

## **“The Bread of Life: Eating Christ’s Flesh”**

**February 7, 2016**

**John 6:35-66**

**The Lord’s Supper**

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”  
I Corinthians 11:26

When we eat bread, we take into our bodies by way of mouth a substance made of flour, water and other ingredients. These ingredients contain nutrients that are needed by the human body. That raw mixture, baked in an oven, becomes the bread that we devour. By chewing we begin to break down the baked ingredients, and digestive enzymes continue this process until the nutrients are extracted from the bread, absorbed by the digestive tract and transmitted via blood to every part of the body. These are assimilated and transformed into the very flesh of the person; prolonging life and vitality.

When Jesus said “I am the bread of life,” (John 6:35), He was saying that He is the source of spiritual life and vitality. His hearers saw Him and heard Him, but were unable to digest and assimilate the spiritual, life-giving content of His Word. Why?

Because “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit” (I Cor. 2:9, 10). Spiritual reality is not discerned by mere physical senses. As physical beings we assign first, by instinct, a literal, physical meaning. But Christ’s words are spiritual truth, which natural sight, hearing and intellect cannot assimilate. They are known spiritually, not naturally, as God’s Spirit illumines us. Only then is Christ’s Word digested and assimilated, enlivening and sustaining the soul.

When Jesus told them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to live, many were repulsed. Some disciples “walked no more with him” (John 6:66). By His words Jesus was separating those whom the Father had given Him (6:37) from those who “did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (6:26). Consider three lessons from this passage:

1. Christ affirmed that His words are spiritual, not literal or physical (6:63). “Bread” is a symbol for Christ, the living Word and life-giver (John 1:1-4, 14).
2. Those whom Christ fed the day prior misunderstood Him to speak of physical bread. Their error is repeated today by teaching that the bread and wine of communion becomes the body and blood of Christ, rather than symbolizing the body and blood.
3. Human instinct operates by literal understanding, which is manifest further in our tendency to materialize the spiritual. Thus, Nicodemus could not understand the concept of being “born again” (John 3), the woman at the well did not perceive Christ to speak of the water of spiritual life (John 4) nor did the multitude hearing Christ speak of the Bread of Life understand that He is the life-giver and nurturer of the soul (John 6). Neither did they comprehend that when He spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood He was speaking of receiving Him and His work by faith; of feasting upon Him spiritually in their hearts.

We feast upon Christ <sup>1</sup>when we believe in Him, <sup>2</sup>when we read and believe His Word, the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>when we meditate upon Him as He is revealed in Scripture and <sup>4</sup>when we worship him as we observe His works of redemption and creation.

