

As you have probably noticed, in our Gospel lessons assigned for the last several weeks, we have been in the 6th chapter of John time and time again in essentially the same speech. Week after week we have heard Jesus elaborating on his statement, “I am the bread of life.” I must admit that as I began to prepare to preach this week’s sermon, I was frustrated to have yet another week of seemingly the same stuff to preach about. I thought, “I have already preached about that. Why another week in John 6?” However as the week progressed I realized that my own lack of desire to tell you once again about Jesus being the Bread of Life was a problem. You see, I realized that my lack of desire showed a misunderstanding or doubt about the words of our text. After all, Jesus today says in our text, “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.” My getting sick of Jesus calling us to him, the true bread of life, to eat is like getting sick of air. It is saying, no thanks I don’t need any life today. I would rather die. And further I realized that if I refused to preach it to you, I would be robbing you of your life as well. So on with the text.

Our text today is near the end of John’s extended account of Jesus’ bread of life speech. Jesus has been confusing his hearers with all this talk about being the bread of life from the very beginning. First, people were confused with how Jesus himself could be referring to himself as bread; after all he was a human. Next they were concerned with how he could possibly say that he came down from heaven, because they knew his parents. You might think Jesus eventually would have just stopped and explained everything more clearly. But he didn’t. Rather, he went on with his words to offend even more people. To force the point that he himself was the bread of which they are to partake, he made the picture very vivid. He tells them that if they want to have this bread of life that they asked for, they have to eat his flesh and drink his blood. Even his language forced the point. Up to this point he had used a word for eat which could have been easily understood as figurative. But now he changed to a word that would be similar to us saying chew, munch, or chomp. Yes he told the people that if they wanted life, they must chew on his flesh. And not only that, but he also said something even more offensive to his Jewish hearers. Not only would they need to chew on his flesh but also they must drink his blood. Any Jewish person knew that eating anything with blood even in it was unclean and unlawful. It was unclean because the life of the animal was in the blood. In fact Jesus language was so offensive that we are told that once he finished, most of his followers, save his 12 disciples, left him. They just couldn’t handle these strange hard words.

I think perhaps the opposite is true for most of us. For those of who are used to hearing, “Take eat this is my body” and “Take drink this is my blood,” the words of our text don’t so easily offend. In fact maybe they don’t even stop us for a second. In fact often we feel as I did when I first sat down to prepare this week’s sermon, we are just ready to hear something different. We have heard it all before. And unfortunately it is not just this text that doesn’t grab our attention like it should. There are two many amazing things that happen every week here at church that we don’t even give a second thought about. How many times have you spoken the confession of sin and heard the words of absolution and not even really pondered that a sin that once separated you from God had just been wiped out? The words “I a poor miserable sinner” have lost their punch. “I forgive you all of your sins” just become the words that Pastor says after confession. How many times have you heard that Jesus died for your sins in the sermon, and sort of drifted off because you figure you have known that for as long as you can remember? You just wish we would talk about something else. How many times have you taken the Lord’s Supper without any real thought that Jesus himself is being placed into your mouth? At times, for those of us that have grown up in the church, we have a tendency to hear God’s word and not listen, to just sing a hymn instead of praying it, or to receive the supper because it is the first Sunday rather than because we need it. Even though baptisms are a bit rarer, we tend to be more concerned with whether the baby will cry than pondering the fact the he or she is being brought out from under the hand of the devil into the hands of our loving God.

Today, we need to hear Jesus’ words again. “Unless you drink my blood and eat my flesh you have no life in you.” The things we do here time after time, week after week are that important. It is our life. Without God feeding us constantly, we will die. Without Nicole being washed today she would still be in her sin and would die. Without you hearing God’s word of forgiveness, your guilt would remain on you and you would die. Without receiving the Lord’s Supper for the forgiveness of our sins, our transgressions would lead us to death. These things are our life, and without them we will die.

And being that they are our life, we are excited to receive them each time we get the chance and long for them in between times. We just can’t wait to come and hear again of Jesus, how he went to the cross to take care of our sin, how he met us at the font to wash us clean, how he speaks to us through Pastors his word of forgiveness, how he feeds us with his flesh and blood. It is our life. We breathe it in as regularly as air and are refreshed. The more we receive

it, the more we desire it. We desire more and more life from Jesus. We ask Jesus to speak to us each day in his Word, we can't wait to get to church to receive his gifts, and we long for his supper to be served again.

We are very blessed today to have a full course meal today to chew on. The meal that is set before us today is powerful enough to forgive our lack of zeal for the things of God and then restore that zeal to us. Yes the meal is set before you today. We began by seeing God claim Nicole as his very own, washing away her sins, and giving to her the Holy Spirit. We rejoice that we received the same blessings the day we were baptized. After that, your sins were forgiven as I in Christ's stead announced his forgiveness to you anew. Finally, soon we will come up to the altar where we will eat Jesus flesh and drink his blood as he bid for us to do in our gospel lesson for the day. Life is all around us today. We have great reason to sing, to pray and to give thanks. For without God, we would die. But with him, we are alive! Amen.