

Grace Pastors Fellowship  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Winston, Georgia  
January 19, 2012  
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**“Whoever Feeds on My Flesh and Drinks My blood ...”**

**Most of you preachers have worn out your preaching bible and had to break in a new one. My first bible was a KJV Thompson Chain Reference that was a hardback and lasted 14 years. My next bible was a NKJV with a better binding and it held up for 29 years before book tape would no longer keep it together. This new bible is an ESV with a strong binding and based on doubling the life of each successive bible it should last me until I am 131 years old.**

There are some things that our Lord Jesus said were absolutely necessary.

Jesus told Nicodemus “Amen, amen, I say to you unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

Jesus had to pass through Samaria to keep an appointment with one of His elect at a well. John 4:4

Jesus said “... unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” John 8:24

So with the thought of divine imperatives I want to discuss another one.

**“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.”**

**Reading from the Gospel of John, Chapter Six at verse 41:**

John 6:41-59

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "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?'" <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup> 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 you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." <sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. ESV

The context of John Chapter 6 is the majestic claim made by Jesus of Nazareth that He, a true Man, is the **Son of Man** of Daniel's prophecy and that He "**came down from heaven.**"

In the OT Scriptures to "come down from heaven" is something sent by God; be it fire, an earthquake, a flood, an angel, or **the Son of Man!**

In John Chapter 6:33, Jesus says that He is the **Bread of God** who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

When the local church observes the Lord's Supper we should be knowledgeable of what John 6 teaches about the Lord's Supper.

But John Chapter 6 has **nothing** to do with the Lord's Supper!  
And yet John Chapter 6 has **everything** to do with the Lord's Supper!

Now I will try to make sense out of those two contradictory statements.

In verse 56 Jesus says:

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

**This is something that Jesus was teaching!**

<sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

The reason that I said, “John Chapter 6 has **nothing** to do with the Lord’s Supper and **everything** to do with the Lord’s Supper” is because of how some men have perverted what Jesus said:

<sup>53</sup> 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 you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

The problem arises when men misunderstand what Jesus taught.  
The Jews could not grasp what Jesus taught.

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Men who are ignorant of the Scriptures and whose thinking is always carnal can only imagine a **literal** meaning in the words of Christ. And so they have tried to make the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine in the Lord’s Supper to have some literal application from John Chapter 6.

When Jesus says “unless,” that makes the object of His words an absolute requirement. Jesus told Nicodemus that it was absolutely necessary to be “born again” if one is to see the kingdom of God.

In John 3 when Jesus told Nicodemus that to be “born again” was an absolute necessity. Nicodemus, you will recall, understood Jesus to mean a literal rebirth from his mother’s womb.

John 3:1-4

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And then in John 6:

<sup>53</sup> 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 you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

It is absolutely necessary that you be born again to see the kingdom of God and it is no less necessary that you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood to have life.

Since eating His flesh and drinking His blood is an absolute necessity to have everlasting life and if eating His flesh and drinking His blood is to be understood literally, then there must be a way to actually feed on His flesh and drink His blood.

So in the genius of the Roman Catholic system of placing tradition over the Scriptures they devised a way to change the physical bread and the actual wine of the Lord's Supper from one substance into another substance. If they can do that then it would then be possible to literally eat His flesh and drink His blood.

But I said that John Chapter 6 has nothing to do with the Lord's Supper.

Consider for a moment the chronology of John Chapter 6 and you should see that Jesus cannot be referring to the Lord's Supper.

John wrote his gospel a generation after the other three evangelists; a span of about 30 years, from the late 60s A.D. to the late 90s A.D.

John devotes five chapters [John 13-17] to the events in the Upper Room on that final night before the crucifixion when the Lord's Supper was instituted and yet John does not mention the **institution** of the Lord's Supper.

The reason, I believe, that John does not mention the **institution** of the Lord's Supper is so his readers would understand the **spiritual** meaning of the Lord's Supper.

My desire is to give you the **spiritual** interpretation of John Chapter 6.

**“Whoever Feeds on My Flesh and Drinks My blood ...”**

John the Baptist declared the end of the sacrificial system when he pointed to Jesus as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

There is one singular Lamb of God and that Lamb is Jesus! Every other lamb and ox and goat and all of the blood of all of the animals pointed to the blood of the one singular Lamb of God and John the Baptist says that the Lamb of God is Jesus!

Now please stay with me because I intend to make an important case from John Chapter 6 with an **“argument from silence.”**

It is difficult and most often wrong to prove too much about a doctrine when the Bible passage under consideration is silent on that subject.

But I will make my case and you must decide if it is a valid argument based on the Scriptures.

That said, I must give Charles Alexander credit for this line of thought. Mr. Alexander's commentary on John is the best exposition of John that I have studied. It's not that I ever believed the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, but Mr. Alexander explained what Jesus taught in John Chapter 6.

In this case it is what John **does not** say that is extremely significant.

John makes no mention of the **institution** of the Lord's Supper. This is remarkable because John gives us more information about events in the Upper Room where the Lord's Supper was introduced than the other three gospels combined. John devotes five chapters to that single night.

Why does John **not** mention the **institution** of the Lord's Supper in chapters 13-17? The answer is found in Christ's discourse on the Bread of Life recorded only by John in Chapter 6.

Jesus makes a **sevenfold** declaration [seven being the number of perfection and completeness in the Bible] that He Himself is the **Bread of God** that comes down from heaven and must be eaten by faith to the obtaining of eternal life. Cf. vss. 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, and 58.

<sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, [Amen, amen] I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

<sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

<sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

<sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

<sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

In four of these verses, the Lord adds the figure of **drinking** to eating; and the first of these four, verse 53, uses the "double amen." Various translations have it "Truly, truly, Verily, verily, Most assuredly, etc."

Let me remind you of the importance of the "double amen." It always signifies something that the Lord is about to say that is vital to our understanding of Him.

The Lord Jesus must have intended something profound to have so strongly emphasized the absolute necessity of "eating His flesh and drinking His blood."

Why “eating and drinking”? I won’t go into that now but I recommend that you do a study in the OT and see how significant a role that eating and drinking played in the Hebrew culture. That will help you understand why the Lord Jesus used the metaphor of “eating and drinking.”

What happens when we physically eat and drink anything?

In the **physical** sense our body digests food and drink and our body absorbs it. Whatever we eat and drink becomes part of us. There is nothing more intimate than the absorption of food and drink into the body. There is an expression, “You are what you eat.”

In the **spiritual** sense when we “eat and drink” Christ’s flesh and blood we are living on the **doctrine** of Christ. Jesus Christ is part of us as He indwells His people through the Holy Spirit.

<sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

The key to understanding “eating and drinking” is given in verse 47:

<sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

So before the Lord Jesus states the absolute necessity of “eating His flesh and drinking His blood,” He gives the meaning, viz. “whoever believes.”

It is in believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of Man that comes down from heaven that is the “eating and drinking.” Believe in Him and abide in Him to have eternal life.

Here is the “**argument from silence.**” Chronologically when Jesus makes these statements about “eating and drinking” of His flesh and of His blood the Lord’s Supper had not yet been instituted. It is my belief that the **omission** of any mention of the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper by John is a deliberate effort to dispel any notion of **efficacy in the substance** of the bread and the wine. [Repeat]

The notion that there is some carnal efficacy in the substance of the bread and the wine is one of Satan’s most destructive errors in all the history of the church.

John, who wrote his gospel, a generation after the other three gospels was in circulation, in the closing years of the first century, saw the antichristian error of the abuse of the elements of the bread and the wine and purposely omitted any reference to them.

John gives us the **doctrine** of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as the Lord presents Himself to the unbelieving nation as the Bread of God who came down from heaven.

Jesus makes this very clear in verse 63:

**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.** ESV

And I especially like the NKJV wording:

**“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.”**

The **words** spoken by Jesus Christ are **“spirit and life.”**

Here Jesus answers the question asked by the Jews;

**“How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”** [52],

And notice the bewilderment of His disciples in verse 60,

**“This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”**

To further establish the design of John's Gospel please recall that neither does John give a specific reference to the actual **baptism** of Christ.

The record of Jesus' baptism is given by the other three evangelists but not by John and for the same reason that John omitted institution of the Lord's Supper.

Just as some men have made the bread and wine into idols so has baptism been declared by some men to be necessary “in order to be saved.”

To quote Charles Alexander, “He who does not see in this singular fact an inspired and silent protest against the sacramentalism, which by the art and craft of the Evil One was destined to overwhelm the historic church in the course of the ages, must not be able to see very far. Antichrist has used baptism and the Lord’s Supper to supplant the Word by substituting the sacramental virtues of the font and the altar, and the error rages in our day with unabated strength far beyond the Pope’s domain.”

Even the great Martin Luther could not divest himself of sacramental merit in the bread and the wine of the “Mass” even though Zwingli confronted Luther with his error.

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that the human priest upon his ordination is been given the mystical power to bless the bread and the wine and that the bread and the wine change in **substance** into the body and the blood of Jesus.

This is called “transubstantiation”. They refer to John 6 for support.

See: Catechism of the Catholic Church; items 1373 -1381.

A step below “transubstantiation” is “consubstantiation” which says that while the bread and the wine do not change in substance, that the “real presence” of Christ is in the elements.

We believe that the Lord’s Supper is a **memorial** service and the elements of bread and wine are only symbolic.

When Jesus instituted the Supper, He sat before them in His body and said as He broke the bread; “This is My body ...”

It is absurd to think that He meant that the bread was His actual body.

The bread remains bread and the wine remains wine!

So dear Christian when Jesus says, “This is My body ... This is my blood”, in the actual Lord’s Supper it is made clear here in John 6 beyond any doubt that His words are to be understood only in a **spiritual** sense.

The strength of this case is reinforced when we recall that when Christ said to Nicodemus, “Unless one is born of water and [even] the Spirit ...”

Jesus was referring **not** to the baptismal water but to the prophetic emblem of the Holy Spirit taken from Ezekiel 36:25-26, where water and Spirit are conjoined in one statement making clear that the one is the symbol of the other, viz. regeneration.

In my understanding it is of the **highest import** that you understand the **spiritual** meaning of what John records. The legalists and the literalists have nearly ruined any hope that many will see the **sufficiency** of the life and work of Jesus Christ.

**One of Satan’s greatest weapons is to take something good and twist the true meaning to the point that it becomes an idol!**

Only grace will allow a sinner to discount every personal act of obedience and any notion that presumes to gain merit from God. All our righteousness is in Christ Jesus. Isaiah in 64:6 says this about our personal “righteousness,”

**But we are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;**

As you worship Jesus Christ in the memorial Supper may you have a clear understanding of “eating and drinking” the Lord’s body and of His blood.

The true “eating and drinking” the Lord’s body and of His blood is to dwell on the **doctrine** of Christ and to make His Word that which sustains you in life until you die.

The Lord’s Supper is given to the church to remember His death until He returns in glory and judgment at the end of this present age.

I hope this brief exposition of a part of John Chapter 6 has been helpful and focused on the Gospel of repenting and believing in the sufficiency of what Jesus has done and dispelling any notion that there is anything to be gained in the taking of the Lord’s Supper beyond a memorial of His death and the promise of His soon return in glory.