

Feeding on Jesus

Livin' the Life

John 6:52-59

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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he offers in our series on the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. We are in chapter six, looking at Jesus' sermon on the bread of life today (6:52-59). Today's passage continues the dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. The Jews are arguing with each other over how can Jesus give his flesh on their behalf (52)? Jesus said that he would give his flesh for the life of the world, pointing to his going to the cross (51). The Jewish leaders are now hostile to Jesus and they want to kill him (5:18). Why are they so hostile? John told us that the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil (3:19). Humanity rejects Jesus because we love darkness as it is consistent with our sinful human nature. We raise barriers in our minds and attitudes against the truth. We find ways and reasons to reject the truth even when there is reasonable evidence for it. We even see this in popular culture. There are those who do not believe we landed on the moon or that 9/11 happened or that the earth is round and I read this week that 23% of CEO's are fired annually because they are unable to accept reality.

Jesus responds by saying that feeding on him brings eternal life and eternal joy and satisfaction. He says it negatively and then positively to make one point. Feeding on Jesus gives life and eternal joy. Follow along as I read verses fifty-three and fifty-four. Negatively, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Then, positively, whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day (53-54). Jesus is speaking figuratively. Flesh and blood are metaphors for his atoning death on the cross (51) so that eating and drinking means coming to him in faith so that his life counts for ours (see 6:40). These verses teach us three truths. First, there is no eternal life or any spiritual life outside of Jesus. Second, Jesus is the only source of eternal and spiritual life. There are no other paths to God but Jesus. But I want you to notice a third truth that we see in these verses. These two verses make the same point. They are parallel to each other, making the same point but in different ways. The second verse interprets the first. There is no life in us unless we feed and drink on Jesus (believe; 53). Then he restates himself, the one who feeds and drinks on Jesus (believes), has eternal life and Jesus will raise him up (54). To have life is to have both eternal life and be raised up by Jesus. If you have eternal life, you will be resurrected to eternal joy.

Then Jesus builds his case by giving the reason believing in him gives eternal life, his flesh is true food and his blood is true drink (55). Jesus is the only source of eternal life, knowing the true God and his Son (17:3). He contrasts the manna in the dessert to himself (58). They have been making a big deal about the manna but Jesus is the better Manna. The manna was a miraculous gift God gave the Jews in the wilderness but they still died. I love food, you love food; some of us love it more than others. But you can eat all you want and you will still die. The ultimate reason God gave Israel the manna and God gives us food and makes us dependent upon food for survival is to point us to our need for the better and greater bread of life, Jesus. Jesus is the only one who can rescue us from our sinful condition because flesh is true food and his blood is true drink. Jesus is the only one who can give eternal life. Then Jesus describes how he gives eternal life. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him (56). Eating and drinking or believing in Jesus is the way we have union with him so that his life counts for our life and sustains the life he gives. Eternal life comes from being united to Jesus, like a branch is united to a vine, so that his work on the cross is counts for us. By faith, we are united to Jesus so that we have eternal life and are raised up to eternal joy and satisfaction. Eternal joy and satisfaction, being raised by Jesus, is the extension and the perfection of the eternal life we experience now, knowing God through Jesus.

Then Jesus compares this abiding with him to his relationship with his Father, showing the depth and permanency of this union. 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 (57). In the same way the living Father sustained Jesus during his earthly life, those who feed on Jesus have life because Jesus determines that they have life and Jesus sustains them until he resurrects them. True spiritual life is found and sustained in the Son. So, the message of chapter six is come to Jesus, feed on Jesus or believe on Jesus for eternal life. The issue for all of us is unbelief. If you are not a Christian, the gospel calls you repent and believe in the work of Christ. If you are a Christian the gospel calls you to repent and believe the gospel. Feed on him and you will be filled. Feed on Jesus for eternal life, feed on Jesus to sustain your spiritual life, feed on Jesus for eternal joy and satisfaction.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why are the Jews disputing among themselves (see v. 51)?
2. Why are the Jews so hostile to Jesus and resistant to his claims?
3. Why does Jesus use the terminology of eating or feeding on his flesh and drinking his blood?
4. Why does Jesus use feeding and drinking as metaphors for faith?
5. How does that mean for us daily?
6. In what ways or areas of life are you not feeding on Jesus or trusting him?
7. What does it mean to repent and believe?
8. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
9. Are you following Jesus?
10. How do you go to Jesus to sustain you spiritually?
11. What is God telling me from this passage?
12. How will I respond to him?
13. What is in the way of me listening to God?
14. What does God want me to share with someone?
15. How is God working in your life?

