

The Bread of Life

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 6:51-59
Preached on: Sunday, June 1, 2014

Will you join me this morning by taking your Bibles and turning to John's gospel, chapter 6. This morning we will continue our verse-by-verse study of this amazing message of good news beginning in verse 51-59. Let me read the text to you this morning, Jesus says,

“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.' 52 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.”

We all know that physical hunger is a very powerful motivator and someone has well said, “You are what you eat.” If you eat too much and/or you eat the wrong things, your health will deteriorate. God has created for us a body that is a very complex organism that requires the proper kind of nutrition in order to sustain it and to help it function at its full potential but even if we eat the right amount and eat all of the right things, we all still eventually die. There is a significant correlation between good nutrition and the quality of life, good health, including longevity but still, in the long run, we all die. Death is a part of God's curse on sinful man: the wages of sin, we know, is death.

But we are not only physical beings, we are spiritual beings and like physical hunger, spiritual hunger is a very powerful motivator and, likewise, we are what we eat spiritually. Every person who has ever lived knows that there is a God, knows that he and she is somehow responsible to him. We know that God has incorporated an awareness of himself in every single human being that he has ever created in his image because man can see the invisible attributes of God in creation and because of conscience. According to the word, we know that man will do instinctively the things of the law, therefore, every man has an innate knowledge of God that he is the Creator and that somehow he is accountable to him. It is for this reason that as we look over the course of history, as we look at people even to this day, we see that man is incurably religious. In fact,

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anthropologists acknowledge that down through history, every single people group has had some sort of religion. They worship some kind of God; they place their faith in something. In fact, there are currently an estimated 4,200 religions in the world today, some form of faith or belief system. Even atheism is a religious system: they do not believe in the existence of God and so they basically worship themselves and worship creation and so forth. But no man is totally ignorant of God because every man has been made in his image so all men know that he exists, even the most ardent atheist. But the unsaved man will rebel against this. He will do anything to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, in fact, the Psalmist has said that “only the fool has said in his heart that there is no God.”

So at the core of every man and woman is a spiritual hunger that must be fed and like all vacuums in the physical order of the universe, even as they will all be filled with something, so to the vacuum in the human soul will be filled. We all must eat something to satisfy the longings of our souls or else we die spiritually. In fact, the word of God says that all men are born spiritually dead, they have no appetite for the only food that will nourish their soul and give them eternal life, therefore, when offered the gospel of Christ, the only bread that will satisfy the famished soul, they will reject it inevitably because it's against their nature to eat it. That's precisely the point of what Jesus has been saying thus far in John 6. He has offered himself as the bread of life but simple man chokes on Christ.

Now, many people will worship the true God falsely but most people will merely worship false gods. They will not worship the Father in spirit and in truth; they don't know what that is. And Satan, through his diabolical and deceptive world systems, offers an all-you-can-eat buffet of soul foods that give temporary satisfaction but ultimately destroy. Just think of the myriads of temptations that there are in the world today that appeal to the lust of our flesh, that part of us that longs for satisfaction, that craves for meaning, for purpose in life, that hungers for things that will somehow make us happy, make us feel fulfilled. We know that the nature man, in other words the man apart from Christ, will chase after every imaginable pleasure, every imaginable philosophy, that will bring some kind of temporary happiness and make sense to him and he will even unwittingly erect idols in his heart that will occupy his thoughts, that will reign over his affections, that will demand his loyalty but none of these things ever bring lasting happiness, nothing brings permanent satisfaction. As proof of that, man constantly struggles with things like: anger, addictions, anxiety, self-pity, escapism, discontentment, despair and the list goes on and on.

I'm sure that some of you are experiencing some of these things today. You've put your trust in things that you are convinced will make you happy but as you look at the character of your life, as you wake up in the middle of the night, you have to admit that you are miserable, that you're frustrated, you're angry, you're afraid and perhaps you're

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lonely, confused, filled with self-pity, discontent, filled with despair because your false god and/or perhaps your false religious system just isn't working out. It has promised more than it can deliver so you are disappointed and so what we tend to do as human beings apart from Christ is grab after anything and everything that will somehow satisfy the soul, that will somehow bring relief whether it be a pill or a drink, a plate of food, a tv remote, a computer, a cellphone, a game, anything but the Lord but nothing brings lasting joy, nothing brings permanent satisfaction to that ache in your soul. Therefore, you could be likened to the Israelites of old that God described through his servant Jeremiah in chapter 2. At the end of verse 11 he says, "But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit." He went on to say in verse 13, "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water." It is for this reason that God continued to speak through Jeremiah in chapter 17, beginning with verse 5 and says this, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD. For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant."

To be sure, the natural man is ruled by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the boastful pride of life, that arrogance that dominates one's life and as a result, he worships things like sexual immorality, materialism, body image, affirmation from others which fuels the whole Facebook phenomena, entertainment, he seeks happiness through chemicals, he escapes into another world where somehow he can survive. The list of destructive foods for the soul is endless. The point is: sinful man will pursue anything but the Lord, the living God. We see this even with professing Christians in our culture who live as if God doesn't exist. We live in a culture that teaches the theory of evolution, that we are just basically sophisticated germs that have evolved into what we are today. This is what we teach in our country and yet on our money it says "In God We Trust." Now, you explain that huge disparity. So people have no real meaning of life except what they make of it. Like the old song said, "If it's your thing, do what you want to do," and basically the answer to that is just eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.

So, the first thing people will think of when they wake up in the morning is: what will make me happy today. They immediately run to their idol of happiness and that's what will occupy their thoughts, that's what will occupy their time because life is all about me and my needs, not God and his glory. Politicians play upon man's spiritual hunger and every time there's an election cycle, there is some variation of the promise for hope and change. Everybody gets all excited and everybody runs out to vote but, alas, there really isn't any real hope and no positive change. Things go on like they've been, in fact, they get worse and all of that political rubbish is nothing more than unsatisfying junk food for the soul. Things get worse not better. In fact, I would ask you: do you really believe that

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this generation is happier than previous generations? Do you really think that you are happier and more self-fulfilled than your parents or your grandparents or your great-grandparents? Not at all but because of man's sinful nature, man continues to pursue material things, he continues to pursue idols of the heart, all in an effort to satisfy his famished soul.

Here in John 6, Jesus tells us that those who do this will surely die in their sins even as the Jews died in the wilderness. But here's the good news: because of God's infinite love and mercy and grace, Jesus offers himself as the bread of life, the only food that can feed the famished soul, the only food that can produce real life, one that is satisfying, one that is filled with joy, one that is meaningful and one that is eternal and only when a man trusts in the Lord and lives for his glory, will he find lasting joy and lasting satisfaction for his soul. It is for this reason that the Lord added these words back in Jeremiah 17 that I mentioned earlier in verse 7 and following. He says this, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD And whose trust is the LORD." Here's why, "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor cease to yield fruit." That's what we want. That's what Jesus offers.

As we come to the text this morning, I would like to divide it into three basic parts. We are going to see the bread offered, the bread maligned and the bread eaten. So let's join Jesus and his disciples. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum to an audience of hostile Jewish leaders, men who marveled at his miracle working abilities but they took great umbrage at his claim to deity, to be of a heavenly origin, so the word tells us that they grumbled over his claim to be the source of eternal life. They were offended because of his calls for repentance and faith in him as a prerequisite for entering the kingdom. They despised his insistence that salvation could be gained only by placing their faith in him, not in keeping the law. Moreover, they resented his claim that salvation is on the basis of the Father's uninfluenced sovereign grace and by faith just in Christ alone. This undermined their entire religious system, they resented statements like in verse 37, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out." In verse 44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day."

So, let's enter the scene. The synagogue in Capernaum is about the size of this worship center in the center section here. In fact, I would encourage you to go online and look it up, you can see the ruins there and some of it has been built and ruined since Jesus' day but you will get the general idea. We know that, according to the text, the place was jam-packed and there's a massive crowd all around Jesus. They're even on the outside listening in; there was no glass so you could hear rather well. The Jewish leaders are all decked-out in their finest and most ostentatious religious garb to flaunt their spiritual

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plumage and pedigrees. I want you to see their faces now, their faces are red with anger. Those veins in the neck are bulging; the hearts are hardened and the fists are clenched and the Son of God is unflappable, perfectly composed, in full command.

Having spoken the truths that I've just mentioned, he makes this declaration in verse 51, "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven." Here we see the bread offered. Now, the text doesn't say this but I would imagine his disciples who were there with him winced when he said this. I can just see Peter elbowing John and saying, "Aw, I wish he hadn't said that." That's one of the key reasons they're all upset. Notice, Jesus repeats the very thing that caused them to grumble in verse 51. He repeats it. Obviously Jesus is not ashamed of the gospel. He continues, "if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Let's keep the flow of the text going here. Having addressed God's sovereignty in salvation, he now addresses man's responsibility. He has already said that no man can come to Christ unless the Father draws him, not because God prevents him but because of man's nature, therefore, his will is opposed to Christ, God must do something. Though man has the freedom to believe in Christ, he has no desire to do so. Nevertheless, we see the Lord calling sinners to come, they must willingly embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in repentant faith. Then, as Jesus puts it here, "if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever," and we know that when a man has a desire to eat this bread, that desire proves that the Father has drawn him, that the Spirit has given him life.

I want to dwell upon this figure of eating for a moment. We can gain great insight into how a sinner must appropriate the spiritual truths of the gospel by meditating upon this. Just a few things that I would point out: 1. Think about it, only a person who is alive will have an appetite to eat. Duh, as we would say, of course. But think about this spiritually: prior to the quickening, that is the regenerating work of the Spirit of God that causes a man to be born again, prior to that, all men are spiritually dead Scripture tells us so they have no hunger for saving grace, no appetite for Christ, their sinful bellies are full with the pleasures of this world and yet they crave more and more and more, they're never satisfied. But when they demonstrate a hunger to eat of Christ, that appetite proves that suddenly they have been given spiritual life and now they have an appetite for the only food that will satisfy the soul. Whenever a sinner is awakened to the seriousness and the consequences of his sin, he will gladly run to eat of this supernatural bread. Suddenly Christ becomes his greatest delight; suddenly he longs to know more of Christ and the power of his resurrection.

There is a second parallel as you think about it: this spiritual food, like physical food, is useless unless it is eaten. Think about it: we've all been hungry before. It doesn't happen much in our culture but we've all been hungry and when a man is desperately hungry, he

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does not spend time analyzing the bread that was just given to him. He does not pontificate about its admirable qualities. He does not inspect its ingredients. He does not philosophize about its potential nutritional value. He does not meditate on how it compares with other foods. He eats it! He's starving for it. The point is this: unless a man consumes the Lord Jesus Christ, unless he internalizes the magnificent truths of the gospel, it will do him no good. In fact, Jesus makes it clear in Luke 12 that the more truth a person knows, the more dangerous it is for them to reject it. The degrees of hell's punishment for sinners are directly related to their knowledge of the truth and I cringe when I think of some of you who know the gospel probably as well as I do but you still refuse to humble yourself and trust in Christ. Such stubborn, arrogant defiance will one day testify against you in the day of judgment. My friend, God calls you to repent. He calls you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because the wrath of God abides on you. Paul says, "Behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." But if you continue to refuse, I warn you, in the day of judgment God will be more tolerant of Sodom and Gomorrah than he will of you because had they heard all that you have heard with respect to the gospel, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes.

The writer of Hebrews offers this sobering warning in Hebrews 10, beginning in verse 26, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." So my unsaved friends, I would beg you to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or you will perish in your sins.

But I want to point out a third parallel here with eating. It's a very obvious one: eating is an extremely personal act. No one can do it for you. If you are to be nourished and strengthened by a banquet of food, you must eat it yourself. No one can be nourished by proxy, that's the point. No surrogate can digest your food and have it benefit you. Likewise, you will derive no spiritual benefit whatsoever from watching others feed upon Christ. By merely watching their transformed lives and hearing their amazing testimonies of God's faithfulness and grace in their life, none of that will do you any good. In fact, as I've already mentioned, it will do you great harm in the day of judgment. You must personally receive Christ as your own.

Now, let's go back to the text. Notice what Jesus says at the end of verse 51, "and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." Here Jesus speaks of

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his voluntary vicarious sacrificial sacrifice, his death on the cross where he offered his flesh to purchase the redemption of all whom the Father had given him. He died for all who had believed. He died for all who will believe. He was the Passover lamb. He was the final sacrifice for sin to which all previous sacrifices had pointed. We know according to Hebrews 9:22 that without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. In fact, earlier in John's gospel, John the Baptist said in John 1:29 as he pointed to Jesus, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Likewise here in verse 51, Jesus is saying that "I give my flesh for the life of the world."

It's important for you to understand something here: the word "world" in this context speaks of humanity in general, not just the Jews but also the Gentiles, something that was repugnant to the Jewish people. Jesus' sacrifice upon the cross was sufficient for all men without distinction. We know according to 1 John 2:2 that he himself is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world. But this does not mean that Jesus' atoning work saves everybody, that's the heresy of universalism. Scripture teaches that most people will perish in their sin and spend an eternity in hell. To be sure, his sacrifice is sufficient for all men without distinction but it is efficacious, in other words, it is effective for those who place their faith in Christ and those alone, those who will savingly believe. As we've studied before, many people erroneously believe that Jesus died for the whole world, that is, everybody who has ever lived and that his death on the cross was merely an act whereby he accomplished a potential salvation, not an actual one. So they will argue that he died for everyone potentially but it is up to you to accept that gift. They would say that Jesus died for everyone indiscriminately so that everyone in the world is, in principle, forgiven so the only ones who will be saved are those who, by their own efforts, actualize this potential atonement. Said differently: the actualizing of the atonement is up to man not God, therefore, if a sinner chooses to not believe in Christ, then the atoning work of Christ remains an unrealized potential so they believe in an atonement that is unlimited in scope but limited in power, in other words, its effect because it is at the mercy of the sinner's will. I believe that Scripture teaches just the opposite, something altogether different, something exceedingly more glorious and that is this: that the atonement is limited in its scope, limited to the elect, but it's unlimited in power, it's able to save to the uttermost. The atonement was not a potential salvation for all, it was an actual atonement for the many, those whom God had appointed unto salvation, those whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, those whom the Father had given to the Son.

So the true gospel is a God-centered, cross-centered gospel, not a man-centered gospel. John MacArthur put it well when he said, "The death of Christ was a real, genuine, actual satisfaction of divine justice. It was a true payment and atonement in full. Actually, not potentially, paid to God by Christ on behalf of all who would ever believe because they were chosen and redeemed by the power of God. The death of Christ was definite,

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particular, specific and actual on behalf of God's chosen people. Limited in extent by his sovereign purposes but unlimited in effect for all whom it was rendered." So, indeed, Jesus states "the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." In other words, his sacrifice here that he's speaking of, extends beyond the Jewish people, beyond this audience that he is addressing. Christ is the Savior of the entire world of lost sinners who are among the elect: men and women and boys and girls of every race, of every color, of every nation, every tongue, every culture whether rich or poor, slave or free. For this reason, God speaks through his prophet, Isaiah, and says this in Isaiah 45:22, "Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth."

So first, my friends, we see the bread offered. Secondly, we see the bread maligned in verse 52, "Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?'" The term "argue" means "to enter into conflict with one another; to fight or quarrel; to have strife of words with someone about a particular issue." Now, you must understand: only a complete idiot would think that Jesus is referring to some form of cannibalism here and these people were not idiots. They understood that Jesus was using figurative language here but they're wondering, "What did he mean? How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Think about it: right in the middle of Jesus' sermon, frustration boils over and these Jewish leaders began to argue with one another over this enigmatic, mysterious statement.

As a footnote, the Roman Catholic Church uses this and other texts in this section to support their doctrine of transubstantiation. Perhaps you've heard of that, I know a number of you have been saved out of the Roman Catholic system. This is a deeply disturbing and heretical doctrine that teaches that the elements of the bread and the wine literally become the body and blood of Christ. According to Roman Catholic teaching, every time the Mass is celebrated, the sacrifice of Christ is repeated in some sense and grace is thereby imparted to those participating but obviously they fail to recognize the symbolic nature of Jesus' statements when he declares "this is my body and this is my blood." Moreover, they fail to understand the finality and the completeness of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. There is no need to repeat his sacrifice as a constant reminder of sins, as a constant reminder of remaining guilt that somehow needs to be atoned for over and over and over again. On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." He did not say, "It has begun." Christ atoned for our sins once and for all on the cross. The writer of Hebrews puts it so clearly in Hebrews 9:25, he says, "Nor was it that He would offer Himself often," in other words, repeatedly, "as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He goes on to say, "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many."

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Folks, think about this, please understand this: here in John 6, Jesus is addressing these hostile Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum. He was not addressing issues of the eucharist, of holy communion. The Lord's Table hadn't even been instituted as an ordinance yet, a memorial commemorating his death because the death hadn't even occurred yet. So, neither the Jews nor the disciples would have ever made that kind of a connection. Furthermore, Jesus makes it clear that whoever eats of his flesh has eternal life. If this section was referring to holy communion, it would mean that somehow partaking of the elements would be the means by which one could attain eternal life. Such a view is utterly foreign to Scripture; it totally contradicts what Jesus said earlier in verse 40 that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. So this kind of magical thinking is inconsistent with Scripture and it also is in conflict with Jesus' emphasis on the sovereignty of God in man's salvation, the Father's drawing and choosing and man's coming and believing. That's how a man is saved, not by partaking of the elements of the bread and wine in holy communion.

One final thought, we know according to 1 Corinthians 11, that communion is for believers not for unbelievers so this kind of superstitious mystical thinking misses the point entirely of what Jesus is saying. Now, to be sure, the Jews missed it as well. Jesus is speaking figuratively, metaphorically, not literally. While they understood that, they didn't understand what he was speaking about but what he's saying here is that he's calling sinners to appropriate him by faith to take hold, to take in, the truths of who he is and what he offers. So, Jesus continues with more of the same here. He's already got them upset but he's not taking his foot off the pedal at all here, he just keeps driving ahead. Here we see, thirdly, the bread eaten beginning in verse 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.'" If men are to be saved, if they are to receive eternal life, they must receive Christ into their heart through faith because without them, they have no life in themselves. In other words, they remain in a state of spiritual death; they are miserable; they are corrupt; they are morally polluted; they are enslaved by their lusts; they are guilty; they are condemned.

But he says in verse 54, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life." By the way, it doesn't say "he receives," he has it already. It is already his possession otherwise he would have never eaten. "He has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." My friends, this is so precious to me, I was thinking about this. Think about it: when Adam ate the forbidden fruit, what happened? He died spiritually but here eating Christ makes man alive spiritually. In Christ's death, you and I died, we were crucified with Christ so his death was our death and then, think about it, when we appropriated, in other words, when we received the truths of the gospel by faith into our hearts, his death became our life. We read earlier in the service Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me and the life which I now

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live by the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered himself up for me.”

I want you to also notice the change of tenses in the verbs here that Jesus uses in verse 53 and verse 54. Very important but precious thought: in verse 53, notice he says “unless you eat and unless you drink.” This is in the aorist or the past tense and it implies something very important, it implies a single act performed once and for all. Here's what we glean from this: there is therefore no need for some kind of continual eating and continual drinking of his body and blood as the Roman Catholics would have us believe. But then in verse 54, it says “he who eats.” The verb is in the present tense denoting an action in process, a state of being that continues. So here's what Jesus is saying: the act of receiving him is a one-time act that never again needs to be repeated. It is a one-time appropriation of Christ when we come to him and believe in him and receive him as our Savior. But having received him, we continue to feed upon him, receiving constant nourishment and satisfaction to our soul.

We see this illustrated, for example, in Exodus 12. You will recall the story that in order to be delivered from the wrath of God, the Israelites had to take the unblemished lamb into their homes, they had to love that lamb and then they had to sacrifice it and apply the shed blood of the slain lamb to the doorpost and the lintel and because of that blood, they were protected, the Angel of Death passed over because he saw the blood applied. But then, what were they asked to do? They were to feed upon the lamb and in some sense what was foreshadowed in that first Passover is pictured anew here. Once again, the Lamb of God is asking people to have faith in him, to have faith in his sacrifice on their behalf, to trust in him, something that most of them would never understand until after his death and resurrection, many of them probably came to faith in Christ at Pentecost.

So he says in verse 54, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” He goes on to say, “For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.” In other words, here is the source, dear friends, of our spiritual nourishment that sustains us day after day in this life and even throughout eternity. It's such a blessed thought. Why would we settle for anything less? Solomon devoured all that the world could offer him and what did he say? “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” But then when he came to his spiritual senses and confessed that nothing in this world could bring any satisfaction and any joy to a man's soul but God, he added this in Ecclesiastes 2:25, “For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him.” The point is: no one.

Friends, please hear this: when I think of what my Savior has done for me, when I think of how he pardoned my sin, how he justified my soul, how he has given me all of these covenantal blessings, how he has secured them on my behalf, when I contemplate all that Christ has done for me, when I understand what he endured on my behalf and how he can

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therefore sympathize with my weaknesses and my temptations and my sufferings, my soul is satisfied. There is nothing else in life that can bring that kind of satisfaction. There is nothing else that can bring that kind of joy. My faith is strengthened. My heart is encouraged. My body is comforted. Frankly, even now as I rehearse this glorious union that I have with him, that you have with him, I experience that ineffable joy of his presence in my soul. There is nothing in this life that can come close to that experience. This is what happens when we taste of the Lord and see that he is good. This is what happens when we feast upon the spiritual meat and drink that is ours in Christ. My friends, this is the exhilarating delight that awaits those who feed upon the glories and the grace of Christ as revealed in his word.

Jesus says in verse 56, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” This speaks of the believer's union with Christ, a doctrine that brings such joy to my soul, that intimate oneness that we can enjoy because we are in him. If you have not experienced this, I cannot explain it to you but I can tell you theologically according to what Scripture says, our union with Christ secures for the believer that complete identification with Christ in his work of redemption. We know according to Scripture that we have been crucified. We have been buried with him. We have been raised up together with him. We have been seated together in the heavenly places with Christ. We are hidden with Christ in God. It also secures our participation in all spiritual blessings in Christ. This glorious union is what that speaks of. The word of God says, “We are the righteousness of God in him.” Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1 that, “In Christ we have wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” Our union with Christ also secures an ideal and perfect completeness in Christ. In fact, Paul says in Colossians 2:10, “We are complete in him.” Colossians 1:27, “Christ in you is the hope of,” what? “Glory.” Our union with Christ secures that vital and blessed union with all other believers. Galatians 3:28 says that we are “all one in Christ Jesus.”

These are the great truths that we have to take in, that bring such joy and satisfaction and nourish our soul. So Jesus concludes this section saying, verse 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. 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.” What a magnificent promise but, oh dear sinner, unless you feed upon Christ, your famished soul will never be satisfied and all that awaits you is eternal death. May the Spirit enable you to eat the bread of life and drink the cup of his blood and by faith receive him today and be saved. For you, dear Christian, feed daily upon these glorious truths of God's word, to think that God in human flesh came to live a life that you and I could never live, a perfect life, and that he died as our substitute so that we could have eternal life. The more you feed upon these great truths, the more you will experience him as the greatest delight of your soul. Amazing truths, Amen? What a precious Savior is our Lord.

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The Bread of Life

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 6:51-59
Preached on: Sunday, June 1, 2014

Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these truths. I pray that you will take my feeble words and somehow by the power of your Spirit, cause them to come alive in every heart, especially those who have never truly eaten of you. Lord, draw them unto yourself. Save them, we pray. Lord, for all of us who know and love you, may we be strengthened and nourished and encouraged as we find in you our soul's greatest joy and greatest delight and that's because of Christ that we can ask of this. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.