

# The Bread Sermon III

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #21)

John 6:52-59

## A. Our text is one of the hard sayings of Jesus

1. There are many times when Jesus demands hard things from us
2. In this text, Jesus requires we feed on him alone and demands we seek him more than food and drink

## B. The simplest way to see this text is as Jesus speaking of the Eucharist

1. The Eucharist is Jesus' one way of salvation visualized and concretized
2. The Eucharist is Christ's way of personalizing his coming and sacrifice and particularizing our coming to him

## C. This "Bread Sermon" defines the very heart of Jesus's coming and teaching

### THE TEXT

#### A. 6:53 - "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you"

*"Unless one is born again from up above, he can't see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3)

*"Unless a person is born of water and Spirit, that person can't enter the kingdom of God"*  
(John 3:5)

1. The Baptismal "unless" is Jesus' invitation to come to Him through this physical initiation ceremony
2. This Eucharistic "unless" is Jesus' invitation to come to Him through this physical continuation ceremony

#### B. 6:54 - Jesus makes the physical offense even more offensive

1. Jesus uses "animal-eating" words when he says "eat" (i.e., "chomping down")
  - a. In Jesus' day, slurping, chewing with your mouth open, a hearty belch were signs of enjoying and appreciating the meal
  - b. Jesus: "If you're not delicate at meal time, why are you so delicate at faith time?"
2. The Eucharist helps the church remain Christocentric

#### C. 6:55 - "The real food and real drink of real life is Jesus' flesh..."

1. No food on the planet is more nourishing than this bread and wine
2. This food not only recalls the Gospel, this food is the Gospel - Jesus himself

#### D. 6:56 - "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, I in them"

#### 1. In John 15, Jesus will invite us to "abide" (lit. make our home) with him

- a. In John 6, we have the first practical suggestion for how to *abide* - regular Eucharists
- b. Jesus notes if we eat this meal regularly we can settle in with him

#### 2. "Coming to Jesus" in conversion is critically important; coming to him regularly in communion is imperative

#### 3. In 1 Cor. 11:27-34 Paul says we should "come" to Jesus confessant and forgiven, with renewed faith and commitment

*"The renewal of Communion may be a fundamental step toward the longed-for renewal of the Church and for her mission in the world."* (Frederick Bruner)

#### E. 6:58 - Jesus: "Here it is. Here I am. Take a good look. This is it!"

1. When you see/hold the bread and wine you're looking at the meaning of life
  - a. We proclaim God's Word as nourishing Bread
  - b. We invite listeners to respond by coming together to his Table
2. Jesus concludes with a promise of unending Life - humanity's deepest desire

#### F. This is the Gospel in a nutshell, i.e., a Bread offering. May we savor it!

### THE TEACHING

#### A. First, Jesus is teaching that faith is simple to receive

#### B. Second, Jesus is teaching we have eternal life because he promised (cf. 6:54)

#### C. Third, Jesus says he abides in us and we abide in him (cf. 6:56)

1. Just like we enter into an intimate relationship with the bread and wine when we eat and drink it, we enter into an intimate relationship with Jesus when we believe and trust what he did in his suffering and death
2. This is the continued blessing of the Christian life - Christ in us, we in Christ - we celebrate every time we come together around his table.

#### D. "Thus he unites us with himself and so imparts the precious benefits of his sacrifice to all who participate in faith."