

SLIDE Theme: Let's Go Fishing

Object: Cell Phone

Scripture: **SLIDE** "And He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" (John 6:35 & 41 NASB)

SLIDE Ah, the telephone... I don't know how we would get along without it. It is so important to us in our day-to-day life. We use it to stay in touch with friends and loved ones; we use it to make appointments; we use it to order pizza. Today's phones are amazing! Most cell phones will do much more than just make a phone call. Some will let you send text messages and email. Some will even let you take a picture and send it to a friend. One important feature of today's phones is that a friend can call and leave a message. When that happens, your phone lets us know by saying, "You have a message." One thing that really bugs me is to call a friend and leave a message and they never return my call! What kind of friend would do that?

You and I have a friend who has left us a message. He wants us to answer His message. He has invited us to go fishing with him. Oh boy! I love to go fishing, don't you? I wonder if you can guess who that friend is? That's right! Our Lord and friend, Jesus, He left us a message that He wants us to go fishing with Him. This fishing trip will be quite different. **SLIDE** Instead of catching fish, Jesus has invited us to go fishing for people! Jesus didn't leave His message on the phone, He left his message in the Bible.

One day as Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two

brothers-Simon Peter and Andrew-throwing a net into the water because they fished for a living. Jesus called to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" **SLIDE** The Bible tells us that they immediately dropped what they were doing and followed Jesus.

As Jesus, Peter, and Andrew walked along the shore, they saw two other brothers-James and John - sitting in their boat mending nets. They called and invited them to come along too. They dropped their nets, left their boat behind, and followed Jesus.

If you have ever been fishing, you know what a thrill it is to land a big one. **SLIDE** Can you imagine what a thrill it is to go fishing for people and to help someone else come to know Jesus and become one of his followers? Even though this story in the Bible is about Jesus calling the first disciples, it is for us too. It is a message from Jesus that He wants us to go and make disciples. Will we return his call? What will our answer be?

Dear Jesus, just like Peter, Andrew, James, and John, we want to join you and go fishing for people. Help us, Jesus, to follow You and tell others about You. Amen.

Slide Two Types of Manna – Unbelief and Belief

Today we will break our study passage in two sections; first, verses 48 to 51 and the second half verses 52 to 59. Jesus makes the claim in verse 48 **Slide** “I am the bread of life.” This is the beginning of Jesus’ “I AM” statements. Jesus is using Old Testament imagery that people knew and were familiar with. In chapter one of John (1:32) it is recorded - Jesus using the image of the descending dove in a similar way as Jacobs’s ladder found in Genesis (28:12) upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending from heaven. This illustrated that Jesus is the One who God the Father has revealed to mankind and Jesus is the only intermediary between God and mankind; He is the One that descended from heaven. Paul made this clear in his letter to Timothy, **Slide** “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus.*” (1 Timothy 2:5 NASB) In chapter 3 of John (3:14 & 15) Jesus is the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness in the Book of Numbers (21:9). Here the crucifixion is portrayed and Jesus’ work upon the cross is that which saves men and women and they are healed from the serpent’s bite of sin. **Blank** Now here in chapter 6, Jesus uses the imagery of the “bread of life”, the new manna, by which, the new people of God are fed spiritually. There are two types of manna; the manna the Jewish people fed upon in the wilderness that sustained physical life, but eventually all these people died. Now, there is the manna Jesus is and gives, this manna or bread of life is spiritual food that sustains life forever. As the “Bread” that descended from heaven Jesus is able to satisfy the deepest needs of the human soul. Jesus satisfies our needs and sometimes our wants, but not all our wants.

Just as we, as parents, meet the true needs of our children, but not all of their wants. My children thought they needed candy, lots of candy and they thought they should stay up late and watch TV. They thought they did not need to clean their room or make the bed or do their homework. If Joyce and I given them what they thought their needs were, they would have grown up to be obnoxious. So what is it a child needs? It certainly is not what the child thinks they need. Actually the child needs discipline, to be taught right from wrong, that they are loved and how to love others, to share their toys, to have goals and encouragement to achieve the goals. Jesus meets our true needs; He loves us, we are taught right from wrong, to love others more than ourselves. Jesus gives us the safety of knowing our salvation is permanent, He guides us and encourages us. What this passage teaches is if we feed upon Jesus, we will grow into strong mature Christians.

In verse 51 Jesus is speaking of the Cross, when he says, **“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and Slide the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”** Jesus will give Himself **for the life of the world**. It is important that Jesus is preparing people and referring to His dying on the Cross, for without the cross Jesus would simply not be of much use to mankind in general or to us in specific. His life would be one to be admired, as many in the world do, but it would not have been the life that saves people and brings them back into fellowship with God. Jesus not only speaks of the cross here, but here He foreshadows the future; the future was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross and rose again conquering death and to live eternally offering His flesh for salvation to mankind. Blank

Verses 49 to 51 not only contain Christ’s claim – that claim is - He is from God, He is the Bread of Life and He is God, but these verses also put forth a requirement on us. That requirement is that we must feed upon Him. Now here lies a separating point

for those who claim to be Christian. What does it mean to feed upon Jesus as the Bread of Life? It means to believe in Jesus as one's Lord and Savior. Commit one's life in service to Him as His slave – He paid for us on the Cross and owns our very souls, but only the souls of those that have been given to Him by God the Father. If you have been called by God and given to Jesus, then He lives in you and becomes part of you, and you are no longer who you were for you have been infused with Christ by the indwelling of your soul, your very being, your very essence by God the Holy Spirit. You no longer have a right to yourself – you are Jesus' property. Verse 37 speaks of coming to Jesus. I ask, "Have you truly come to Him?" **Slide** Americans think they are self-made, but Christians know they are not. To truly be a Christian is in many ways is to be non-American or any other nationality for that matter. The devil knows the scriptures better than you or I, he knows who Jesus is, but he hates Jesus. Knowing whom Jesus is and knowing the scriptures is not what makes you are a Christian. To know if you are a Christian you need to answer these questions, have you surrendered your body, mind and soul to Jesus? Have you surrendered your ego and ambition to Jesus? To be Christian means to no longer live for you, but to live for Christ. Do you completely and truly believe as the Apostle Paul did when he said, **Slide** "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21 NASB) This is where the rubber meets the road. This is the proof in the putting. This is the goal of what we have come to label as the process of **Slide** sanctification. Are you growing in Christ? If so, as you grow, are you letting go of anything that is of your sinful self? Are you coming to Christ with empty hands that are open, hiding nothing and showing that you have nothing to offer? Are you feeding upon and receiving His righteousness? If this is **not, not** what your life is, if this is **not** the process you are living; the struggling to let go of the world and to let Christ take over your life – then you must ask yourself do you truly believe in Christ or are you one of those who

knows about Christ. You must eat to physically live and likewise you must, must feed upon Christ to spiritually live. I ate of this world and found it empty and lacking. I had achieved many things and won accolades from men and yet I was not satisfied. It was this unmet satisfaction and my spiritual hunger that drove me towards Jesus and gave me a hunger to read the scriptures. This was the Lord's doing and I fought Him and dug in my heels, but He had called me and my love for Him and for His truth grew until I was in love with Him so deeply I had to have Him and let go of the right to myself – who can resist His effectual call? The world may give satisfaction at times or for periods of time, but Jesus is the only One who satisfies completely and for eternity. I was blind to my condition before Christ regenerated my soul because I was spiritually dead. But now that I am spiritually alive in Christ I know and see exactly what I was before He saved me and I would never want to go back.

Do you understand knowledge is not enough? You must feed upon Jesus. Have you ever eaten too much garlic? It begins to come out of your pores and anyone that comes close knows you have been eating garlic. I am telling you that you must feed upon Jesus until His essence so completely fills you that it comes out in everything you do and are. No one will doubt that you are feeding upon and living upon our Lord Jesus and you have surrendered your life to Him. I hope now you understand the full meaning of verse 51, **Slide** “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.” **Blank**

Many take this next section of verses and tie them to the Lord's Supper. Think of this and if it is right to relate these verses to the Lord's Supper as I read verses 52 to 59. “Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’⁵³ So 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.’⁵⁴ He

who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.’ ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.” Is this passage speaking of the **Slide** Lord’s Supper? It is

certainly how the Catholic and Orthodox would see it. During the Communion Service when an ordained priest blesses the bread and wine, they believe, these elements literally are transformed into the flesh and blood of Jesus. Others see the Lord’s Supper as a mere memorial to remember what Jesus did. However, we as a body of believers, our view is that Jesus is actually present in the Lord’s Supper, but that His presence is spiritual. We often say God’s presence is everywhere. But this does not mean He is physically present in objects, but that He is spiritually present throughout the universe and specifically present in every believer.

I do **not** believe that Jesus is speaking of the Lord’s Supper here in these verses.

Why? First, at the time He is speaking here He has not taught on the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper had not been instituted yet. Secondly, here Jesus is addressing unbelievers, and the Lord’s Supper is for Christians only. Thirdly, because Jesus is speaking here of eating and drinking unto salvation, while the eating and drinking of the Lord’s Supper is for those already saved. Fourth, Jesus is speaking here of the indwelling when someone becomes saved and one is already indwelt and saved when a believer celebrates the Lord’s Supper. Finally, in my opinion, there are thousands of people who partake in the Lord’s Supper every week and do not possess eternal life in Jesus because they know “of” Him but do not believe “in” Jesus as the Christ as we have just discussed – they have not surrendered their lives

to Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Here is the question one must answer, Is the eating of Christ's flesh and drinking of His blood referring to what Jesus has been speaking of in John chapter 6? Jesus has been saying that men and women must, must, **Slide** "believe" in Him as we read in verses 29, 35 and 47. They must **Slide** "come" to Him as seen in verse 35. They must **Slide** "see" Him as found in verse 40. They must **Slide** "hear" and **Slide** "learn of" Him as we read in verse 45. All of these words – believe, come, see, hear and learn of - give definition of what we call **Slide** living by "faith". Believe, come, see, hear and learn of are all verbs, they are words of action and their action results in living by faith. The Greek word for **Slide** "faith" is *pistis* (pis'-tis) and is a noun. The Greek word for **Slide** "believe" is *pisteuo* (pist-yoo'-o) and it comes from the noun *pistis* (pis'-tis) and is the verb form. **Slide** The action of believing - results in living by faith. This brings us to understand the old saying, "You are what you eat." Then I ask, are you feeding on the world and your own ego or are you feeding upon the Savior, our Lord Jesus? Are you living for Christ in a covenant relationship? Many people do not understand what a covenant is, this is evident in the number of divorces in our society. The divorce rate among those labeling themselves Christian is over 50%. **Slide** Webster says a "covenant" is "a formal written agreement between two or more people, businesses, countries, etc." The 1828 Webster Dictionary says a covenant is "A mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing; a contract; stipulation. A covenant is created by deed in writing, sealed and executed; or it may be implied in the contract." In other words a **Slide** covenant is a solemn promise that should never be broken. God's covenant with mankind is never broken. He has written it in the scriptures so that mankind cannot change it, but also that we may know it and what His covenant promise is to us. We need to accept, believe and live the covenant with Christ if we truly believe

in Him. **Blank**

If Jesus is not real to you as is written in Philippians, **Slide** “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”, then have you made a covenant with Jesus? In this next illustration I refer to the bride for relationship to how the scriptures presents this idea, but it also applies to the husband. **Slide** The bride promises herself to her husband. In America before the ceremony the bride can do, as she likes. She makes decisions for herself and in fact, if she wants too she can cancel the wedding up to the moment she says her vow. However, once the ceremony begins and she speaks her vows and is pronounced wife, she is no longer her own. She is no longer simply the bride, but wife. The groom says his vow and he is no longer groom, but husband and equally belongs to the wife.

Apply this to the scriptures – Jesus is the forever-faithful covenant lover and bridegroom of the church, and you and I are His covenant bride. It is Jesus who has courted us and wooed us. We did not choose Him, but He chose us. It is Jesus who sought to marry us and He pronounced His vows in eternity long before the foundation of the world. In eternity past Jesus said, “I, Jesus, take thee, Bill, Joyce, Mark, Larry, Rhonda, Renee, and on and on, to be My wedded wife. I promise and covenant, before God the Father and all the angels as My witnesses, to be thy faithful and loving husband, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and for time and eternity.” Because of the strength of His covenant promise to us we are able to look into the face of Jesus and see His undying love for us in His eyes and we believe in His promise and history has proven God’s promises ever true, and we repeat the vow to become His for eternity. To add weight and proof to Jesus’ promise and vow and the time in history when we make our vow, Jesus went to the Cross were He paid an infinite price for our sin, He purchased us so

that we would be free of sin, guilt and shame and this enables us to come to Him freely, openly and completely. If you understand this illustration then you understand the concept of “faith”. Faith is what it means to eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood and serve Him and live for Him. It is to commit oneself to Jesus completely. If you know of Christ, but have not given yourself to Him in complete belief, then now is the time to move from knowledge of Christ to believing in Christ and be His eternal bride. Once united with Christ no one will be able to separate you from Him. This is the model Jesus gave us for human marriage, the covenant union of a man and a woman until death do them part. **Blank**

This passage also makes clear that there are certain and observable results that come from feeding upon Jesus. One might instantly think of the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5, really the whole chapter is one you should read this week and let it sink into your heart and mind, but I will read only verses 22 to 25, **Slide** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **Slide**²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”²⁵ **Slide** “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-25 NASB) If we believe in Jesus then we receive the certainty of our salvation and this affects the way we think and live, and the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives is the natural result. This is made clear in verse 54 when Jesus says, **Slide** “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” Knowing this will then encourage us to live in such a way that the “Fruit of the Spirit” will be evident in our lives. Eternal life is life with God without end and Jesus follows His promise of eternal life with the promise that He will raise us up on the last day. Does not this encourage you – to know that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate a believer from God. This is the definition of covenant, a promise that will never be broken.

Another result of believing in and feeding upon Jesus is we enter into a life-transforming union with Christ. This is seen in verse 56, **Slide** “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” This is the first time union with Christ is mentioned in the Book of John, but it will grow and become more prominent as we study our way through the John’s entire gospel. In the wedding illustration the bride takes the name of her husband, she has a new name, new relationship and a new station in life. As the bride of Christ these things are true for us as well. We are now known as Christian and no longer known as Sinner.

Finally, Jesus’ words tell us than when we feed upon Him, He will give us strength to live this life. Life in this world is difficult for it corrupt and we are no longer of this world and are called to live holy and apart from this world. **Slide** Verse 57 ends with “so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.” We are able to sin less and to live holy, amid corruption, because we feed upon Jesus and He is the Most Holy. This verse is not speaking of eternity, but living here and now. Our present daily lives are to be lived by the power of Christ in us. Let me close with this thought and goal for every Christian written by Paul, **Slide** “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20 NASB) Amen and Amen!