

## **“The Diet for Eternal Life” (John 6:25–59)(3.21.21)**

John 6:25–59 (NIV84) *Jesus the Bread of Life*

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

<sup>28</sup> Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

<sup>30</sup> So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? <sup>31</sup> Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to **the world**.”

<sup>34</sup> “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

<sup>41</sup> At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup> They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

<sup>43</sup> “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. <sup>44</sup> “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ **Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.** <sup>46</sup> No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. <sup>50</sup> But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

<sup>52</sup> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup> He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“The Diet for Eternal Life”**

INTRODUCTION:

I received a text of encouragement last week after worship: It read, “You bring us the fertile word of God each week and we need it. We are thankful for it.” Jesus agrees that hearing God's word is critically

important: John 5:24 (NIV84) “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Paul knew and taught the same truth: Romans 10:17 (NIV84) Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Today we have a rather long explanation by the Lord Jesus. Some have called it a sermon. He addresses key issues for that day, this day, and all days until the last day, the resurrection of the righteous. Will you be raised up on that day? To find out, look at your diet. How are you feeding yourself?

BODY:

Many times over the years I have heard people say something along these lines: “If I could see Jesus nowadays, then I could believe. If I saw bonafide miracle, then I would believe. I think I have seen minor miracles, but if only I could witness something big. God, if you do X and Y then I will believe.”

The evidence of this crowd’s behavior shows that those kinds of thoughts are self-deception. Why?

Because they are declaring self-dependence. They are telling God, when you live up to my expectations, my evidential standards, then I will accept you. A less loving God would be hurling lightning bolts.

The crowd is mystified by how Jesus came to the other side of the lake. Imagine if they had known that He walked on the water. They have seen Jesus feed five thousand men plus women and children with five small barley loafs of bread and two fish. When you read John’s account of that miracle, you learn that many in that crowd had come because they had witnessed Jesus’ miraculous healing of the sick.

And still, they ask for MORE PROOF. They have the effrontery to set the bar – do a greater miracle than Moses providing the Manna in the desert. Inherent in that request is the common mistake of attributing to man what came from God. Jesus corrects them. It came from God not Moses; but more than that, now God the Father gives you living bread from heaven.

They call Jesus, Rabbi. They call him sir. They call him Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know. Do they really know him? Isn’t that problematic? Anytime people try to define God instead of receiving God’s revelation through scripture, it is wrong. Finite creatures give failed descriptions, always falling short of the Truth.

How does Jesus describe Himself in this scripture? Twice he calls Himself the Son of Man, a title most prominently from Ezekiel, followed by Daniel. Jesus says He has the seal of approval from God the Father. Then later, Jesus calls himself **The** Son. Jesus says He is the **one** God has sent. He is the **one** in whom they should believe. Jesus calls God His personal Father. Jesus says He is the true bread from heaven, the bread of God.

Then Jesus makes what is known as one of His seven “I Am” declarations. I remind you that is how God, Yahweh, identified Himself to Moses, “Tell them the great I AM sent you.” Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” Jesus is the one that raises the righteous on the last day. Jesus is the only one who has seen the Father. Jesus is the source of eternal life.

The crowd thought they knew where Jesus came from but Jesus says no, that is not right. Jesus is the bread that comes down from heaven. Starting in verse 31 to verse 58, Jesus speaks about the “bread from heaven” ten times, ten times. Jesus is that bread and He came down from heaven.

There are people who will claim that Jesus never called himself God. This is only one of several scriptures that vehemently contradict that claim. Denial of Jesus’ deity is the defining spirit of the antichrist. I am the bread of life come down from heaven. I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the Good Shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way and the truth and the life. I am the vine.

Jesus says that we are to come to Him. He who comes to Jesus will never go hungry. Only if the Father draws a person can they come to Jesus. Everyone who listens to the Father comes to Jesus. We didn’t read verse 65, but it says only those the Father enables come to Jesus. All that the Father gives to Jesus will come to Jesus. AND, whoever comes to Jesus, He will never drive away.

Do not miss this critical point: Everyone, All, Whoever are words of inclusion. They encompass each and every person that responds to the call. This is consistent with verse 33: For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to **the world**. Jesus came for all, everyone, whoever responds in the whole world.

But wait a second, those verses with the all-inclusive words also have words of divine selection. No doubt that is true. But at the same time, Jesus is preaching to this crowd to come and believe, not to taunt them or to tell them what they are missing. Jesus is beckoning them, exhorting them to come to Him, the living bread who has come down from heaven.

There seems to be a contradiction here. Is eternal life only available by divine decree? Or, is eternal life available by human decision? Yes. Both. It is not a contradiction, but it is certainly a tension. Through the centuries this has been a great point of debate and has even become the central point of disagreement from which new denominations have been birthed.

If you have heard me preach much at all, you know that I have often quoted the Prince of Preachers, Charles Spurgeon. Now, he was a Calvinist and I hold diametrically opposed positions to his understanding of election and free will. Nevertheless, here in this scripture, and some others, Spurgeon deliberately points out the undeniable truth that each person must make a choice for Jesus. Yes, we must see Jesus. Yes, we must come to Jesus. Yes, we must believe on Jesus.

The word believe is used six times in this scripture. In fact, it is given as the very description of **the work of God**, “to believe in the One He has sent.” Warren Wiersbe explains: “Believing is not merely an intellectual thing, giving mental assent to some doctrine. It means to come to Christ and yield yourself to Him. At the close of His sermon, Jesus illustrated *coming* and *believing* by speaking about *eating* and *drinking*. To come to Christ and believe on Him means to receive Him within, just as you receive food and drink.”

You are what you eat. How many times have you heard that expression? In a column about the Secrets of Longevity for “Psychology Today,” Dr. Howard S. Friedman wrote an article, “You Are What You Eat?” (Can eating certain foods make us healthier, or is food just a fashion?) Here is a portion of that article: “I suppose that in a literal sense, it is true that you are what you eat. Our bodies are composed primarily of the food and drinks we put in our mouths, plus some things like oxygen that we draw from the air, nutrients like vitamin D that we make with the help of sunlight, and bacteria that enter from [the environment](#). In this literal sense we are what we eat, but why are we so concerned with what we put in our mouths? Can eating certain foods make us healthier and better individuals as well? Or, is food selection more like fashion, or perhaps even like religion?”

“Over the years, doctors have offered all kinds of contradictory advice about what to eat. You know the scene. Minimize coffee drinking to avoid [caffeine](#); wait a minute, coffee is healthy and protective. Drink lots of milk and eat cheese for healthy bones; wait a minute, avoid saturated fat. Army K rations provided to the combat troops often contained sausage, candy, biscuits, chewing gum, and [cigarettes](#). So, many people throw up their hands in despair and pay no [attention](#) to what might be a healthy diet. In the years since the government-pushed scare about eating FAT came out, the [obesity](#) rate among Americans has skyrocketed. Part of the problem is that healthy [nutrition](#) is very complex;”

“You are what you eat, but you are also what you do and how you relate to others. There is excellent evidence that your overall lifestyle patterns—what we call “healthy pathways” in the Longevity Project—are very important to being happy and successful, and living a long, healthy life.”

To that, I say Amen! But, I ask, “What should you eat for eternal life?” A long life here on earth is one thing, eternal life with the Lord is an entirely different matter. Jesus says that He is sharing the food that will not spoil, but food that endures to eternal life. It comes from Jesus. Not only is it the word of God that Jesus shares, it is the truth of God. AND most importantly it is Jesus himself of which we must partake. This bread gives life. Jesus gives Himself so we may have this life. We must remember that bread was the staple food of their day, and so the **bread of life** should also be our staple food.

Jesus says that His very flesh is what gives life to the world. Eat this bread and you will live forever. Jesus says it from both the positive and the negative perspective.

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup>Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

Jesus explains this truth from many different angles so that no one can miss what He is telling them. But they do. They did then and they do today. Jesus promised that by partaking of the bread that came down from heaven, they would have eternal life, they would live forever, they would have everlasting life.

When we eat, it becomes part of us. We bite, we chew, we swallow. Our bodies break down the food and extract the nutrients. It feeds our muscles, our organs, our brain and hence our mind. Our hearts are strengthened and pump blood and oxygen to every cell. This is what happens in a spiritual sense when we eat of the bread of life. Jesus becomes part of our soul and spirit. The more we consume Him, the more Jesus becomes part of who we are. He lives within us.

Remember also that we must eat every day. Not only that but we eat several times a day. Can you eat for another person? No, they must eat for themselves. Everyone must eat their daily bread.

This figurative language of Jesus' flesh and blood is meant to be provocative. To His Jewish listeners, with their strict dietary laws, it would have been especially hard to receive. They were expressly prohibited from consuming the blood of animals because "life is in the blood." Yes, it certainly is.

To what might Jesus be referring? One point is that we must receive Jesus totally, fully. Another point, is that Jesus must die for His body and blood to become food for us. He says, "This bread is **my flesh, which I will give** for the life of the world." Jesus states three times that He has come to do the will of the Father. That will would bring Jesus to the Calvary Cross.

Jesus was the perfect Lamb that was slain from before the foundation of the world. The final and perfect sacrifice. He is the Passover Lamb for all that will receive Him, for all time. In the Book of Exodus, we learn that on that first Passover night, each household that had the sacrificed lamb's blood on the doorposts would be protected from death. The people within must consume all of the sacrificed lamb. And, so must we.

CONCLUSION:

1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (NIV84)

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

Because Jesus died for us, our debt has been paid. We are redeemed. We have been forgiven and reconciled to God the Father. But there is more! Jesus was resurrected and because He lives, we will live also. Not only will our spirit live eternally, but on the last day, we will be raised up. Four times in this scripture Jesus promises that our bodies will be raised up.

We too will be resurrected and our bodies will be reunited with our spirits. Jesus says that no person will be lost that the Father has given Him. More than that, **no part** of what the Father gives to Jesus will be lost.

John Gilchrist wrote an article, "8 things every good restaurant review should cover." He says, "Don't tell me about the food; tell me about your dining experience. Don't tell me about the food; tell me about the physical properties of the restaurant. Don't tell me about the food; tell me about the people and their food culture. Don't tell me about the food; tell me about their system. Don't tell me about the

food; tell me about their process. Don't tell me about the food; tell me about the service. Don't tell me about the food; tell me about yourself. And then finally, Tell me about the food, **but** find the story."

My friends our food is the bread of life that came down from heaven. The story is that Jesus came and died so that we may live. What is your diet like? Remember you cannot really embrace the experience by reading the restaurant review. You must go and eat the food.

Come to Jesus for the Bread of Life and you will be raised up on the last day.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.