

## Signs: The Gospel of John, John 6:51-58

At the heart of two of the most famous miracles that Jesus performs, we have one of the strangest things that Jesus ever said. That, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”

These words were so disturbing that “many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him (v.66.)” The “Jesus for king!” campaign ends here.

Not only for his disciples then, but all throughout the first century, his words would be a source of debate—and lead to the early church being accused of cannibalism for professing to “eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ.”

But what did Jesus mean—what does it mean that He is the Bread of Life and for us to “eat his flesh and drink his blood?”

The context of his statement can be taken from 6:22-71, **Jesus’ focus is on the need to believe in him—not just the “need,” but the essentialness of belief in “him whom the Father has sent.”**

Read John 6:27, 29, 35, 40, 47, 57

**The implications of Jesus’ words are clear: Believe!**

Now when we read 6:53-58, in the context of those words—what is Jesus saying? **“Eating is believing!”**

### **Eating Is Believing**

Jesus is talking to them about spiritual things—not in literal terms but using a human analogy to convey a spiritual truth. He is utilizing a story and object that they would be very familiar with, the story of manna(lit. in Hebrew: “what is it?”) in the wilderness. Just as God had provided a “gift” then—he provides the greater gift now. **Those who ate the manna still died, those who eat of the Bread of Life will have eternal life** (v.v. 48-51.)

Essentially, Jesus is teaching them (and us): there are two kinds of food; food for the body and food for the spirit. **Food for the body is necessary, but not the most important; food only sustains life, but Jesus gives eternal life.**

## **You are what you eat**

We are called to “taste and see that the Lord is good!” Psalm 34:8 and that “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Deuteronomy 8:3

John has described Jesus as “the Word” and the “Word made flesh.” John 1:1, 14

All of this points to the Word as important—we have the Word today, the source for our spiritual life: **It is essential for developing our faith, the basis of our hope, and the source of our joy.**

**Faith:** 2 Timothy 3:16, **God has given us his word to help build up and develop our faith;** the bible is where our relationship with God, our faith, takes root and grows.

**Hope:** Romans 15:4, **the bible is the basis of our hope—all scripture was written with the divine design to give us hope.** At its core hope is trust—we’re not just optimistic, we’re confident and trusting in a God who is who the bible says he is and will do what the bible says he will do. **Hope doesn’t change my circumstances—it changes me.**

**Joy:** John 15:11, **the bible is our source of joy**—through the development of our faith and hope, we have a perspective of joy that the world can’t shake. **The bible reminds us that God is working through everything!**

## **The Gospel**

The Jews then, and the world today, missed the meaning of what Jesus was saying. It wasn't that Jesus' teaching was hard to understand—but hard to accept once you understand it. To believe in Jesus was to leave everything else behind, to say “no” to self and to selfish pride that thinks itself worthy of eternal life, or false humility that refuses to accept a gift.

Peter understood this, he is able to recognize Jesus as the source of eternal life—his perspective (though not perfect) has changed—he believes.

**Jesus promises eternal life, not to those who eat and drink of his broken body, but to those who believe in why his body was broken—to pay the full penalty for their sin and to give his righteousness in exchange for their unrighteousness.**