

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 6:36-47 | SENT FOR THIS

KEY TERMS

Heaven - For Jesus, *heaven* is the dwelling place of God (vv. 38, 41, 42). Although heaven is figuratively said to be “above” earth, it is actually a spiritual realm that is separate from the physical realm but overlaps and interacts with the physical as God sees fit.

Last day - Jesus uses this phrase *last day* to refer to the end of history as we know it when God will act decisively once and for all (vv. 39, 40, 44). Jesus’ claim is that all the Father has *given* him will *believe* in him, and ultimately will be *raise(d)* on this last day to unending resurrection life.

DID YOU KNOW?

When Jesus speaks of the Father “drawing” people to himself (v. 44), it echoes Deuteronomy 7:6-8, where God declares that he chose Israel not because of their greatness, but because of his love and faithfulness. In this teaching, Jesus is reiterating God’s sovereignty in salvation, but expanding it to the *world* (vv. 33, 51).

SYNOPSIS

After calling himself the *bread of life*, Jesus says *But...you have seen me and yet do not believe* (v. 36). The crowd sees Jesus as a mighty teacher and a potential king, but not the Son of God. Jesus anticipates that the crowd’s unbelief could be taken as a sign of failure on his part, but, he says, *All that the Father gives me will come to me* (v. 37). In other words, Jesus’ confidence for drawing people to himself with proper understanding and faith is not in the potential response of the crowds; it’s in his Father. Jesus continues to say that he has come not to do his own will—but the will of his Father—and that his Father’s will is to use the Son to draw people to himself. The flow of verses 37-40 is that everyone the Father gives to Jesus will come to him, and whoever comes Jesus will keep in or preserve until the *last day*, when Jesus will *raise* those who have come to him.

The crowd is confused and angered and says, *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, “I have come down from heaven”?* (v. 42). Their response is understandable on one hand because Jesus’ claim is blasphemy if it’s not true. But, their response is also wrong on the other hand because they’ve seen Jesus perform incredible *signs* that give validity to his claim. The problem is that they don’t *believe* (v. 36). Now Jesus says they don’t believe because the Father has not drawn them to Jesus (v. 44). Jesus then explains how it is that the Father *draws* people to Jesus, saying it is those who have *heard* and *learned* from the Father (v. 45). Jesus also quotes from Isaiah 54:13, which looks forward to a day when God himself will directly teach his people. Jesus’ point is that God doesn’t drag people to himself kicking and screaming, rather he woos and draws human beings into relationship with him. Jesus then reiterates that *whoever believes has eternal life* (v. 47).

GOING DEEPER

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-6. These passages emphasize that salvation is a work of God’s grace, not something we achieve on our own. How does this truth shape your understanding of your own faith? In what ways does knowing that God pursued and drew you to himself deepen your gratitude and trust in Him?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 6:36-47. Make some observations. What's the big idea? What surfaces tension in the passage?
2. From these verses, list all of the things the Father does.
3. From these verses, list all of the things the Son does.
4. From these verses, list all of the things that people do.
5. How would you summarize what Jesus teaching us about our salvation?

LIVING THE WORD

6. Read Romans 1:16 and Romans 10:13-17, and then consider this question: why must sharing the gospel or good news about Jesus always be at the forefront of the church's mission in our world?
7. After his resurrection, Jesus told his followers, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). He also said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

What does it look like for us to carry his mission into the world both as individuals and as the church? How is the Lord stirring your heart to play a part in God's work?

8. Spend a few minutes praying that the Lord would ignite our hearts with joy in the privilege of sharing the gospel with many people, that the Father would draw people to Jesus, and that many would believe in him for eternal life.