where else would we possibly go? He's managed to see past the difficult metaphor to the spiritual truth behind it. Only Jesus has the words that lead to eternal life. It's just a profound statement of faith when everyone else is walking away.

But that moment of clarity is just shattered almost immediately. Right after Peter's declaration, Jesus follows it up with this absolutely chilling statement. He reveals that even here in this tiny, loyal group, the teaching has created a divide.

One of them, Judas, is still physically standing there, but he has already spiritually rejected the message. The great sifting isn't over. It goes right to the very heart of the group.

And that really brings us to the final question, doesn't it? This whole story highlights a basic human tension. The crowd wanted someone who would meet all their material needs, a provider. They couldn't handle a prophet who demanded spiritual change.

So the question that remains for us is: when we approach faith today, which one are we really looking for?