

The Lord's Message: Feeding on Jesus: Bread of Eternal Life

Date: September 5, 2021

Where: Tilghman United Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: John 6:56-69

Today, we are wrapping up our sermon series: Feeding on Jesus. In the past Sundays, we have learned that Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Living Bread and the Bread of Heaven. This Sunday, we are learning about Jesus is the Bread of Eternal Life.

Let us pray.

If you would like to turn in your pew Bibles this morning to the John 6. I want to start this morning not John 6:56, but I want to start at **John 6:51**. Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Notice Jesus says, "I will give for the life of the world." This is future tense. Jesus is not saying I have given my life for the world, but I will give my life for the world. Today, we could conclude that Jesus is talking about His crucifixion. Jesus gave his life on a cross for our sins. This happened almost 2000 years ago.

This conclusion would also explain Jesus point where He says in **John 6:53**. Jesus says, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." This is the language of Holy Communion. Jesus passes the bread to his disciples and to us saying, "Take, eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Jesus passes the cup to his disciples and to us saying, "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Jesus goes on with this dialogue and Jesus says something in **John 6:63**, that appears to contradict what He has said earlier. He says, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life." One minute, Jesus is telling us that if we do not eat his flesh then we have no life in us. Here Jesus is saying the flesh counts for nothing. We know that Jesus would not make a mistake in this dialogue, so what is going on here. Jesus is moving the dialogue deeper into eternal life. There are two camps that most theologians find themselves in with regard to this verse of scripture. One explanation is that Jesus is talking about our will that is opposed to God's will. The other explanation is that Jesus is talking about that fact that all of us are made up of soul and flesh. When we die our souls go to heaven to be with God. The flesh goes in the grave. I say why can't you have both? Why can't you have a blueberry muffin and a piece of Coconut cake? Why can't both be correct.

Let us look at first theological explanation of our will oppose to God's will. In **Galatians 5:16-25**, Paul gives us the difference between "the works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit." Our will is flesh. The Spirit is God's will. So, we need to surrender our will to God's will. It was not too long ago, that people were seen wearing WWJD wrist bands. WWJD stood What would Jesus do. By surrendering our will to God's will, we start to think about how we should treat others, how we should protect the environment and also how we should keep ourselves from falling into sin. We should strive to be more like Jesus.

This principle of surrendering our lives to God's will starts with us believing in Jesus. This word, "believe" is used over 80 times in the book of John. In **Revelation 3:20**, we are told that believing in Jesus means to open our hearts and allow Jesus to take up residence. The phrase, "I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me," directs us to Jesus taking up residence. Another word that could be used is to "abide." Jesus uses this word in **John 5:56**.

The second theological explanation is that when we die our soul goes to heaven and our flesh or body goes into the grave. In **2 Corinthians 5:6-10**, Paul says that when we are absent from the body, then we are home with the Lord. God has poured His Spirit in us. In **Genesis 2:7**, God breathed life into man and man became a living being. That breathe or Spirit is eternal. When we die, our bodies die, but this breathe or Spirit in eternal. So, where is this breathe or Spirit to go, but to the only eternal place and that is with God. There will come a time of judgment. All of us will be judged. In the Apostle's Creed, our faith affirms who that is going to be. Jesus "will come to judge the quick and the dead." When Jesus, the Bread of Eternal Life, comes to judge the believers, then Jesus will tell God that these are mine. Those that do not believe will go into eternal hell. All of us will be judged. The believers not for their place in eternity, but for their standing in heaven.

These are keys to eternal life in heaven: to believe in Jesus and abide in Him. Eternal life does not begin when we all get to heaven. Eternal life can begin right here today. Eternal life actually begins here on earth. By accepting Jesus into our lives, we are willingly submitting to God to transform us. The transformation begins with God's Justifying Grace. Jesus loves us so much that Jesus was willing to pay the penalty for our sins by dying on a cross. Jesus broke down the barrier of sin that separates us from God. Our sins are now forgiven. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" God continues the eternal life process with God's Sanctifying Grace. The Holy Spirit lives in us, teaches and transforms us into the image of Jesus. We learn how to love and worship God. We learn how to live our lives as an offering of thanksgiving to God. We learn to love our neighbors as God loves us. We begin to live and think differently. This process continues until we reach what John Wesley refers to as "perfection." This perfection will only be completed when God takes us to heaven.

A little boy was misbehaving on Sunday morning in church. The boy's mother couldn't stop the youngest from talking and fidgeting, so she turned to the boy and whisper in his ear, "Why are you acting like this, honey?" She paused a moment, placed her hand on his tiny shoulder and in a gentle voice, quietly questioned, "Don't you know who created you?" The boy glanced at his mother and smiled, with his eyes filled with hope. Then he explained, "God made me, mom, but ... He is not through with me yet!"

None of us here are perfect, but we can start living our eternal life now, by believing and abiding in Jesus. In **John 6:68-69**, Peter gave the correct answer to Jesus' question of "Do you also wish to go away?" Peter said, "⁶⁸ Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

Jesus is the Bread of Eternal Life. Let us feed on him every day, so that we surrender our will to God's will and can live into this eternal life, now and forever. Amen.