

Studies in extended dialogue: John 6:26—58

Context:

- Feeding the 5,000—the same crowd follows Jesus to Capernaum (6:24). Because of this sign, the crowd concludes that Jesus is a prophet, perhaps like Moses in the wilderness (6:14). In contrasting John with the synoptic gospels it is clear that the disciples did not understand the true significance of the sign (Mark 6:52). Luke 9:12-17 and Matthew 14:13-21 provide no comment on the crowd's or disciples' response, but in John 6, the sign is followed by detailed explanation of its meaning.
- By this time in Jesus' ministry, strong opposition existed (Jn. 5:58), but the crowds continued to follow him. This extended dialogue polarizes the masses (6:60,61,66), and leads to Peter's confession of faith (6:68,69).

Setting:

- Multitudes follow Jesus to Capernaum after the feeding of the 5,000 (6:22—25)
- Jesus speaks in the synagogue (6:59)

Structure:

Note that the dialogue is framed around Jesus' answers to six questions:

- Vs. 25—27 “When did you get here?”
- Vs. 28—29 “What are the works of God?”
- Vs. 30—33 “What sign to you give us?”
- Vs. 34—40 “Give us this bread”
- Vs. 41—51 “Who is this man Jesus?”
- Vs. 52—58 “How can he give us his flesh?”

#1: vs. 25—27

Question: “When did you get here?”

Answer:

- You do not seek signs, but free food (Jesus is getting to their motives)
- *Do not work for perishable food, but for food that endures to **eternal life*** (sets up the contrast between earthly and heavenly, material and spiritual that runs through the text)

- which the Son of Man shall give you
- for on him God has set his seal

#2: vs. 28—29

Question: “What are the works of God?” (following the comment about “working for food”)

Answer:

- The work of God is to **believe** in him whom He has sent

#3 vs. 30—33

Question: “What sign do you give?” (why should we believe that you are from God?)

- Our fathers ate manna (Psalm 78:24)

Answer:

- My Father, not Moses, gave true bread out of heaven
- for God’s bread coming from heaven gives **life** to the world

#4 vs. 34—40

Question: “Give us this bread” (seeking a repeat of the earlier miracle and failing to understand the symbolic meaning of the bread)

Answer:

- **I am the bread of life**
 - he who comes to me will not hunger
 - he who comes to me will never thirst
- But you have seen me, and yet not **believe**
- All that the Father gives me shall come to me
 - I will not cast out any who comes
 - for I have come from heaven to do God’s will
 - this is God’s will, that none given to me are lost, but **raised up on the last day**
 - for this is God’s will,
 - that everyone who beholds and **believes** the Son may have **eternal life** and I will **raise him up on the last day**.

#5 vs. 41—51

Question: “How does Joseph’s son say, ‘I come from heaven’?” (Jesus doesn’t fit the messianic profile, being the son of Joseph from Nazareth)

Answer:

- No one can come to me unless the Father draws him; and I will **raise him up on the last day**
 - It is written, ‘they shall all be taught by God’ (Isaiah 54:13)
 - All who learn from the Father come to me
 - No one has seen the Father except the One from the Father
 - Truly, he who **believes** has **eternal life**
- *I am the bread of life*
 - Your fathers ate manna and died
 - Eat this bread from heaven and **never die**
 - *I am the living bread from heaven*
 - eat this bread and **live forever**
 - for the life of the world is my flesh

#6 vs. 52—58

Question: “How can he give us his flesh to eat?” (the crowd isn’t getting the force of the analogy—they continue to seek bread for their stomachs and are oblivious to the deep content of Jesus’ teaching)

Answer:

- Truly, unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man you have no life in yourselves.
 - He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has **eternal life**, and I will **raise him up on the last day**
 - for my flesh is true food, and my blood true drink
- He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him
- As the Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, he who eats me will also live because of me.
- This is the bread from heaven;
 - not as the fathers ate and died
 - he who eats this bread **lives forever**

Main Point: Eat (**believe**) the bread of life (**Son**) for **eternal life** (six times repeated, plus “raise up on the last day” four times). Note the imperative in v. 27.

Supporting points:

Each question answered by Jesus describes the main point:

- 25-27. The analogy established between physical and spiritual food and that Jesus has the unique authority from God to give it.
- 28,29. Believing, not working to receive the food from heaven.
- 30-33. God alone provides the manna from heaven for the world to have.
- 34-40. I AM the bread of life. Believe in the Son for eternal life.
- 41-51. I AM the bread of life. Believe in me for eternal life.

Content:

Use of the Old Testament. In what sense(s) is the Old Testament being used?

- Manna. The crowd cites manna as a sign that God authenticated Moses’ leadership, “As it is written...”, Psalm 78:24. Was this text cited by the crowd to incite Jesus to another miracle to prove himself? Perhaps. Certainly Psalm 78 is *ironic* in this context, as it refers to manna primarily as a charge against the people for their unbelief (Ps. 78:22), the very thing Jesus is also challenging.

There is no “fulfillment” language associated with the relationship of Jesus to the manna. However, manna, or “bread from heaven” is deeply symbolic of God’s spiritual provision for his people:

“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.” Deut. 8:3 (cf. Matt. 4:4)

The analogy between Jesus and manna is easy to see in this extended dialogue: “if this, how much more that” *a fortiori* formula.

- urgently needed to live “life,” “eternal life”
- gift from God coming down from heaven “I am the bread of life coming down from heaven”
- free and abundant the “work” is to “believe”
- accessible to all “he who”/“everyone who” believes

- Citing Isaiah 54:13 (6:45). The blessing of the last days envisioned by Isaiah, though generically referred to by Jesus as “the prophets” (plural), indicates that Jesus is not focusing on specific prediction—fulfillment, but in context, his unique authority to “teach of God” given the unique Father/Son relationship Jesus has with God (6:45,46). He is not the son of Joseph (6:42), but far more. “It is written” in this context means, “it applies.” The last days are present in Jesus’ pronouncement of the kingdom.

Key theological terms:

- Person of Christ

Son of God—a messianic designation (Psalm 2)

“I AM” sayings begin here (see 8:58)

God is “Father” (see below)

- Work of Christ

bread of life

who “gives his himself

for all who partake of him

will be raised up in the last day

- The way of salvation

belief in the free provision of Christ available to all

The Fatherhood of God

Most common reference for God by Jesus (65x in synoptic and over 100x in John)

Note the 15 references to God as Father in Matthew 5—7

Dynamics of relating to God as Father and implications for discipleship.

Inductive Study Worksheet: Epistles

Overview

Identify author, audience and others referred to in the letter

What are the main themes of the letter?

Why do you think the letter was written?

Passage Study

structure (skeleton) <i>Context</i>	content (muscle) <i>Historical/Cultural</i>	application (skin) <i>Where do we go with this:</i>
What is the main point of the preceding & subsequent paragraphs? <i>Paragraph Diagram</i>	Explain Roman and Jewish cultural practices, people, objects, etc. that may bear on the text's meaning	What was the original audience to do with this message?
Outline the paragraph structure	<i>Language</i> Define key theological terms	How might you apply this to yourself or your church?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main point?• How is the main point supported, illustrated, or explained?	<i>Theological</i> <i>Salvation:</i> What does the passage teach about God's program on earth? What does the oracle teach about <i>Christ</i> ? What does the passage teach about the <i>life of discipleship or the church</i> ? What other doctrinal teaching is in the paragraph?	

Overview

1 Timothy

Author	Audience	Third Parties
1:1 Paul an apostle of Christ by God's command	1:2 Timothy, Paul's true child in the faith	1:3,4 teachers of strange doctrine centering on speculations and genealogies
1:13—16 former blasphemer, persecutor who acted ignorantly; foremost of sinners	1:3 In Ephesus at Paul's urging to instruct	1:6,7 teachers of fruitless discussion, making ignorant and confident claims about the Law
1:20 involved in church discipline in Ephesus (?)	1:18 entrusted to fight the good fight, in accordance with prophecies made about him	1:20 Hymenaeus and Alexander's faith is shipwrecked, and Paul delivered them to Satan to learn not to blaspheme
2:7 appointed an apostle, teacher to the Gentiles	3:1ff (5:22) appoint worthy elders and deacons	2:9ff women not adorning themselves properly, or acting properly in meetings (?)
3:14,15 desires to come to Ephesus, but may be delayed	4:12 young	6:3—10 false teachers who seek profit from their message
	5:23 drink wine for frequent stomach and other ailments	6:17 some are rich and having moral problems associated with wealth
	6:12 called to eternal life, made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses	6:20,21 some have left the faith pursuing what is falsely called "knowledge"

Themes

Proper conduct in the body of Christ (3:15)

- Prayer for state officials (2:1,2)
- Appropriate roles for women (2:9—15)
- Character of elders and deacons (3:2—13)
- Proper conduct in relationships in the church (5:1—16)
- Treatment of elders (5:17—21)

- Slave/master relationships (6:1,2)
- Instructing those in error (1:3; 6:17,18)
- Love is goal of instruction (1:5)
 - Countering speculation and distortions of Law (1:3—7)
 - Public reading of scripture and teaching (4:13)
 - Oppose the teaching falsely called “knowledge” (6:20)
 - Maintaining sound principle (3:1,15; 4:6,11,16; 5:7,21; 6:2,17,18)
- Character of a worker (4:6,12)
- Self discipline (4:7—12)
 - Progress in the Word (4:14—16)
 - Relating to those older (5:1)
 - Flee pursuit of wealth, pursue righteousness... (6:11)
 - Guard what has been entrusted (6:14,20)

Summary: Why was this book written?

Paul, the apostle, writes to the younger Timothy encouraging him personally, and focusing his attention on the key issues threatening the church in Ephesus.

Paragraph Study:

Structure (skeleton)

Paragraph identification

- Recognize a complete unit of thought (though related in context to other paragraphs)

Paragraph divisions in 1 Timothy 1

NASB	NIV	RSV	NEB	JND Kelly	Wuest	Leffel
1—2	1—2	1—2	1—2	1—2	1—2	1—2
3—17	3—7	3—7	3—4	3—11	3—4	3—7
			5—7		5—11	
	8—11	8—11	8—11			8—11
	12—14	12—17	12—14	12—17	12—17	12—17
	15—17		15—17			

Structure summaries: identify the main and supporting points—unpacking the logic

- What is the main point?
 - recognize *connective words*
 - Romans 12:1 Therefore present yourselves to God
 - 1 Corinthians 11:33 So then, brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another
 - therefore, so, thus, then, so then, as a result, consequently, yet...
 - consider statements of a *general principle* or *evaluation*
 - 1 Corinthians 8: Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies
 - 1 Corinthians 6:7 Why not rather be wronged? (rhetorical question)
 - identify *imperatives*
 - 1 Corinthians 7:10 The wife should not leave her husband
 - 1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love
 - Philippians 3:17 Join in following my example
 - note *independent clauses*
 - 1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always concerning you
 - recognize *repeated terms* in a paragraph or wider section of the letter. Repetition can be used either for the main point or supporting points
 - Philippians uses “joy” or “rejoice” 15 times
 - 1 Corinthians 13 focus on “love”
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7—11 repeats and contrasts “glory” (main point);
 - 2 Corinthians 1:3—7 repeating “comfort” 10 times (main point)
 - 2 Corinthians 4:12—18 repeats and contrasts “veil” and “unveiled” (supporting points)
- What are supporting points? “Why” and “how” *explanations* and *qualifications*.
 - recognize *connective words*
 - because, for, since—*justification* or *reason for* the main point
 - Romans 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly
 - but, otherwise, however, if—*contrasting* or *qualifying* the main point
 - Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering...
 - that, so that—*applying* the main point or showing the *results*
 - Colossians 3:12, I press on, so that I may lay hold...
 - consider *examples of general principle* or *the principle itself*

- 1 Corinthians 9:24 Those who run in a race all run, but only one receives a prize
- identify *indicatives*
 - Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh...
- note *dependent clauses that qualify or clarify* the main point
 - Philippians 3:20,21 ...from which we eagerly wait for a Savior... who will transform the body of your humble state into conformity with the body of His glory...

Chart the relationship of main to supporting points

Example: 1 Corinthians 1:4—9

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you in Christ, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I thank my God always concerning you for (the grace of God which was given to you in Christ), that (in everything you were enriched in Him), (in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you), so that (you are not lacking in any gift), (awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ), (who will also confirm you to the end), (blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ). (God is faithful), through whom (you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord).

main point: I thank my God always concern in you (independent clause)

supporting points:

- why: for the grace given to you in Christ
- result: that in everything you were enriched in Him
- how: in all speech and knowledge as Christ's testimony was confirmed in you
- result: so that you do no lack any gift
- result: awaiting the revelation of Christ
- qualification: who will confirm you to the end
- how: blameless
- when: in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ

- why: God is faithful
- how: through His calling into fellowship with His Son Jesus our Lord

Structure summary: Paul is thankful to God concerning the Corinthians

- Reason #1: God's grace in Christ
 - enriching in speech and knowledge
 - not lacking in any gift
 - awaiting the revelation of Christ who will confirm you to the end blameless in the day of the Lord
- Reason #2: God is faithful
 - through His calling into fellowship with Christ

Example: 1 Timothy 1:3—7.

As I urged you on my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

(As I urged you on my departure for Macedonia), remain on at Ephesus so that (you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor pay attention to myths and endless genealogies), (which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith). But (the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith). For (some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions).

Structure Summary:

Main Point: Remain at Ephesus to instruct (imperative)

Supporting Point #1: Need for instruction: certain men teaching strange doctrine

- Myths and genealogies giving rise to speculation
- Such teaching does not further the administration of God by faith

Supporting Point #2: Purpose of instruction: To establish the goal of love

- How? From a pure heart
- How? From a good conscience
- How? From a sincere faith

Supporting Point #3: Contrasting fruit of instruction: discussions about Law

- They want to be teachers of the Law even though they don't understand it. In their arrogance and ignorance, they are dangerous