



“THE BREAD OF LIFE”:

Where else would we Go? - Part 2
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41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven?'" 43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 "I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" 71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

In our modern day of the “Jesus light” message of the greater church world, this story today cuts like a razor. There is nothing soft or passive about the words of Christ here, and certainly not in the greater meaning behind them. How we would like so often to take the brash, the offensive, the radical words of Christ out of scripture and out of our lives! If we are willing to receive them as they read, they not only challenge us but bust us to our knees as we realize in humility our shortcomings and failures. Who, having really read the Words of this book has not experienced this?

This event would mark perhaps the greatest ‘throw-down’ by Christ in all of His ministry. It screams loud through the quiet halls of church sanctuaries and the subdued religion of the Sunday church goer. It is roaring, raucous, intense and dramatic! It is the height of Lordship theology, and radical in its startling message. It represents so much of that has been lost to Christendom over the last 2000 years. “Does this offend you?” Oh yes indeed! For the words Jesus speaks in this passage cannot be ignored or slighted or minimized.

Jesus said “I am the Bread of Life.” What a wonderful yet breathtaking little statement! There is nothing passive or half-way in this. Jesus was saying “I’m it.” More than just *teach* it, I literally **am** the very stuff of life! I am your sustenance. I am your completion! Jesus then moves to declare the emphatic nature of that reality; by painting a reality that He was not bread to keep in the cupboard or bread to hold up as a credo or bread to “believe” in as a life philosophy. He was bread in which we are to take inside of us...to make a very part of our life and breath. To inhabit the next physical step in the walk of our living.

Jesus seeks herein to be not just our Savior but our life essence...to be our *everything*. And lest we are apt to reject the theological position that Jesus is to be our literal Lord and *will* be our Lord in our redemptive life, please note that Jesus says here that if you do **not** “eat my flesh and drink my blood”...if you do not “embrace this radical and overt gospel and literally make me part of you,” then *there is no life in you*.

We are told elsewhere that Jesus claims He is “*the way, the truth, and the life*.” We know the verse, but do we know the reality of such? He doesn’t say He **knows** such, or **possesses** such or **teaches** such, but says He literally **IS** those things! And He went on to say that “*No one comes to the Father except through (Him)*.” (John 14:6). The command here is to embrace a dynamic with Him in which He is literally a part of us and we are a part of Him. How dramatic! How daunting! Such would mean when I glorify Him with my living, He is there, and when I involve myself in sin, I take Him with me.

When I stand in defiance to Him we become tepid and He “vomits us up” (Rev 3:16) and I am then therefore not a part of Him. What does that *mean*? I’m not totally sure, but I want no part in that so I avoid being in that place. When I “abide in Him” I live a fruitful life, and He tells us that I can literally “ask what we desire, and it shall be done for you.” (John chapter 15) Ahhh! Sounds like a money tree, but when I am a part of Him I cannot help but want what HE wants!

Again, if we reject this level of involvement and commitment then we “have no life in us.” No *eternal* life. No *abundant* life. No *spiritual* life. No “LIFE!” Oh how many of us are simply walking around through this plane of existence and there is nothing here for us for we are in fact *dead*. Oh how we try to white-knuckled cling to the breath of single-handed individualized mortality and yet Jesus told us that “*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it*.” (Luke 9:24)

By eating His flesh and drinking His blood, by consuming Him to the level that we are part of one another and inseparable, He said we would have eternal life; and that we would dwell in Him and He would dwell in us. There can be a no more magnificent declaration in all of literature than these words.

In the 17th chapter of John Jesus was praying to the Father and said this: “*And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me*.” Made perfect? Not perfect in the understanding of the word in today’s vernacular, but perfect as in “complete.” We are full. We are *whole*. Such is the gospel of Jesus Christ...

It was only the day before that Jesus had fed five thousand plus and how the people had received Him! The crowd surged about Him, but so quickly now the crowd would leave Him. Like the later “triumphant entrance” into Jerusalem...as he rode the fowl of a donkey, where the people threw down palm leaves for Him to cross and chanted “*Hosanna, Hosanna...here cometh the King!*” And then two days later the same people would chant “*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” as Pilate presented the beaten down Messiah. Just the day before the people wanted to make Him

king, and now? What just happened? What was different? They wanted a king who gave them what they wanted. Jesus was not that king.

Even those who professed to have some measure of faith in Him found it herein impossible to continue upon the words of Jesus. So here He was, *alone* with His little group of twelve and He asks, “*Will ye also go away?*” And upon those words, Simon Peter answered with a sentiment that has echoed down through the history of man and the world, “...**Lord**, *where would we go?*”

I believe that such a verbal affirmation as this, of an individual’s ‘no-return’ spiritual position, says something so very deep and profound. For it is this simple and honest statement that says that I have crossed the “bridge of no return” with my Redeemer and have turned and burned the bridge.

I am reminded herein of Cortez. In 1519, the Spanish explorer and conquistador Hernando Cortez sailed 11 ships with 600 men to the Yucatan shores of Mexico, bent upon conquering the Aztec people. He was overwhelmingly the underdog compared to the huge and powerful empire of the Aztecs that had been around for 600 years.

In order to clearly and physically declare his position and resolve concerning this mission, Cortez did something that seemed completely insane to his men: **He gave the order to burn his own ships**. His men resisted, naturally wondering how they would get back home. But Cortez’ answer was this: “*If we are going home, we are going home in their ships!*” The path forward was clear for Cortez – All or nothing, 100% commitment. The option of failure was gone – conquer as heroes, or die. Because now...with the ships burning in the harbor, there was no place left to go...

But for many of us, we still have our ‘foot in the door.’ We may not call it that or perhaps we are unwilling to acknowledge that, but the result is the same. We have yet to ‘burn our ships’...we have yet to jump into the pool all the way. We have yet to ‘get out of the boat.’ We claim that “seeing is believing.” These people had seen the miraculous power of God exercised right in their midst, and yet?

We want to take the position with God that says “show me and I will step out.” But Jesus is saying “step out and I will show you.” What on the earthly realm made Peter believe he could walk on water? He believed...no doubt because of what he had already witnessed under the grace of God, and he stepped out of that boat in faith. Oh yes, it was an imperfect faith to be sure. But there is no record of Jesus kicking Peter out of the club for his failure. It happened because Peter was ‘all the way in.’

Peter answered Jesus “...*where would we go?*” And therein lies the answer to this. *Can you walk away? Do you have someplace else to go?* Because if you do, Satan will provide the way to make that happen. Oh, he has done it so many times, and we have witnessed it! People who have followed Christ...the provider of bread, for sometimes *years* but eventually they drifted away when things got heavy, the demands of faith became too daunting to bear, or they didn’t get more ‘bread’ when they wanted it. Never did they realize that Jesus was always asking for an “all-or-nothing” relationship with Him. They, like the Jewish world in Jesus day, are looking for a Messiah that fits the parameters that they have laid out...a Messiah who would operate within the confines of the walls of their wants and desires.

Jesus has declared that we must “partake of Him” if we are to partake in His life. We must literally assimilate His being into our own in order to experience that kind essence. The people said “*this is a hard saying, who can hear it?*” **Indeed!** And maybe the emphatic nature of the word’s of Jesus as well as this message as a whole has made you quietly bristle at such a declared level of participation and unity that his words imply.

Notice however that there is nothing herein that resembles a scolding or accusation. But rather the words of Christ are rather like the invitation He made to the apostles as He met them on the shore that day after His resurrection; *“come and dine.”* *“Leave the life of fishing boys...and as I promised in the beginning, I will make you fishers of men!”* This is an invitation and an explanation of the path to ‘life large.’ For those who claim they want *all* of Jesus, this is the road He is presenting. This is the way to that life.

Upon Jesus words, Peter stated that for him...and for the apostles that stood there with Jesus that day... a moment of decision, that there was “nowhere else to go.” They had crossed that bridge of no return. There would be no retreat. There would be no compromise. Peter said *“we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Notice the process...they came to *believe* and then they had come to *know*, that He was the Christ. They had witnessed and experienced the real Jesus. They knew He was the real thing, and that He alone possessed the answers of mankind. For these men, there was nowhere else to go.

Many people walked away that day. Apparently Jesus was unwilling to alter His message or soften the gospel in order to build a big church. Like now, many people will in time walk away from such dramatic truth. It happens because they discover that following Jesus just costs too much. I have at times in my life grown weary in the battle. Discouragement and the lack of understanding as to what He was doing caused me in my flesh to desire to leave the fight and find a quiet place where I could live out the remainder of my days in peace. (as if there was any to find outside of Him!)

It was at those times that I came to *this* place...this ‘last door’ to the outside, and like Peter, what kept me inside was *“where else would I go?”* I have seen too much, witnessed too much of the miraculous and experienced too much mercy and grace. My eyes had been opened to the state of the world and the utter desperation of a lost humanity. It is simply too late. Where else would I go? There is no going back. There is nothing out there for me anymore.

So how does this all take place? How do I “eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood?” How do I move from redeemed to consumed? How do I become that connected to the living God? **One**, I must move from *believe* to *know* as the apostles had. Notice that Peter said they had *“believed and had come to know...”* They didn’t make that discovery on their couch. They were thoroughly engaged. They wanted this, and they committed their all to finding it. We will never come to know this relationship with Christ by sitting on a hillside hungry with our hand out. But we do by taking the blessings of a multiplied miracle and sharing it with those who are.

Secondly, I would take you to John 20:19...soon after the resurrection of Christ...

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit....”

Since the resurrection of Jesus, we have had available to us the very Spirit of He who saved us, that will, upon a very real and honest invitation, come inside of us and dwell there as a very part of us. Jesus ...the “living bread” living inside us. But just as the language imparts, we must “eat...and keep on eating, of this Spirit of God.” And He promises that He will become the only bread that will ever satisfy us again...