

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt – 13th Sunday after Pentecost – John 6:51-58 – August 19th, 2018

Think for a moment about how often we need to take in food in order to be well nourished. We need to take in food multiple times a day in order to be well nourished. Most of the time it takes three meals a day with snacks in between. Now God could have created our bodies differently. He could have created our bodies so that we eat once on Sunday and then we are good for the week. But God didn't create our bodies that way. God created our bodies so that we need to take in food multiple times a day. Today in our Gospel Jesus says, **“My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink” (John 6:55)**. Just like we need to take in food multiple times a day in order for our bodies to be well nourished, we need to take in Jesus not just on Sunday mornings but multiple times every day in order to be well nourished spiritually. Today we will see that **Jesus' Flesh and Blood Nourish Us. I. They nourish us with forgiveness. II. And they nourish us with life.**

First, Jesus' flesh and blood nourish us with forgiveness. Jesus says, **“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” (John 6:53-54)**. When we first hear these words we might think that Jesus is talking about Holy Communion. But Jesus isn't actually talking about Holy Communion in these verses. The way we know that Jesus is not talking about Holy Communion in these verses is that he says **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you (John 6:53)**. Jesus is talking about a requirement for salvation. He says unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you. He's talking about a requirement for salvation and taking Holy Communion is not a requirement for salvation. The only requirement for salvation is believing in Jesus.

So Jesus isn't talking about Holy Communion in these verses. Instead, he is talking about believing in him. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood” is a picturesque way of saying “Whoever believes in me.” But why does Jesus call believing in him eating his flesh and drinking his blood?

Well, the fact that he talks about “flesh” and “blood” reminds us of the cross. On the cross Jesus gave his flesh and shed his blood for our forgiveness. So when he talks about eating his flesh and drinking his blood he is talking about trusting in his sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.

Why does Jesus call believing in him *eating* his flesh and *drinking* his blood? I can think of three reasons why Jesus calls believing in him eating his flesh and drinking his blood. First, when you eat and drink something, you take it inside of you. Believing in Jesus is a matter of the heart. You have to believe in him on the inside. Believing in him is like taking him inside of us.

The second reason that Jesus calls believing in him eating his flesh and drinking his blood is that just like we can't live without food and drink, we can't live spiritually without believing in Jesus.

The third reason that Jesus calls believing in him eating his flesh and drinking his blood is that eating and drinking is something that we need to do every day, multiple times a day, in order to be well nourished. In order to be well-nourished spiritually we need to think about Jesus and his