

John 6:51-58 Maintaining A Healthy Spiritual Diet

Delivered on August 19, 2018 by Elder Caleb Jones at Littlefield Presbyterian Church

In the beginning was the Word. Those are the first words of the gospel of John. The Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word was Jesus. John is saying that Jesus has always been here and will always be here for us in scripture and life.

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” I am sure many of us have heard the saying “you are what you eat.” When I hear that, I am reminded of a cartoon strip where two friends were at lunch together. Before ordering their food, one friend looked at the other and said “Don’t forget, you are what you eat.” The other friend looked up and said “well then, I need to eat a skinny person.” Now, that cartoon may be a little extreme.

But Jesus’ clarification to the Jews is just that...extreme. Eat my flesh; drink my blood. Could it be that Jesus saying this is a graphic way of saying “receive me”? I’m not here to offer you a religion. I’m here to offer you a relationship. One with the true God.

Why would he be so extreme?? Because following Jesus is extreme. The Christian life is easy right? Right? NO. The Christian life is impossible without the Spirit.

When you journey through the Gospel, it seems like the cost of discipleship gets heavier and heavier and you can feel your back stooping over just a little more. Jesus tells us as his disciples that we are to love as God loves and we feel the weight of these words on our shoulders. Jesus tells us as his disciples that we are

to see our neighbors as our brothers and sisters and once again, we feel the weight of these words on our shoulders. Jesus tells us as his disciples that we are to trust in God, not our possessions and we feel the weight just a little more. And as we continue our journey, we try to shift the weight around so we are just a little bit more comfortable as we journey to Jerusalem. And then as soon as we think we are comfortable, that we have our backpack of discipleship shifted in a way that makes for easier carrying, Jesus adds another package, another weight by reminding us that we are called to live out our lives with the mentality that the Kingdom is happening now; that we are to live out the Kingdom in all our actions and our deeds as disciples.

And at this point, we realize that we are stooped over, with our backpack of discipleship, heavy upon our backs, and our foreheads almost touching our knees as we struggle under the weight to take another step with Jesus.

But God does not call us to be successful. God calls us to be faithful. Faithful to God and not the world. That does not mean abandon the world. But you can strive to make it better.

Jesus started by saying, "I am the living bread. Thru me you will live forever." That was not enough for them. They still had all the noise of traditions filling their ears and they could not hear the truth speaking. Our kids have the distractions of TV, internet, radio, peers, school.

We adults have the distractions of bosses, spouses, kids, washing machines, PTA, church. All these things keep our arms up blocking our view of God.

When we recite the Lord's prayer. How many can say the words without looking?? PAUSE. How about the apostles creed? "I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and

earth.....” We get so distracted by the everyday stuff, that Jesus has to knock us ‘off center’ to get us to listen.

Here is an example of how lost we are; not only about receiving God’s message but also about how we deliver that message to others. A pastor stood near a sharp curve on a busy road holding a sign. It read “The end is near! Turn around before it’s too late!” A sports car zoomed by as the driver honked his horn, shook his head and stomped on the gas. Moments later the pastor heard the sound of screeching tires, followed by a big splash. The pastor bowed his head and prayed. Then he turned his sign around and said, “Maybe I should change my sign to ‘Bridge Out’.”

The Jews had been chewing on the old model all their lives. You know what that is...Moses and the Sinai covenant. Jesus was offending them because he wanted to change the old model to a new model. They saw the current way as the best way.

That’s the way we’ve always done it. Why change. But what the old model was lacking the new model was completing. Jesus said “I have come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.”

What was the purpose of the old covenant? To get God’s people to live in relation with God. All these rituals and all these covenants the Jews had, were to get closer to God and **HERE HE WAS. IN THE FLESH.**

In being offensive, Jesus is trying to love them ‘off-center’ because God is not where they are. Chew on my flesh. Naw on my bones. The other way was not working guys. Look back in history.

In the scriptures before this, the Jews were asking for a miracle as proof. Basically, they were saying “Do a trick for us.” Jesus hits

them with eat my flesh and drink my blood. And they are going “what, I can’t believe he said that.” Jesus was saying “You want one part of me and I will give you all of me.”

You don’t get just the “miracles”, but you get everything. Take it all until you’re not only consuming me, but I’m consuming you. Jesus wants you to desire all of him. You can’t know Jesus until you live on him, consume him, experience him, desire him.

And in that desire and experience, you will be transformed into a new creation. The old you will pass away. A new you will be reborn. That hole in your heart will be filled by God.

Life which was temporal is now eternal. Death which was imminent is now defeated. As you feast daily on Christ and feed on God’s Word, you will grow from the sustenance provided.

The greatest proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is alive today should be YOU. Let me say that again. The greatest proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is alive today should be YOU. You have these huge backpacks on your back that are so bulky and so heavy they push you down to your hands and knees and you wonder if you will ever be able to get back up.

But then we read today’s scripture and in discussing it we realize that the only way that we will truly live is to feed on Christ constantly. God wants to use YOU. God has saved you by grace and has made something out of your life. Now, God wants to show you off to a lost and dying world. The best thing you and I can do is throw our excuses down and realize that God is able where we are not. Our heart’s desire should be and must be to serve God at all costs, regardless of what is asks from our lives. After all, Christ gave His all, and He asks no less from us. Are you willing to come to Him today and throw in the towel? With all the noise in your life, Are you willing to say, "God, here I am send

me".

You need to be filled on the feast that he provides for you. You need to consume him and let him consume you. We need to eat proper food in the proper proportion sizes to live a healthy life on this earth. Are we eating the proper spiritual food to ensure we have eternal life? We need a continuous life-giving food source to live forever. Remember God put a tree of life in the Garden of Eden? After Adam and Eve sinned he sent an angel with a flaming sword to block off that tree so that they wouldn't eat of it and live forever in a sinful state of being. Our new tree of life is a wooden cross that was placed on Calvary and Jesus is the fruit of it. We must eat it to live!

Without physical food our bodies cannot live. Divine life is sustained by divine food. Without accepting the body and blood of Jesus as our spiritual food, we will die spiritually. But Life is in the blood. Let the blood of Jesus cover you. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, sweeter also than honey from the honeycomb!" Jesus has given you: access to the throne of grace, acceptance by God, adoption as sons and daughters, assurance of resurrection. He has purchased these privileges and paid the price with his own flesh and blood so that now God sees you as his own flesh and blood.

So, I say again, you are what you eat. Does anyone have an appetite for Christ? Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? Believe on him and you shall be saved.

Jesus knows your heart aches and the pain and suffering you are going thru. He knows what is happening in your life. He is telling you to come and eat with him. Let him be a part of your life to transform your life by maintaining a healthy spiritual diet.