

# ABIDE — The Word Feeds Our Spirit

Pastor Danielle Burkholder

Understanding nutrition requires understanding different cultural palates and food preferences. Pastor Danielle shared a story of how Pastor Perry found more life and more fullness and richness in opening up to a different palate and different kinds of foods. How does eating something else, something better, open your life up to more fullness and richness?

## John 6:25-59

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. *Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.*”

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me,

and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. **Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **I am the living bread that came down from heaven.** Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "**How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**"

Jesus said to them, "**Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.** For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 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. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

*The New International Version (Jn 6:25–59). (2011). Zondervan.*

# Jesus' Primary Concern

The people want more food from Jesus, but he doesn't give it to them. Instead, he says some very difficult things to them that reveal what Jesus' primary concern is.

“You're not looking for me because of the signs, but because you ate and got your fill and looking for that to keep happening — for your appetites to be met, an easier life, bills paid, and that miracle to make your life feel good.”

The bread was good and was a result of the overflow of Jesus' compassion, but Jesus wanted to give them something way better.



The people are looking for more food but Jesus wants to give them himself. The bread they're looking for will mold or become hard tack. But Jesus is forever.

Miracles are great but they are short lived. People can be healed, even brought back from the dead, but they will still die. **Do your desires and what you work for line up with Jesus' primary concern for you?** Or are you still concerned with an easier problem-free life?

“Jesus, if you just take care of this, I'll do XYZ!”

And out of an overflow of Jesus' compassion, he will meet us there. But his invitation is for so much more for us.

The invitation is to not remain in that place of desperation.



You do not have to get your priorities fixed and all your garbage sorted before coming to Jesus. He will meet with you wherever you are.

## Belong Before Believing

“I tried Christianity thing but it didn’t work out for me.” There is a mass exodus from the church right now, and it’s a complicated problem.

But the insight from this passage suggests that one layer for this problem were chasing the miracles or the experience instead of the bread of life.

And Jesus doesn’t make it easy a lot of the times: “Eat my flesh and drink my blood.”

A lot of Jews who heard him say that were offended and stopped following, even dozens stopped following him after he said those things (Vs. 67).

Why the hard sayings?

Part of this reality is that Jesus had to die so that his body and blood could infiltrate our being so that we could be cleansed.

In the same way that eating food that has gone off is a whole body experience of revulsion and getting the food out, eating good food is a revivifying, life giving, and spiritually nourishing sort of feeling. When we eat food, the food becomes a part of us, whether good food or bad food.

So when Jesus invites us to think about his sacrifice as food that we need to eat, he’s inviting us to see his sacrifice infiltrating us and becoming a part of who we are.

This then means that his power infiltrates us and we have his power.

This then means that his authority infiltrates us and we have his authority.

This then means that his truth becomes a part of us and we have his truth.

## Food Will Spoil

Your appetite for the food of this world will eventually spoil. Whether we're bingeing screen time or sitting in despair and depression, we're still so hungry.

The food of this world will spoil, but Jesus' invitation is to food that lasts forever.

As difficult as his sayings are, his truth can impact and fill every part of who you are. Remain in him and you will have life.

When all of our appetites for comfort, food, sex, and every other "food" of this world, when all of that is stripped away, will you still have meaning?

"We distract ourselves with pleasure when we can't find a sense of meaning."

— Victor Frankl

Jesus claims that real meaning cannot be found apart from him. You will still be hungry and you will still be thirsty.

Abiding isn't just abiding in the word, but abiding with the word and with God's people

| — Pastor Seth Trimmer

Eating with others is better than just eating by oneself. IT's by design that we should be "eating the Word" in community.

What is your current appetite? What are you spending large amounts of time digesting?  
Are you looking for life where there is death?

We invite you to consume Jesus & his word with others and in community.