

John 6:48–58

48 I am the bread of life.

49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”

53 Then Jesus said to them, “Verily, verily, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

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 feeds on Me will live because of Me.

58 This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

“Eating His Flesh and Drinking His Blood” **John 6:49-58**

INTRO:

In our study today we are entering into a very difficult part of **John 6**. The major question we need to ask ourselves as we study this text is: *“What did Jesus want His listeners to understand when He said these words?”* This is a very important question because it is the determining factor to understanding what this passage actually means.

Our study will fall into three parts.

I. The Need: You Must Eat (vs. 48-51)

II. The Problem: How Can We Eat? (v. 52)

III. The Answer: What Does It Mean To Eat? (vs. 53-58)

I. The Need: You Must Eat (vs. 48-51)

“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

A. At **verse 48**, Jesus once again takes up the issue of His being the Bread of Life. He reintroduces the subject by drawing a contrast between the manna that Israel ate and Himself as the Bread of Life. Those who ate manna in the wilderness died. This does not mean that the manna was poor food. It meant manna was not designed to make them live forever. By contrast, the Bread of Life, who also came down from heaven, came so those who partake of Him may never die. He is the source of eternal life.

B. Jesus said three things about Himself as the Bread of Life in **verse 51**.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

1. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Living Bread that came down out of heaven to this world. We are not talking about a loaf of wheat and water here. We are dealing with the incarnate Son of God. This bread is a person. This one who can bring life is God’s Son Himself.

2. If anyone commits himself to the Son he will have eternal life. The purpose of bread is not so we can look at it, nor is it to smell. The purpose for its existence is so that we might eat it. We must personally respond to the Lord Jesus as our Savior for us to have eternal life.

3. The way this life was purchased is through the Son giving His life for the world’s life. This was only accomplished through the cross. As Jesus was to say later in this very book, **(John 14:6)**

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.”

II. The Problem: How Can We Eat? (v. 52)

“The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’” verse 52

A. All of this figurative language poses a huge problem to this strongly Jewish audience. At first, they had wanted to take Him very literally. **(v. 34)** But when it becomes clear that He is talking about Himself as the Bread of Life, this becomes impossible to do.

B. To take the Lord at His word involves a faith they did not possess and an insight they also did not have. That is why they grumbled among themselves about what all of this meant.

C. We might ask as we observe the frustration and conflict in this verse, how much they really understood. **(1)** Did they understand He was claiming to be God incarnate come to fulfill the type of the manna and they refused to accept this? **(2)** Did they comprehend He was not talking about literal bread, but in figurative terms about a spiritual reality? **(3)** Or, were they still so tied to their stomachs that they didn't understand any of this at all?

III. The Answer: What does it mean to Eat? (vs. 53-58)

A. Jesus replies to their question with a threefold description of what eating involves. In **verses 53-54**, Jesus said to them and to us, eating means resurrection.

“Then 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 you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.’”

1. Jesus drove this truth home by stating it in two different ways. First, He stated it negatively. If you do not eat of me, you do not have life in you. If you never personally put your trust in Christ alone to save you, you will not ever have eternal life in you. Many folks walk around today thinking they are alive, but they aren't. They are dead. To be sure, they exist in the physical universe and they exhibit the signs of physical life, but they are not alive spiritually. They do not know what life is. They will not know until they come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Second, Jesus said it positively. **(v. 54)**

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The one who has Jesus has not just life itself, but the one who embraces the Lord Jesus by faith will have life which will never end and life filled full with the presence of God.

3. So, eating of the Bread of Life means spiritual resurrection.

B. The Lord Jesus doesn't stop there. He added eating means abiding. We read in **verses 55-56**,

“For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.”

1. The one who eats of the Bread of Life abides in Christ. This means two things. First, it alludes to the idea that we can't become a believer and then quit believing. The evidence we have partaken of the Lord Jesus is that we remain in Him.

2. Second, it speaks of the relationship Jesus talked about later in **John 15**.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

He who is connected to the vine is communing with the vine. He is committed to the purpose of the vine.

C. Finally, Jesus asserted, eating is living in union with Christ. **Verses 57-58** reads, *“As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”*

1. In **verse 57**, Jesus described Himself and us. Just as God the Father sent Jesus into this world and while in this world, Jesus lived through the Father, so also we shall live through Him.

2. How did **“Jesus live through the Father?”** Jesus did not say He drew His life from the Father. We know this because in **John 5:26** Jesus has life in Himself. Rather, Jesus asserted He lived His life in union with the Father. God the Father defined the purpose of His life.

3. In the same way, when we eat of the bread of life, we will live our lives in union with the Son and the Father. We will live through Him!

What then is eating His flesh and drinking His blood? It is appropriating the Lord by faith and making Him part and parcel of who we are. When we eat something, it becomes our flesh and our bones. In a real sense, we are what we eat. If we feed on Christ, He becomes a part of us. Our lives find their beginning in Him (salvation). Our lives find their purpose and direction through Him (sanctification). Our life’s ultimate goal is to be with Him for eternity (glorification).

Have you and I made a personal application of all of this? Have you and I personally trusted Christ to save us? Have we sat in the chair of faith? If we haven’t, we have not the life that Jesus spoke about. We just exist.

NOTE: Perhaps we need to begin by reminding ourselves what the rest of the Bible tells us.

First, God never condones cannibalism. This cannot be taken literally for this reason alone.

Second, we cannot take this to refer to the Lord’s table. Listen again to what Jesus said, *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Verily, verily, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.’”* (6:53)

Jesus also said,

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (6:54)

Admittedly, this sounds a lot like the Lord’s Supper. This cannot mean the Lord’s Supper if it were communion Jesus would be asserting that eucharist saves, which it does not. It would then also go against some important texts in the Bible including **John 3:16** and **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

Hymn #192 *The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power*