

Will You Eat the Bread of Life?

John 6:35-40

BI: To believe in Jesus is to take Him into your soul by faith as one takes bread into His body by eating. Will you receive Him today?

Introduction:

This morning is “Lord’s Supper Sunday.” And in a few minutes we will be sharing fellowship around the Lord’s Table. As we prepare for that I want us to think about why Jesus set up this ordinance of the church to consist of bread and wine. Now we understand, do we not, that the bread represents Jesus’ body and the wine (or grape juice in our case) represents His blood. And someone might observe that Jesus based the Lord’s Supper on the feast of Passover which also included bread and wine. Certainly that is true, and the whole Passover feast is worthy of exploration relative to its symbolism. But we will have to leave that for another time.

What I want us to see consider this morning is that the Lord’s table us is a physical picture of the gospel. And my question about that is, Why did Jesus decide to establish the Lord’s table in a manner that involves eating and drinking? Why didn’t He set up the official picture of the gospel as an activity that involves kneeling, bowing, crossing one’s self, and saying a prescribed prayer. Why do the chief features of His picture of the gospel involve eating and drinking? That seems strange, doesn’t it?

What I want us to see this morning is that by requiring His picture of the gospel to involve eating and drinking Jesus shows us exactly what saving faith is like. It is more than thinking about Jesus in an orthodox manner. It involves more than that; something that is helpfully and powerfully pictured by the act of eating and drinking.

Read John 6:35-37

1. To this point Jesus has been speaking in cryptic language (cf. O.T. Mashal). Up until now His words are presented to the crowd as kind of a riddle or Proverb. Now he offers the *interpretive key* by stating very clearly, “I am the “bread” - the bread that will permanently satisfy the hunger of your soul.
2. The Scriptures often speak metaphorically of man’s need for God in terms of hunger and thirst (cf. Psa. 42:1-2; 63:1). So Jesus is saying that He is the embodiment of the very gospel He offers.
 - A. Psalm 42:1–2 “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?”

- B. Psalm 63:1 “O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.”
- C. Isa. 55:1–2 “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance.

3. In keeping with O.T. imagery, therefore, Jesus speaks of our need of Him in terms of eating and drinking. By the way, when Jesus says, “I am the Bread of life” He is offering the first of His seven “I Am” metaphors in the gospel of John.

- A. The Bread of Life - Satisfier and sustainer of life (6:35, 48)
- B. The Light of the World – Dispeller of sin’s darkness (8:12)
- C. The Gate – Entrance into security and fellowship (10:7, 9)
- D. The Good Shepherd – Protector and Guide in Life (10:11, 14)
- E. The Resurrection and the Life – Hope in death (11:25)
- F. The way, Truth, & Life – Certainty in complexity (14:6)
- G. The true Vine – Source of vitality and fruitfulness (15:1,5)

4. Offering Himself as the “Bread of life” is not simply Jesus inviting them into intellectual belief in him but rather it is Jesus inviting them to internalize Him like one takes bread into His body. Think about it:

- A. When you have a loaf of bread it does no good simply to look at it and smell it, and theorize about it, and say that you believe it. It does you no good until you eat it. A light is of no use if you do not put yourself under its illuminating glow. A gate is no good to you unless you step through it. A shepherd benefits you NOT AT ALL unless you follow Him.
- B. You see, Jesus is not simply someone to “believe” in. He is Someone to *take into the core of your being*; to eat Him; to drink Him; to take Him into the very fibers, cells, and thought processes of your soul so that He transforms and gives life to all that you are! This is what it means to believe.
- C. And this is why Jesus said things like (Luk. 6:46) “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do what I say?” You are not benefited at all by having a Lord whom you do not obey.
- D. So it is with the Bread of Life. You must eat it to receive its benefits; Which is the same as saying, you must receive Jesus into your life just as He offers Himself.

5. Hendriksen writes: “It is through faith, i.e., through intimate union with Him, assimilating Him spiritually as physical bread is assimilated physically, that man attains to everlasting life.”¹

6. This metaphor is very similar to the kind of thing Jesus said to the woman at the well in John 4. Jesus said to the woman, “*Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life*” (Jn. 4:14).

7. Again we read in John chapter seven, “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink’” (John 7:37).

8. In our passage back in chapter six, Jesus is speaking to the very people who ate the bread when He fed the 5,000. The amazing thing, however, is that even though Jesus repeatedly proved His identity and even though the crowds had personally benefitted from following Jesus, they still did not believe in Him. That is, they would not personally receive Him for who He is. They would not bow the knee and come to Him on His terms. They simply would not believe.

Read 36

9. Jesus is charging the Galileans with unbelief. They had seen Him and were impressed with His miracles and even suspected that He might be the great Prophet that Moses predicted. But they did not see Him for who He truly is. As Constable observes, “Physical sight and spiritual sight are two different things.”²

10. You might ask, “How could they have been so blind?” That’s a good question. These past couple of weeks we learned that people are often blinded by their own desires. “*We do what we do because we want what we want.*” But there is also another blinding influence upon the lives of unbelievers that keep them from seeing and delighting in the awesome goodness and glory of Jesus.

11. 2 Cor. 4:3–4 “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whose case the god of this world [satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...”

12. So there are two great forces working against God’s plan to redeem a throng without number who will worship and adore Christ for eternity. There is the power of the sinner’s own desires, and there is the power of Satan who is actively at work to blind their minds to the glory of Christ.

13. Now, someone might ask, “Then how in the world can anyone hope to come to know Christ? How can anyone hope to be saved?”

¹ William Hendriksen, *Gospel of John*, (1953) Baker Book House, (233).

² Dr. Constable’s Notes Online: John, (116).

14. That's a great question, and one that we will delve into more deeply next week. But let me just answer it very succinctly by saying that *the only ones* who will be saved are those whose *desires* the Father actively and independently changes by the power of His regenerating grace. He must do a miracle of grace that changes their spiritual appetites so that we who once hungered and thirsted for whatever we could forage from the world, the flesh and the devil, now find that we have an insatiable desire for the living water and the bread of life who is Jesus Christ.

15. Exploring this passage together is going to lead us into some very deep water, to be sure. But in reality, if you don't personally know Jesus Christ this morning the question is very simple. What is keeping you from believing and receiving Him? Right now He offers Himself as the living bread. What keeps you from receive Him? Why have you not yet eaten the "Bread" that gives eternal life?

16. You might say, "Well, I'm not ready for that. If I receive Jesus the way He wants me to receive Him, He is surely going to rock my boat and change my world." Well, you're right about that. But what's so wrong with inviting the author of life - the Architect of your soul - to come in and fix what is broken? What's wrong with asking the great Physician of your soul to come and heal you where you are ill? What's wrong with asking the Good Shepherd if he would set you free from the bondage of following your own impulses and adopt you into His flock where you can follow His lead instead?

17. If you could really see your life as He sees it you would know that deep down your soul is desperately hungry and thirsty and nothing in this world that you have tried has helped. Jesus offers himself to you now as the Living Water, and the Bread of Life. Come and drink deeply of Him. Come and feast on all that He has promised to be for you.

18. If you sense that He is giving you a hunger and thirst for Christ that you have never known before, then come with a broken heart saying, "Lord Jesus, I have nothing to offer you but my brokenness and sin. I have nothing by which to commend myself to you, but I have nowhere else to turn. Will you receive me? Will you accept me? Will you let me drink from your Spring of Living Water? Will you let me feast on the Bread of Life? Take my life. Do with it whatever you will. I trust you. And I entrust my life and my all to you completely. Please forgive me, save me, and make me your own.

19. This is what the people in John 6 would not do. But for you Jesus says, (6:37) "Whoever comes to me I will certainly not cast out." Isn't that great news?

20. The way Jesus presents it, to believe in Him is *NOT* simply to start thinking of Him in a manner that is theologically correct. It is more like eating Him and drinking Him. It is taking Him into our deepest parts where He can transform us from the inside out.

21. So as we come to the Lord's Table this morning, let's come realizing that eating the bread and drinking from the cup is indeed the perfect picture of the gospel. 1 Cor. 10:16 "*Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?*" And if you have never come to Him in the way He prescribes, then perhaps today will be the day of salvation for you.

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