

# Joyful Self-Forgetfulness in Christ

*John 6:56-69*

- Intro:

**What is the key to our lives? Is it in us, or is it somewhere else?** The key to our lives is **NOT** in us but is in Jesus. Jesus is not only the complete, full, tabglibe revelation of who God is but also the revelation of who ... we **are** and ... who we are **meant** to be. We learn our true purpose and meaning **NOT** by focusing on ourselves. Christians believe that one of the great gifts of the Christian faith is that we are rescued from our self-obsession and our self-preoccupation to turn toward Christ, the true destiny of our selves.

- ME

I am always working hard to be the best me I can be. That does not mean I don't have a long way to go, though. But I am doing what I can to be better than I was. I can't do it alone. I can't muster the wisdom, the strength, the motivation, the whatever on my own. Sometimes I've just got to forget myself and rely on someone or something outside of me. I've got to rely on . . . **Who do you think? What do you think?** I've got to rely on . . . **Jesus!**

- YOU

**Who do you rely on to be the best you you can be? Have you ever considered relying on . . . Who was that again? Jesus!**

Let's look together now at what God has to say about Joyful Self-forgetfulness in Jesus in John 6:

Let's pray first...

- GOD

***John 6:56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.***

- WE

Jesus lives because of his relationship with the Father. In the same way, Jesus said, **‘the one who feeds on me will live because of me’**. To **feed** on Jesus is to **believe** in him, and those who believe experience eternal life. Did you notice that here Jesus speaks of **feeding** on **‘him’**, rather than **‘eating his flesh and drinking his blood’**, which confirms that both these expressions mean *‘to believe in him’*.

Jesus finishes his discourse:

***This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live for ever.***

Jesus himself was the true bread that came down from heaven. There was that bread from heaven in Moses' time, the manna their forebears ate, but it didn't stop them from dying.

Jesus says words that cause friction in the minds of his disciples. **What on earth can he mean by this strange talk of eating his flesh?** His disciples rightly ask, **"This message is harsh. Who can hear it?"** **"Many of his disciples turned away and no longer accompanied him."** When Jesus turns to his remaining disciples after this difficult teaching and asks, **"Do you also want to leave?"** they reply, **"Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life . . . you are God's holy one."** Jesus is the Lord in John's Gospel.

Everything in this Gospel is secondary to the claim that Jesus Christ is Lord. We don't know much about the disciples in the Gospels. John does not tell who stayed and who left. This isn't even a story about the disciples, or us. It is a story about the **light** shining in the darkness, the **bread** from heaven. In a time when many people think that they come to church to hear advice for their personal problems, this passage is a reminder of the purpose of church, the source of the gospel, the reason why we're here is . . . **Jesus**. Unlike Matthew, there are no long lists of ethical warnings in

John. **“How are Christians supposed to live their lives?”** Don’t look to the Fourth Gospel for the answer.

**Why?** This is not good news primarily about us. It’s about Jesus Christ, the bread from heaven, the one who speaks **“words of eternal life.”**

- Poet Laureate Billy Collins opened one of his poetry lectures by first bantering playfully with his audience. Telling them how wonderful it was to see them there, how great it was to see how many people were interested in poetry. Then he said, **“Now, enough of that. Let’s get this off you and focused back on me.”** He was kidding, but the audience laughed because they knew this to be true of themselves. We live where there is constant pressure to **focus** on, to be **preoccupied** with, and to **cultivate** ourselves. We all embody what Oscar Wilde said to someone at a London party, **“Come over here and sit next to me. I’m dying to tell you all about myself.”** We are the most interesting project we undertake. Through such self-absorption, humanity has not grown; it has shrunk. The value of everything is reduced to the question, **“What’s in it for me?”**  
*Martin Luther defined sin as “the heart curved in on itself.”*

Curved in on ourselves, focusing mostly on our needs, our aches and pains, we wither and die. This is the sin that infects us today. **How do we change our focus? Let me tell you a story:**

**“I would die if I didn’t get to play golf at least once a week,”** a man once told his pastor. **“Surely you exaggerate,”** said the pastor. **“Golf can’t be that great.”** **“Oh, but it is,”** he replied. **“There’s nothing better than to be out on a nice day, focusing all my attention, all my thought and affection on that little white ball. All burdens are lifted from my back; all concerns are put on the shelf. All I want to do is to get that little ball into that little hole on the green. It’s . . . wonderful!”**

I suppose that is a form of mindfulness, of being present to the moment. **Do you ever wonder what runs through my head right before I begin to preach?** The answers may surprise you. *Not much.* Before that moment, I do sometimes wonder, **How do I look? How am I going to do? Will they like what I have to say? Have I come here with the right message, at the right time, for the right people? Will they like me? Will I remember to talk slowly enough so the point gets through?** But in that moment just before I preach, I find that I am not thinking about anything except the message. Everything is caught up in focusing on the demands of the sermon. I almost become what I am trying to preach. It is a rare moment of *self-forgetfulness*. It is close to what Charles Wesley meant in his hymn when he spoke of being **“lost in wonder, love , and praise”** when one is in love with Jesus. It is like the self- forgetfulness of the golfer who becomes so obsessed with the little white ball on the green grass, preoccu-

pied with the moment, totally focused on the ball, giving the moment absolutely everything that's it deserves.

- THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE

**Faith is being self-forgetful and focusing on Jesus.**

- YOU:

**How will you be self-forgetful and focus on Jesus?**

- CLOSE:

It's not about us. It's all about Jesus. It's about God in Jesus Christ coming to us as he is, rather than how we might like him to be, speaking words we need to hear not than words we might want to hear.

**Let's pray together now and see wat he has to say...**