



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 6: 52-71

Spring 2022

"The Truth That Divides"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, it's good to have you back. Well, we're in John chapter 6. Some, I know, are visiting this morning and it's good to have you here. Some old friends are here and it was very good to have Dr. Beale with us, an old friend from seminary; he and I ministered here together for some years.

I couldn't help but think as he was teaching on the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3, what a parallel there is, or connection there is, with this great text in the Gospel of John. It doesn't surprise us when you find these connections from one passage to another, but nevertheless it's here and I think you may see that as we go through the remainder of this chapter.

We're going to look at verses 52 through 71. This is the day after, and the end of the day after the Lord's fourth miracle when He took a few loaves and fishes and broke it in pieces and fed a vast multitude of people. 5000 is the number that's given, but that's probably on the low side of it. It's probably more like 20,000 people, counting women and children.

The miracle so impressed them that they wanted to make Him king. Well, He diffused all of that and they found Him the next day in a synagogue in Capernaum, and He's been teaching them and saying, as we see in verse 51,

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Now I can guarantee you, if Dr. Beale had said that, 'Eat My flesh', and as the Lord will say, "Drink My blood" you would have left immediately! This is the way the Lord preached; this sets Him apart. Well, He got a reaction, verse 52,

⁵²Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³So 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. ⁵⁴He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

⁵⁹These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

⁶⁰Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" ⁶¹But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? ⁶²*What* then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. ⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

⁶⁶As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do

you?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

John 6: 52-71

This is something you see all through the Gospel. You see it later on in the trial; the arrest and the trial of Jesus, He knows everything, He is in complete control of everything. He is absolutely calm and directs the events—and that's our Savior. He's the second Person of the Trinity, very God of very God. Well hopefully, we will honor Him this morning.

(Message) One of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, and one that's prominent in the Gospel of John, is 'the perseverance of the saints', also known as 'eternal security'. Once a person believes in Christ, he or she can never be lost; Christ is forever the believer's Savior. That means, as the late Dr. Edwin Palmer put it in his book, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, "It is possible to get your eternal destiny settled once for all, so that you never have to worry about it. Perseverance of the saints emphasizes that Christians, and all Christians are saints, that they will persevere, that they will continue trusting in Christ as their God and Savior. They will believe to the end."

Now that is true, and I think there's nothing more encouraging, and really nothing more important if a person wants to grow than that great truth—that a believer in Christ is eternally secure.

But that doesn't mean that the Christian life is a soft life. It isn't. It's filled with challenges daily. Just like an assayer of precious metals tests the quality of gold and silver to determine the quality or genuineness of it, so too our faith is continually tested to purify its quality, or verify it's genuineness.

Tests may come in hardship or even in comfort; by opposition to the faith, persecution, or in materialism; the allure of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth and pleasure. It's what the Lord taught in His parable of the sower, (or the parable of the soils), in Matthew chapter 13. Affliction or worldly worries show the true nature of a person's faith, either authentic or inauthentic.

That also occurs with doctrine. There is truth that divides people. It separates true faith from false. And we see that very clearly in our text this morning, John chapter 6, verses 52 through 71. The crowd that had been so eager to follow Jesus and make Him their king when He fed them loaves and fishes, was now beginning to grumble over His teaching. He told them that He had 'come down from heaven', suggesting something supernatural about Himself, something divine. —They didn't like that. Then He told them that He was "the living bread", and that they must "eat" Him to have eternal life. (vs51). And that disturbed them even more.

John wrote, in verse 52 that, "...the Jews *began* to argue with one another", and it was a heated argument. This word translated *argue* means *to fight*. And so a stormy debate occurred among them as they began saying to one another, "How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?" (vs52b). And admittedly that is a hard statement, shocking on the face of it. But none of these people were so dense as to suppose that Jesus was actually advocating something unethical, something completely contrary to the Law—like cannibalism.

This was figurative language; not at all uncommon in the Old Testament where we read of the prophets doing such things as 'eating God's words', or 'eating His scroll'. You see that, for example, in Jeremiah 15:16; and you have it in Ezekiel chapter 3; he 'eats the scroll, and it was like honey in his mouth.' (vs3). So they were familiar with this language.

But they didn't like the language He used, so they were arguing about what He meant. And the arguments were heated. It only got worse when, in the next verse, (vs53), Jesus answered their complaint by repeating His requirement in even stronger

language; telling them that they also had to 'drink His blood.' His purpose was not to inflame the crowd but to give clarity to their understanding. 'Unless they ate His flesh and drank His blood', He said, 'they would have no life in them.' But He added, in verse 54, "He who eats of My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." He promised that earlier in verse 40, where He said, "...everyone who *beholds* the Son and *believes* in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." 'Eating' and 'drinking' are the same as *beholding* and *believing*.

The language here is stronger but the point is the same. We appropriate Christ, we appropriate His life through faith. And what we believe about Christ, what we believe in, when we believe in Christ, is stated in the words *flesh* and *blood*. They express unmistakably His true nature, His real humanity. He came down from heaven, leaving His eternal place by taking upon Himself our nature, true flesh, so that He could die for us.

That's what blood indicates, His death, but it's not just any death, a violent death, the death of sacrifice. It's blood separated from body, it's blood separated from flesh and poured out, shed blood. Faith must be in Him as the God-man who died in our place, who suffered God's righteous, just, wrath as a man for people—in their place as our substitute. He took it so that we wouldn't. That is essential to know and believe.

And to make that clear, He put this in colorful language: That the object of saving faith is in the crucified Savior, who died as our substitute, who died in our place in judgment. He calls that "true food" in verse 55 because it gives eternal life.

They wanted food like the bread and the fish that He gave them the day before; and they wanted food even more like that manna that was given to their fathers in the desert day after day. What He was offering is spiritual food, infinitely better food. And as He said, that life, eternal life, has the promise of resurrection because eternal life is for both soul and body; for a forgiven, pure soul and a glorified, pure body. Now what a promise that is; what a hope!

If you were listening to Dr. Beale this morning, you'll remember he talked about how aging occurs. Look at your high school annual and say, "That's what I used to look

like. How did I get this way?" It happens gradually. And the more it happens, the more you realize, "Well, I've got something to look forward to. This is going to be transformed. I have eternal life in Christ. It's unending life, but it's glorious life, too." That's our hope, and we could spend the whole hour on that.

But He not only promises glory to come in the future but transforming power now, in the present. Jesus said in verse 56, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." Now I often say this, and you see here particularly, "Grammar is important." And it is here: In verse 53, the words *eat* and *drink* are in what's called the 'aorist tense', (which is just a simple past tense), which indicates action at a point in time, and refers to saving faith, the initial faith.

But here, (vs56), the words are in the present tense, indicating continuous action and referring to our life in Christ and our present sanctification. When we believe in Christ, we are united with Him and He with us the moment we believe. We enter into a personal and permanent relationship with Him as well; we *abide* in Him. We live in Him as we constantly feed on Him. That's the way to sanctification, to spiritual growth and holiness. And that's what He's speaking of in this text, this passage, this verse.

It's been likened to marriage: The distinction between the aorist tense and the present tense, the initial faith and what follows. There is an initial commitment. The couple appears before the altar and they give their vows to one another. But that's not the end of it. That's just the beginning. At that moment they enter into a lifelong union and relationship at that very moment—and that continues on, together; and their commitment, as it continues on, will be strengthened and grow.

And that's the way it is for us in Christ. His commitment to us, to His people, is infinite and endless. It is from eternity past, without beginning. And it's full and complete and infinite in its nature. It's eternal and infinite, so it doesn't grow. It can't grow, it's complete.

But our commitment began with the new birth and our union with Him; and it grows stronger as we abide in Him, as we live in Him and faithfully develop in our relationship with Him. That takes commitment on our part: Takes discipline, takes study.

That's suggested here in the word *eat*. (vs56, *trogo*). (It's a different word from the previous word 'eat', (vs51 *esthio*)). This 'eat' means to 'gnaw' or 'munch'. It's like a cow munching or chewing on grass. And we talk like this: The teacher may introduce us to a new idea, something that we've not thought about before and he may see some confusion on our face. And so he'll say something like, "Well, chew on that awhile." In other words, 'Think about it, meditate on it.'

And that's what we do in our relationship with the Lord. Like a cow munching on grass we contemplate the Scriptures, we meditate upon them, we think about them; and in doing that we think about Christ—and in doing that we get to know Him.

Later on, in John 17, verse 3, Jesus is praying to the Father. He defines eternal life in this way when He said, (and you by now should know this verse well, I repeat it quite a bit), "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Eternal life is not only a future hope, it is a present reality.

And knowing Him is what it's about. We know Him by seeing Him in Scripture. We experience Him as we walk, live day by day faithfully to His Word. Through that, we are "transformed"; that's 2 Corinthians 3:18, "from glory to glory", Paul says. Increasingly, more and more of Christ is in our lives, which means we become more and more the people that God created us to be; and more and more content and more and more useful. And it won't end in this life; we'll never reach the completion of that but we begin to experience it—and it accelerates as life goes on. It should, if we're faithful.

Now that's what Jesus was offering this crowd. Think of that! He's offering them a relationship with Him—which means He was offering them a relationship with God Almighty, their Creator, their Savior. He was offering them a relationship with the Triune

God, the only God of the universe, a relationship with Him that never ends. Verse 58, "He who eats this bread will live forever."

What could be better than that? Manna? Material well-being? Temporal riches and health that fade and turn to dust? Hardly that! No, He was offering them eternal life and resurrection by telling them the only way to have it. What a great promise—but they were not receptive.

As He finished speaking the people began to leave the synagogue, grumbling. They're described as "disciples" in verse 60, but these disciples are a wider group of followers than the 12, more like 'fellow travelers' than genuine disciples. They were drawn to the Lord by His ministry up there in Galilee—which was a ministry of miracles. And He was teaching; no one taught like the Lord did.

But as He taught them here, they realized He wasn't what they wanted after all. His teaching was "difficult", they said, and they wondered "who can listen to it?" (vs60). And so the Lord asked them, "Does this cause you to stumble?", (or, 'does this offend you?'), (vs61). Now that indicates that what Jesus taught them was not so much hard to understand, (it wasn't like it was arcane), as hard to take. It was not confusion that bothered them, it was clarity; it was what they understood that troubled them.

The idea that He was greater than Moses?! That He'd come down from heaven!, was something they could not accept. He was a carpenter, dressed like a carpenter, He's the son of a carpenter; they knew His family.

Then the idea that He is 'the bread of life', that, 'salvation is in Him' offended them because it suggested that they needed to be saved. Well, they're Israelites; they don't need to be saved!

But it's His statement that they could only have life through Him—which meant not by their works, not by their efforts, not by their attendance in the synagogue; and the whole idea of *inability* here, that is restated over and over again—*inability*...now all of that was impossible to take! The idea that men must be *given* by the Father and that

God must *draw* them, and that apart from His grace, no one can come to Him...that was unacceptable!

It all ran contrary, counter to, their way of thinking—just as it does today. People still have trouble with these very issues. The Bible is so relevant. You see how it is so contemporary, whether you go to Genesis or to the Gospels, it's all contemporary. The same problems they had then, we have now.

Today it's 'Calvinism' that they don't like, (or that's what some call it). Others call it 'sovereign grace': The idea that salvation is a gift, that faith is a gift, that we must be brought to Christ and we come to Christ by faith alone: *Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling*, that's offensive. It's a blow to pride. Men like to think that they're okay; 'I'm okay, you're okay.'

It's been that way from the beginning. Since Cain brought his offering of the fruit of the ground, what he had sown and what he had reaped—what he had done; rather than a slain lamb, rather than go to his brother and ask for a lamb. He could not do that, not his younger brother. What he had done, 'Was adequate, was good, was better.' — Now, that's the natural man. We see it here because the Lord was teaching on grace and these people found it to be "a difficult statement", 'hard to listen to, hard to take, impossible to accept.'

So the Lord responded to their complaint with a question, "Does this cause you to stumble? *What* then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" (vs61-62). Well you might think that would lead to faith in them.

Well, here's His meaning: If His claim to come down from heaven offended them, how will they respond when He returns to heaven? Would they believe then or would that make it more difficult?

Now think how He would go to heaven, how He would make His ascension. His ascension would come and would occur by means of the cross. The way up, was first down, into the grave. But more, I think, to the point is that He would descend into

humiliation and crucifixion, which was a stumbling block to the Jews—and to the Gentiles as well. So if His claim was offensive while He was in Galilee doing miracles and teaching great sermons, what would they think when they saw Him hanging on a cross like a common criminal?

That really is the critical question for everyone: What do you do with the crucified Christ? Accept Him—or reject Him? Which is it? The way people answer that question determines their destiny. But it's truth that offends, it's truth that divides. We don't try to offend, we try to be clear and encouraging. But the truths of the cross and sovereign grace inevitably offend the natural man and divide people.

So how can anyone come to Christ? How can anyone 'eat and drink' Him, believe what they naturally disbelieve? How do they come to believe what they naturally think is false? How do they come to want what they naturally think is bad? How does that change occur?

Only by sovereign grace. The Lord says it again in verse 63, "It is the Spirit who gives life." He quickens the soul. He changes the heart. He illuminates the mind. Otherwise they, and we, and everyone, will remain in unbelief. We cannot believe in a crucified Savior apart from grace.

And Jesus reinforced that in verse 65 by repeating that controversial statement He made earlier, "No one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." "No one can come", they cannot come, "unless it has been granted him from the Father." The Lord did nothing here to tone down His message and make it palatable for the crowd. He gave them a straight, clear, and strong dose of the truth.

And they didn't like it. John recorded their response in verse 66, that as a result of this, "...many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."

Truth separates the genuine from the false. The response of these disciples showed that they were not real disciples—because true disciples believe. His words may

be hard for us. You read through the Bible and you are going to find difficult passages, things that puzzle you. You don't have a ready answer for them; and you find that periodically throughout the Word of God.

So what's the right response to that? Is it just cast it aside and say, "Well, I can't believe this." No, it's to recognize that what the Scriptures say, just as what the Lord said here, is true. And then go to the Lord and ask Him to teach you that truth, help you to understand, help your faith.

The crowd in the synagogue didn't do that. They became angry, rejected His teaching, and withdrew from Him. They walked out of His sermon and left the synagogue.

Suddenly it's just the twelve and Jesus; and that itself was a test for these remaining disciples. It was a test because it's nice to be part of a popular movement; it's nice to be part of the majority. But when it becomes unpopular and you're left alone, that can be hard. The excitement of the day before had gone out of everything; and the thrill the disciples had the day before was gone.

Now that was a test, as I said, so the Lord turned to the twelve with a question: "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (vs67). Now He wasn't asking for the sake of gaining information. He wasn't worried about the situation and what might happen next. It wasn't as though He thought, "What did I say? Shouldn't have said that. What's going to happen with these guys?" He knew what was going on. He wasn't worried. John wrote in verse 64 that, "Jesus knew from the beginning who they, (*the unbelievers*), were...", and in fact, "...who it was that would betray Him." He knows everything; and He knows the hearts of His people. He knows the hearts of those who aren't His people, but He knew the hearts of every one of the twelve right there. He knew His disciples. His question wasn't for Himself. His question was really a challenge for them. They needed to affirm their commitment to Him.

And Peter did that for all of them. "Lord", he said, "to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and come to know that You are the Holy

One of God." (vs68-69). Peter may not have understood everything that the Lord had said to His disciples, there may have been some confusion in his mind. There probably was but he believed that Jesus is Lord, and believed that He is "the Holy One of God." And so where else could he go? Who else could he turn to? The promise of eternal life is in Christ and in Christ alone. He could go nowhere else. He knew that—and that's the only answer that the disciple and the believer can give.

When the conquistador Hernando Cortez landed on the coast of Mexico with 700 men, the first thing he did was burn the ships. The message was clear. There's no going back to the Old World, only going forward into the New World. And for the Christian, there's no going back to the old life, no retreat from the challenges of this present world. We can only go forward with our Captain, the Author of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know that because we believe the words of Christ. Rather than divide us from Him, those words unite us to Him. His words strengthen the believer to persevere in that belief, to continue on in faith and grow in faith. And the genuine believer will.

It doesn't mean there won't be struggles—there will be. And there will be setbacks in the faith; Peter is a great example of that. After this marvelous confession that he just gave, he'll suffer a spiritual breakdown the night of Christ's arrest and trial—he would desert Him. He would run away, gain some strength back, and then he'd go follow the Lord into the courtyard of the high priest. And there it would all break down again, he'd deny the Lord three times just as the Lord said he would. The Lord knows everything.

The doctrine of 'The perseverance of the saints' doesn't mean that Christians are sinless. It doesn't promise that we will march to heaven on a straight, upward line. Not at all. Edwin Palmer described our faith as being more like a small boy climbing a snowy hill. He'd frequently slip and then he manages to get up and finally reach the top.

I could appreciate that illustration that he gave because when I was a boy, (I grew up in the north, in Kansas City), around November things started getting really cold; and

then in December and January and February, there's snow on the ground. We would grab our sleds and we would go to the hill, wherever it was. There was one in front of my house, but there was a better one where the high school was. And you'd go there and get up on the hill and slide down. And then, what would you do? You'd climb back up the hill. But it wasn't that easy, I'd be slipping and falling, but you got to the top because you wanted to get there...so you could get back down again.

Well, that's the Christian life. We all have ups and downs, days of confidence and times of doubt; but the saint prevails. Charles Spurgeon compared the Christian to a man onboard a ship: He may be knocked down on the deck by the waves again and again; but he's never washed overboard.

Paul affirms that, that the Christian life has struggles, and the waves knock us down. But he wrote in Romans chapter 6, verse 14, "Sin shall not be master over you." It won't conquer the believer. Why? Well, it's not because of our own strength or because the saint has strong spiritual balance, (although we should develop that, and we will develop that as we progress in the faith and mature as Christians). But that's not why we persevere; it's because, as Paul also wrote in Romans 6, verse 14, "You...are under grace." Which is to say the Christian is always under the care and power of the Lord God. It never stops. There's no break in it.

Adding to Spurgeon's analogy, the saint is not washed overboard because he is attached to a safety line that keeps him, or her, tethered to the ship. And what is that safety line? It's the Lord God; it's the Triune God. And He'll develop that, the Lord will, later in chapter 10 when He talks about being "the good shepherd", He keeps us in the faith. And because we have a new mind, a new nature, because we have eternal life, we believe His Word, we believe the Gospel, and we believe His promises; and we will not fail to believe—that's grace.

And that explains the division here. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, (vs16), that the Gospel message is "...to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life." Why is this Gospel the perfume of life to you? It's because the

Holy Spirit has given you life. It's because the Holy Spirit has given you ears to hear and eyes to see, and a heart to understand and believe. And it's times like this, like this in John chapter 6, that test a person's faith and prove it to be true.

With the true disciple and believer there is no real possibility of retreat. We can only, by God's grace, go forward. And Peter committed himself to doing that by vowing allegiance to Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." (vs68). He spoke for all of them. All 12 of them—all but one. And the Lord knew that. Peter didn't, but the Lord knew that. He Himself knew what was in man, as John wrote back in chapter 2, and He said here, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil." (vs70).

He was speaking of Judas Iscariot, of course, who would betray Him. He knew the heart of Judas, when it was a secret to others, when he appeared to be a true disciple, a loyal and committed follower of Christ, who'd stood firm during a crises—seemed to have stood firm here in this crisis. In fact, the Lord chose him to be one of the twelve, knowing his nature, knowing the treachery that he would commit from the very beginning—which shows what I mentioned earlier, His absolute sovereign control over everything.

But the fact that there was an enemy among the 12 disciples should alert us to that potential danger. Wolves come in among the flock disguised as sheep and what each of us needs to do is guard our hearts. That was Paul's counsel to the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20, verse 28. "Be on guard for yourselves," he said. And then he adds, "and for all the flock."

But also the example of Judas is sobering. He was a man who walked with Christ for three years, heard His teaching, saw His miracles, participated in miracles, and was very close to Him, personally—but unsaved. People can enjoy great privilege without ever having believed. Peter said, "We have believed," but Judas hadn't.

Coming to church, growing up in a Christian home, having believing parents, is a great privilege. I don't know that there's a greater privilege for an unbeliever to have than to have that privilege of a believing family; to be in that with believing parents. But that is no guarantee of salvation. You must personally trust in Christ as God's Son and your Savior. And then, by God's grace, having done that, cultivate that relationship to grow in Christ, meditate on Him, pray to the Lord and live a life of obedience. That's a lot in one sentence, but that's what we must do. That's the life of a disciple. There is no returning to the old life. When you trust in Christ, you 'burn your ships and the way back to the Old World'. It doesn't exist for you anymore.

Are you a new creation? Yes, you are, if you put your faith in Christ. You've entered a New World, a new life, and you can only go forward in that new life, following Christ, the captain of our salvation who leads us through this world, and is leading us to glory to come. And as we do that, and as we think about that, our following of Christ should be a following that we do gladly, thankfully.

It's not always an easy life. It's a very hard life. It's full of trials and monster waves that wash over us and test our faith. But the Lord will keep us and bless us through it all. That's grace, sovereign grace.

And as we understand grace; that God chose us from all eternity before we'd done anything good or evil, before we had any existence, when He chose us knowing what we would become, knowing that we would be ruined by the fall; and sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who came gladly, willingly to purchase us, to die for us while we were helpless, while we were ungodly—when we understand that, that we were no different from Judas in an of ourselves, and that He saved us, well, then we will gladly follow Him. And then we will serve Him, not out of compulsion, not out of obligation, but out of gratitude and a heartfelt desire to do so.

Do you find all of this distasteful? If you feel yourself being divided from Christ and His teaching and what you thought was Christ, and what you thought was His

teaching, that should tell you a lot about yourself. You're not a disciple. You're with the crowd. Being with the crowd is a comfortable place to be, in the present—but it's a dangerous place to be.

Christ alone has the words of eternal life. And you can have that only by believing in Him as God's eternal Son, who became a man to die in our place. And He did that; He accomplished salvation once and for all. "It is finished," He declared; and that's who your faith must be in. May God help you to believe if you've not. If you've not, trust in Him and live, now and forever.

Father, what a great truth that is, and what a pleasure it is to sing it and know that it's true, that Your love is unending. The love of the Triune God is unending. You chose us when we were lost, when we had no hope. Your Son purchased us in that condition. And the Spirit who has sealed us will never let that seal be broken, never let us go.

Now that should not encourage any kind of laxness in our faith or disobedience. Just the opposite; if we truly understand it and we are Your people, we will see that as a great incentive to live for You. Thank You for the privilege of being able to do that, to live for You and be a light in the midst of a very, very dark generation. Bless us with that kind of courage that our Lord showed as He preached to this multitude of unbelievers. May we be clear in our beliefs, both in what we say and how we live. That's Your grace. And we can only do it by Your grace, so we pray for that. Bless us.

Bless us as we go, and bless our service that soon follows, as we take the Lord's Supper and remember His death for us. We thank You for Christ.

And now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)