

## Sermon Outline

# “LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## EATING THE MESSIAH (JOHN 6:41-51)

### I. Introduction

- A. God’s highest priority for every human being is that we should find salvation in his Son Jesus the Messiah. To find salvation is to find eternal life, which is ultimately to find God himself.
  - Jn 6:40: “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- B. Instead of thanking Jesus for his teaching, the Jews grumble (vv 41-42).
  - 1. They took issue with Jesus saying that he is “the bread that came down from heaven.”
  - 2. Since Jesus had earthly parents, the Jews thought that was no way that Jesus could have come down from heaven.
- C. But Jesus explains why the Jews don’t want to come to him.
  - 1. No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws that person. All who are drawn by the Father will come to Jesus.
  - 2. And Jesus, for his part, will raise up those people on the last day (v 44).
- D. In verse 45, Jesus connects his teaching with something foretold in the prophets.
  - 1. According to the prophets, when God re-gathers his people at the end of the age, he will take them under his wing and instruct them in a special, individualized way.
  - 2. Jesus says: “It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—”
  - 3. These words show us what exactly God’s end-of-the-age/new creation teaching would be about—*God’s teaching would be about his Son.*
- E. Why is it so important that our teaching in church center on Christ? Because God’s teaching centers on Christ.
- F. Who then is Jesus?
  - Jn 6:47-48: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.”
  - Jn 6:51: “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.”

### II. More Grumbling (Jn 6:52)

- A. The Jews continue to grumble. They assumed that since Jesus had earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, Jesus had to be just like them in every way.

- B. Because they were not able to “think outside the (unbelieving) box,” the Jews could not contemplate the possibility that Jesus might be right.
- C. Just as the Jews complained about Jesus’ saying that he was from heaven, they now begin a new line of complaint. This time, it’s “‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’” (v 52)

### III. Unless You Eat (Jn 6:53)

- A. Jesus does not leap to his own defense. He stays in the same direction.
  - Jn 6:53: “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.”
- B. Jesus’ doesn’t give up. Instead, he becomes even more vivid in his language.
- C. He makes an oath, testifying to the truthfulness of his words: “Truly, truly, I say to you...”
- D. Then he openly invites people now to *feed* on him! He calls on people to *eat* him.

### IV. The Promise (Jn 6:54)

- A. Then Jesus makes the same promise as he did before:
  - Jn 6:54: “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- B. There are two truths.
  1. Those who eat Jesus (that is, those who believe in Jesus) have eternal life.
  2. If we have eternal life, Jesus will raise us up or resurrect us “on the last day.”

### V. True Food and True Drink (Jn 6:55)

- A. In v 55, Jesus tells us why his flesh and blood can achieve such a great salvation.
  - Jn 6:55: “For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”
- B. When Jesus uses the word “true” here, he’s not implying that all other food and drink is false. In this context, “true” refers to that which is ultimate and final in God’s scheme of things.

### VI. Infinite Son, Infinite Worth

- A. Why is Jesus the true food?
  1. It all comes back to who Jesus is.
    - Jn 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
    - Jn 1:17: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
    - Jn 1:18: “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”
  2. Jesus is the Son of God, who is of the same nature as God himself. As such, Jesus’ life has infinite value.
- B. If the life of the Son of God has infinite value, it is fully sufficient to compensate God for all the sins of each and every human being who has ever lived.

—No sin is stronger than the broken body and shed blood of Jesus!!

- C. If we are sorry for our sins, come back to God and depend on Jesus' death to remove our sins, all our sins will be forgiven and we will be reconciled to God who is the infinite Source of Life.
- D. This is why Jesus says, "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink."
  - 1. Jesus' person has infinite and eternal value.
  - 2. As a result, his broken body and shed blood can accomplish ultimate, comprehensive satisfaction for justice; open the way to absolute forgiveness, and grant eternal life to his people.

## VII. Union (Jn 6:56)

- A. Jesus makes another promise in verse 56: "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."
- B. Anyone who believes in Jesus (i.e. relies on Jesus' sacrifice for salvation, depends on Jesus' broken body and shed blood for eternal life) will be joined to Jesus, and Jesus to him or to her.
- C. There is an intertwining/inter-locking between the Messiah and his people.
  - 1. The life of Jesus will envelope each of the individual lives of his people.
  - 2. The life of Jesus will swallow up each of our individual lives such that we become his and he becomes ours.
- D. The words of the love song of Solomon are appropriate here: "My beloved is mine, and I am his..." (2:17).
  - 1. Jesus is mine and I belong to Jesus.
  - 2. In life and in death, in sickness and in health, in failure and in success, in sadness and in joy—Jesus is ours and we are his, forever.
    - Rom 14:8: "For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

## VIII. Interdependence (John 6:57)

- A. This bond with Jesus/union with Christ is the means by which the eternal life in Jesus flows into each believer.
- B. Verse 57 sets up a comparison between Jesus' relationship to God the Father, and Jesus' relationship to us. There is a similarity between Jesus' relationship to the Father on the one hand, and his relationship with us on the other.
- C. What is Jesus' relationship to the Father like?
  - Jn 6:57: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father..."
    - 1. Jesus saying in Jn 6:57 is similar to his earlier saying in John 5:
      - Jn 5:26: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself."
    - 2. I read this as speaking about the "eternal begotten-ness"/"eternal generation" of the Son.
    - 3. Jesus is the Son who is "begotten"/"born" of God before all time and space.
    - 4. But since God is infinite, the Son also is infinite. Since God never had a beginning, the Son never had a beginning.

5. I take the Lord's saying to mean that Jesus draws his own divine life from the Father.
  6. Yet, there was never a moment when the Son did not exist, because:
    - a. The Son is as eternal as the Father.
    - b. The Father could never be without his Son.
  7. A confessional summary:
    - WCF II:3: "In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."
- D. What is Jesus' relationship to us?
- Jn 6:57: "...so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me."
    1. Just as Jesus depends on the Father to be his life, we depend on Jesus for our eternal life.
    2. When we are united to Jesus by faith (= by feeding on him, by trusting completely and utterly in him for eternal life every moment of our lives), Jesus grants us eternal life.

## IX. Eat and Drink Jesus

**This is the guarantee that the Lord Jesus gives us with all the backing of Heaven: *Whoever feeds on the flesh and blood of Jesus, whoever depends on Jesus for eternal life, will receive that eternal life.* By the authority vested in Jesus by God the Father, Jesus will raise up these people on the last day (v 54). He will dwell in them and they in him (v 56). He will grant them eternal life (v 57). This is God's deepest desire for his people. It is for us to be in him and he in us. Eternal life is nothing less than perfect union and communion with God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus 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" (v 58). Eat Jesus. Drink Jesus. Put your hope in him. Depend on him. Live forever. Amen.**

### Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
3. According to v 52, what issue did the Jews take with Jesus' words, "I am the bread that came down from heaven"?
4. According to Jesus, what happens when people do not eat the flesh of Jesus and drink his blood (v 53)? What happens when they do (v 54)?
5. "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55). What does "true" mean in this context? And why is Jesus the *true* food and *true* drink?
6. How does Jesus relate to God and to us (v 57)?
7. "Lord Jesus, Son of God, I rest on you alone for eternal life." Make this a regular prayer.