

Putting On Christ | Jesus Our Wilderness Manna

John 6:47-59

I. Announcements

- A. First-time visitors
- B. Membership Class next week
- C. Nursing Mothers Room

II. Scripture Reading — John 6:47-59 (ESV)

[47] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. [48] I am the bread of life. [49] Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. [50] This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. [51] 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.”

[52] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” [53] 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. [54] Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. [55] For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. [56] Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. [57] 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. [58] This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” [59] Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

III. Introduction — Misconception of the Gospels

- A. Various biographies of Jesus
- B. Generally: virgin birth, grew up, miracles/teachings, death, resurrection
 1. We just finish the story by asking Jesus into our hearts so we can go to heaven
 2. Comment on social media: “Even though our paths are different here on earth, I believe that God made our plans for heaven to be our final destination. He gave us insurance by sending his son to die on the cross for us. By coming in contact with the blood of Christ, we punch our ticket for the paradise that awaits us.”
- C. Oversimplified view renders the gospels boring; their beauty is lost on us. Breathtaking drama that unfolds throughout human history.
- D. What about NOW?

IV. John 6: Echoes of Moses and the Israelites

- A. Begins with the seemingly benign statement that this occurs at Passover time
 - 1. Blood of the Lamb
 - 2. Meal prepared in way that the Hebrews could hastily flee Egypt at a moment's notice
 - 3. Fled Egypt to the Wilderness — after crossing the Red Sea
- B. Jesus multiplying the bread and fish —> Manna from heaven
- C. Grumbling in the Wilderness —> Grumbling around Jesus in the wilderness
- D. Jesus walking on Water to get to Capernaum —> Crossing of Red Sea
- E. “I am” statements in John
 - 1. 6:35, 48, 51 — I am the bread of life
 - 2. 8:12, 9:5 — I am the light of the world
 - 3. 10:7, 9 — I am the door of the sheep
 - 4. 10:11, 14 — I am the good shepherd
 - 5. 11:25 — I am the resurrection and the life
 - 6. 14:6 — I am the way, the truth, and the life
 - 7. 15:1 — I am the true vine

V. Text — John 6:47-59

[47] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. [48] I am the bread of life.

A. What does it mean to believe?

- 1. Chases this with an idea so abstract that people are taken aback
 - a) I am the bread of life
 - b) Eat this bread and live forever
 - c) Eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood
 - d) :56 — Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.
- 2. John 4:46-54

[46] So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. [47] When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [48] So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” [49] The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” [50] Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. [51] As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his

son was recovering. [52] So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” [53] The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household. [54] This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

- a) Problem: People “wanted miracles to order rather than moving on to real faith”¹
- b) This is largely why Jesus repelled people’s premature efforts to make him King.
- c) But this man believed the word in an uncommon way — a way that revealed what he really thought about the Person of Jesus. He saw Jesus as more than a miracle worker. He had a different kind of belief — a belief based entirely on the strength of Jesus’ word.
- d) He “got” Jesus. The word became flesh to this man.

B. What Makes Belief Hard?

1. For the Jews...
 - a) Shock: Jewish law forbade the drinking of blood and cannibalism. Jesus, it appears, was deliberating going for an emotional, visceral response. (Where do we get the idea that pastors should coddle everything that I already believe?)
 - b) Hard Hearts: Their own assumptions of what Jesus should be to them.
 - c) Outrage Over the Roman Oppression:
 - (1) And slowly, political outrage begins to displace and replace true worship. To the point that people can't tell the difference between them anymore. Outrage feels so right. But often it leads only to self-righteousness.
 - (2) Life was hard, so they couldn't see their own spiritual bankruptcy. People who suffer often give themselves a pass. Jesus didn't. He called them to discipleship — because he knew that their hearts needed him the most.
 - (3) “I believe evangelical churches will not see revival until, in repentance, we change the major focus to *our* sin rather than the world’s.” — Jared C. Wilson²
2. For us in our wilderness?...
 - a) Political Outrage or Euphoria:
 - (1) Euphoria: Our outrage or euphoria over the political and social affairs of our country can become subtle idolatry.

¹ Wright, N.T. John For Everyone. Part 1.

² <https://twitter.com/jaredcwilson>. June 23, 2017. 2:33pm.

- (2) Some of Jesus' followers thought he wasn't nationalistic enough. To others, he wasn't speaking up enough on behalf of justice issues.
- (3) Abide in Jesus. Don't consume the stale bread of political punditry. Don't drink the blood of vengeance that often masquerades as "justice." This will take over your affections.
- b) The Problem of Suffering In Our Wilderness World:
 - (1) People conclude there can't be a God or he is not good or all powerful.
 - (2) But for suffering to cease to exist, God must remove our freedom, volition.
 - (3) Then we become animals. Or worse, machines. And if we're a race of machines, we no longer have an opinion, a protest, and this conversation can't happen because we don't have the freedom to even think it (besides, everyone is doing what they're supposed to be doing anyway). We simply do and say what we're programmed to.
- c) **What makes it hard for me to believe? What hardens my heart toward Jesus?**
[Take a moment and reflect on this...]

C. Conclusion:

- 1. Feast on him.
- 2. Feast on him together.
 - a) "Belief" Is NOT Just A Metaphor For Private Faith...
 - b) Context: A community he was forming in the wilderness
 - c) Greek
 - (1) John deliberately uses a word which rules out metaphor alone
 - (2) Eat = Munch or chew
 - (3) The Lord's Supper — Jesus' body and blood mysteriously offered to believers
 - (4) We are people of the covenant with a holy meal that unites us and binds us as a new kind of community; a foretaste of that wondrous moment when believers will be raised up and eat at the Lord's table for all eternity in the new creation.
- 3. This will lead us to grasp Jesus' glory more and more.