

You Are What You Eat: The Radical Truth About Spiritual Nourishment

There's a medical fact that won't surprise you: every single one of us has to eat and drink to live. Without water, we last about three to eight days before dehydration causes irreparable organ failure. Without food but with water, we might survive three weeks to a couple months before our bodies begin breaking down muscle and vital organs for energy. Hunger and thirst remind us of an uncomfortable truth—we are dependent creatures.

This basic biological reality becomes the backdrop for one of Jesus's most bewildering statements in all of Scripture.

The Statement That Shocked Everyone

In John chapter 6, Jesus makes a declaration that stops people in their tracks: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever. And this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

If that wasn't shocking enough, He doubles down: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you."

The crowd's response? Confusion, argument, and bewilderment. How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

This statement came the day after Jesus miraculously fed over 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. When the crowds found Him again, He called them out—they weren't seeking Him because they understood who He was, but because He filled their stomachs. When they demanded another miraculous sign, Jesus responded with this shocking metaphor about consuming His flesh and blood.

He wasn't promoting cannibalism. He was stating His earthly purpose in a way that would grab attention and never be forgotten.

The Life We've Lost

To understand what Jesus means, we need to go back to the beginning. Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed man from dust and breathed the breath of life into him, and man became a living person. Before God's breath, Adam was just mud. The spirit of God is what animates material and makes us alive. God is the author of the spark of life itself.

But sin—breaking God's moral law—severs us from our relationship with Him, our source of life. Isaiah 59:2 says our sins have cut us off from God. Romans 3:23 reminds us that the wages of sin is death. We're like a phone unplugged from its charger—the battery works for a while, but eventually it dies.

This is where the gospel becomes truly good news. Jesus came to offer Himself as a substitute, to stand in our place. Romans 8:4 explains that He did this so that the just requirements of the law would be fully satisfied for us. God, as a righteous judge, must uphold the consequences of breaking His law. We wouldn't want a judge who let a drunk driver go free after they killed someone we loved—we'd be outraged at such injustice. God's justice requires consequences, but Jesus took those consequences upon Himself.

Because of this, forgiveness is now possible. First John 1:9 promises that if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us. With sin dealt with, we can have a life-giving relationship with the Spirit of God once again.

More Than Just Survival Food

When Jesus says to eat His flesh and drink His blood, He's calling us to depend on Him alone as our source of life. But this goes deeper than just avoiding spiritual death. By equating Himself with our most fundamental biological need, Jesus reveals several profound truths about what a relationship with Him looks like.

Food provides things our body needs but can't produce. We need about 30 or more micronutrients—magnesium, zinc, vitamin B6, calcium, vitamin C—that our bodies cannot manufacture. We also need the big three macronutrients: carbs, proteins, and fats. Try surviving on only one or two of these and you'll quickly deteriorate, no matter how much you eat.

There's a fascinating reality show called "Alone" where survival experts are dropped in the wilderness with no food. In one season, a contestant made television history by taking down a moose—hundreds of pounds of meat. Yet despite eating constantly, his body continued wasting away because moose meat is incredibly lean. He wasn't getting the fat he needed.

Spiritually, this principle holds true. Scripture calls our fallen nature "the flesh," and our flesh cannot produce what God wants to do in and through us. We can love to a degree, but we don't naturally love like God loves. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—cannot be produced by our flesh alone. We need the bread of life who reconnects us to God the Father through the Holy Spirit.

We organize our lives around food. Skip enough meals and you'll quickly reorganize your schedule to find some. Professional athletes and Olympians don't just work out—they plan specific meals at specific times throughout the day because they need the physical resources for what's on their schedule.

Yet many of us face Olympic-level spiritual challenges while trying to survive on one meal a week—and a regurgitated one at that. Jesus modeled daily time with the Father, often getting alone to pray. When He taught us to pray, He said, "Give us this day our daily bread." Understanding Jesus as the bread of life transforms this prayer into: "God, I don't know what my day has in store, so I need enough of you for my daily needs."

The early church faced enormous challenges—persecution, estrangement from loved ones, loss of property and friends. Their response? Acts 2 tells us they worshiped together at the temple each day, met in homes for meals, and shared with great joy and generosity.

Research from the Center for Bible Engagement found that people who engage with Scripture three times a week or less see little change in their lives. But at four or more times a week, incredible things happen: loneliness drops 30%, anger issues drop 32%, bitterness drops 40%, and commitment to other believers jumps 200%.

Food is not just about survival—it's good. God could have given us taste buds that made everything taste like cardboard, but He didn't. He created food to be enjoyable. A well-prepared, nutritious, well-seasoned meal satisfies us far better than cheap fast food.

Psalm 34:8 invites us: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." God doesn't want our relationship with Him to be bitter medicine we swallow while holding our nose. Jesus said in John 10:10, "My purpose is to give a rich and satisfying life."

The Main Course

Jesus isn't a supplement to add to your life when convenient. He is life itself. He's not a side dish or dessert—He's the main course, the daily bread, the living water.

When we truly eat and drink of Christ, we're not just avoiding spiritual death. We're being filled with things we cannot produce on our own. We're organizing our lives around what truly sustains us. And we're discovering that God Himself is good—deeply, richly, satisfyingly good.

The question isn't whether you need to eat and drink. The question is: what are you consuming? Are you trying to survive on things that can never truly satisfy—success, popularity, comfort, reputation? Or are you feeding on the bread of life who came down from heaven?

Your spiritual health depends on your answer.

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **John 6:51** - "I am the living bread that came down from heaven..."
2. **John 6:51-58** - The full passage about eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood
3. **Genesis 2:7** - God formed man from dust and breathed life into him
4. **Isaiah 59:2** - "Your sins have cut you off from God"
5. **Romans 3:23** - "The wages of sin is death"
6. **Romans 8:4** - Jesus satisfied the just requirements of the law
7. **1 John 1:9** - "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive"
8. **John 7** - Rivers of living water flowing from the heart (referring to the Holy Spirit)
9. **Galatians 5:22-23** - The fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)
10. **Matthew 6:11** (The Lord's Prayer) - "Give us this day our daily bread"
11. **Acts 2:46-47** - Early church worshiping together daily, meeting in homes
12. **Psalm 34:8** - "Taste and see that the Lord is good"
13. **John 10:10** - "My purpose is to give a rich and satisfying life"
14. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** - Institution of communion ("on the night Jesus was betrayed...")

Alluded to but Not Specifically Cited:

15. **Genesis 1-2** - The goodness of God in creation

16. **Romans 6:23** - "The wages of sin is death" (mentioned as Romans 3:23 in sermon but likely meant Romans 6:23)

Relevant Verses for Main Themes:

- **John 6:35** - "I am the bread of life"
- **John 4:13-14** - Living water that Jesus provides
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - Salvation by grace through faith
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** - Jesus became sin for us
- **Hebrews 10:10** - Sanctified through the offering of Jesus' body