

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

52 At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

53 So Jesus said to them, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. 54 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the Last Day. 55 For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. 56 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 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. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like your fathers ate and died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.”

59 He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 When they heard it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?”

61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this cause you to stumble in your faith? 62 What if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh does not help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe and the one who would betray him. 65 He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is given to him by my Father.” 66 After this, many of his disciples turned back and were not walking with him anymore. 67 So Jesus asked the Twelve, “You do not want to leave too, do you?”

68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Dear Followers of Jesus,

Some of the things Jesus says are weird while other sayings are hard. As an example of the strange or unusual there Mark 10:25, “**Easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for...**” We accept that Jesus has a point even if the picture isn’t entirely clear to us.

Hard words though are different. Hard words are by their very definition are difficult. We don’t like them and we don’t want to accept them.

John 6:51-69 have both strange words and hard words. “**Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink.**” That is strange and hard enough. Even harder are his words, “**You do not have life in yourselves.**” This is hard because Jesus is saying he is the only source of life and if we don’t believe in him and follow him, we do not have life.

As we dig into his strange and hard words you may struggle. Most of us have questions about things that Jesus says and teaches in the Bible. At the end of the day even if we don’t understand, we want to be where Peter and the rest of the 12 Apostles are. We know Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is real life for us. We echo the apostles, “**To whom shall we go?**” Where else are we going to find life with God? We will address these questions.

Today we finish John 6...**I Am the Bread of Life.** Now we have **Part 3 “To Whom Shall We Go?”**

The setting: Jesus is teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum of Galilee.

1. We trust Jesus and his words as the source of eternal life.

There is a crowd of Jewish disciples and Jewish people who had come to see and hear Jesus. Some of these people believe in him and others doubted or didn’t believe. Jesus wants all of these people to hear his words and believe because they are the source of eternal life.

A. Jesus says, “**I am the living bread which came down from heaven.**” They understood. He is saying, “*I am your Lord and Savior.*” So far this is easy to understand.

1. He goes on and says if they eat this bread, if they feed on him, they will live forever. So he is saying he is God and he will give eternal life. This is easy to understand. The Jews expected the Savior to say something like this.

2. Now comes the part that isn't so easy. **The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**” You can hear them thinking, *“This man wants us to eat his flesh.” That is gross and it is a violation of God’s laws.* Furthermore, how could he give them his flesh? St. John reports they argued heatedly among themselves.

Jesus words are difficult. But we understand when we hear Jesus say, **“I give my flesh for the life for the world.”** We think of John 3:16, **“God so loved the world...he gave his Son...”** Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world.

3. In John 16:25 Jesus tells us he is using “figurative language.” Therefore, we understand that eating from Jesus involves taking in his words and digesting them in our heart and mind.

Never-the-less, we struggle. When we hear a lot of advertisements, commercial or political, we tune them out. We tell ourselves, *“I know what they are going to say.”* We can probably get away with tuning out advertisements, but we need to be careful that we don't miss something we need to hear. The same can happen the word, that is “living bread.” We think, *“I have heard about Jesus before.”* So our mind wanders during the sermon or during a devotion. Sooner or later we forget details. Someone asks us about eating and drinking Christ's body and blood and we freeze, because we don't have details and understanding at hand. This isn't good.

We pray that the Lord forgives us for not paying attention. We pray that the Lord helps us to feed deeply on the word of God. We pray that we remember about the living bread so we can use it and share it with others.

B. Jesus doesn't back down. He increases the stakes. Not only are we to eat his flesh, but it is the **ONLY** path to salvation.

1. Verse 53, **“So Jesus said to them, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves.”**

a) What Jesus is pointing to is that there is no real spiritual food outside of

him. He sacrificed his body and life for our sins. His flesh and blood are a real source of forgiveness of sins.

b) With the forgiveness of sins through his flesh and blood, we have eternal life. Jesus has caused it that we live forever. He promises he will raise us up to new physical life on the last day.

2. As we continue to eat and drink of Jesus, we remain in our faith in him. As we remain in our faith, we make choices that keep us in that relationship. Moses had a choice between the treasures of Egypt and being a part of God's treasured people. However, this also meant suffering. Moses chose God and suffering. He knew that God was blessing him and giving eternal life.

It is not just about listening. Jesus calls on us to accept all his words.

2. We trust Jesus even when his words are hard to accept.

There is a switch in people that are mentioned. Before this we heard the Jews grumbled about Jesus words. Now in verse 59 it is no longer random people in the crowd but some of Jesus' own disciples who have issues with his words. Peter and the Twelve Apostles will set the example for us. We learn that we have to trust Jesus even when his words are hard to accept.

A. St. John reports that many disciple turned back.

1. **“This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?”** It isn't just his strange teaching of flesh and blood, but his claim to exclusivity. You are familiar with this in John 14:6, **“I am the way...no one comes to the Father except through me.”** This part isn't strange. It's clear. But it's too exclusive for some of his disciples. They can't accept that he is the only source of life.

2. What causes you to stumble in faith? Is it an infant having faith? Is it receiving the body and blood of Christ in Communion? One couple I met believed that Jesus was Savior, but they did not accept that the world was created in six normal days. When I stood firm on God's word, they walked out church office where we were having class. Some of these things are very clear, but some Christians find them hard to accept.

The Holy Spirit who gives us life also gives us faith to accept the hard words

of Jesus. Isn't the Holy Spirit in all Christians? Yes, but some may accept Jesus as Savior while rejecting his hard words. The danger is if we reject his words aren't we ultimately rejecting him? The Holy Spirit is working through the word to strengthen our faith so we don't reject Jesus' words.

B. The numbers of disciples were shrinking. Painful for Peter and the rest. Jesus asks, "You too?" Peter responds. The Twelve will follow Jesus. We need to give this kind of response.

1. Jesus is the Holy One of God. Holy One = set apart for the special work of Messiah. They didn't know how Jesus was going to carry out his mission, but he has words of eternal life. They believe he is life.

2. Therefore, we hear their response of God given faith, **"To Whom shall we go?"** Joshua speaks in faith also, **"As for me and my household--we will serve the Lord!"** (Joshua 24:15b) This our response, *"To whom shall we go?...We will follow and serve you as our Lord."*

Conclusion: Where shall we go for dinner? There are many restaurants along Bell Road and all over Surprise. There are many good choices.

When it comes to spiritual feeding there is only one choice, one bread. Jesus is the Bread of Life. His flesh and blood give us forgiveness and eternal life. We have the invitation to feed on him and him alone.

At times our human mind may look at it as a difficult thing. How can he be the only Savior? There are many religious choices in the world. Pray for a strong faith. Listen to God's word. The Spirit will work faith and certainty. He enables us to follow Jesus when his words seem strange or even hard. The Spirit helps us to understand the question, "To whom shall we go?" Amen.