

Hymns: 55 Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It 54 Oh, How I Love Jesus  
Scripture: Psalm 34:1-8

Big Idea: Accept Jesus

John 6

[53] *Then Jesus said unto them,  
Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
Except ye **eat the flesh** of the Son of man,  
and **drink his blood**,  
ye have no life in you.  
[54] *Whoso **eateth my flesh**,  
and **drinketh my blood**,  
hath 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 that **eateth my flesh**,  
and **drinketh my blood**,  
dwelleth in me, and I in him.****

Jesus said this in response to the following:

[52] *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying,  
How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

That's a good question. That's the question we're going to tackle today

Today, we are continuing our study of difficult sayings of Jesus, and I think you'll agree this sounds pretty difficult, as we make our way through the Dispensation of Law in your greater mission to better understand the Bible. But before we do, we need to pause for a commercial break.

{Hold up an egg}

*This is your brain.*

Imagine I'm cracking the egg into a frying pan of hot grease.

Chee

*This is your brain on drugs.*

Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle, pop, pop.

*Any questions?*

Do you remember that commercial? I certainly do. It's called: *This Is Your Brain on Drugs*. It first aired in 1987 – over 30 years ago.

From Wikipedia we read:

*Time magazine described the advertisement as "iconic." It has been recognized by marketing professionals as "one of the most influential" ad campaigns in the **history of marketing**,*

*according to numerous sources, and has been applauded as one of the "most unforgettable images in modern American advertising." TV Guide named it as one of the "top 100 ads of all time."*

“But wait,” you say. {talk like a computer} “That egg is not my brain. My brain is still in my head. And it’s not frying. It’s operating perfectly as blood nourishes it with each heartbeat. My brain is just fine thank you. You are talking crazy talk!”

The commercial used a figure of speech – a metaphor. Of course, your brain is not really *an egg* and not *that egg*. And it’s *not actually sizzling in a frying pan* if you take drugs. The commercial is referring to illicit street drugs like LSD. And even if you take illicit drugs, your brain does not fry in a frying pan.

The metaphor is simply saying that you risk serious brain damage (that is, a fried brain) if you take illicit drugs. As we can see, metaphors are a powerful means of expression. And yet, when some theologians read Jesus’ words, they – **and even major denominations** – treat these metaphors **literally** and miss the whole point.

As we consider this study today, the following three keys of understanding Jesus words stand out:

1. Jesus often speaks using **metaphors**.
2. **Context** surrounding the problem passage provides insight.
3. Jesus views life from a **spiritual** rather than **physical** point of view.

So, having touched on metaphors, let’s move on to context. The last time Jacob Kalara brought you the message from God’s word, he covered an event in John chapter 6. It was the feeding of the 5000 followed by Jesus walking on the water.

To get a feel for this event, we will start with another example.

Golden Corral, Ryan’s, Bonanza, Ponderosa, and Western Sizzlin’ are a few of the names of buffet restaurants we have known and loved. Imagine if you were a teenager (most teens love to eat, I know I did) who lived all of your life in an area of the world where food was scarce. Or maybe in your own family, you had to fight for food at the dinner table because you just didn’t have that much. Imagine a stranger took you to Golden Corral. Wow! Food is everywhere:

Southern food: fried chicken, barbecue pork, fried chicken livers, collard greens, butter beans, fried okra,

Stick-to-your-ribs food: steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, cooked cabbage, baked beans

Breakfast food: scrambled eggs, bacon, pancakes, sausage, whipped cream, strawberries, blueberries, maple syrup, french toast, biscuits, butter and jelly

Ethnic food: Italian, Mexican, Chinese

Is anyone getting hungry here?

Comfort food: meat loaf, roast beef, macaroni and cheese, green beans,

Seafood food: fried and broiled fish, shrimp about five different ways

Soup and Salad bars

And don't forget dessert: fruit, cookies, cakes, fudge, ice cream, pie, cobblers, pudding

The stranger who brought you there paid your admission and told you can eat **whatever** you want and **as much** as you want. You likely would think you died and had gone to heaven and would eat until you were "about to pop." And the next day you would be ready to return to this glorious place and fill up again.

Now, in our scripture today, the meal was fish and bread. Imagine the best fish dinner you ever had. For me, that would have to be at Calabash, N.C. Has anyone been to Calabash? They piled piping hot fried right-off-the-ocean seafood, french fries, hush puppies and cole slaw on a platter – all for \$7.99. It was a mountain of melt-in-your-mouth goodness, and that was just the (smaller) senior plate.

Now let's hit a few highlights regarding this story of feeding of the 5000 – which context precedes today's text.

John 6

*[11] And Jesus took the **loaves**; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the **fishes as much as they [wanted]**.*

Notice this was an **unlimited** buffet. Since Jesus "don't make no junk," it stands to reason here that this buffet had to be melt-in-your-mouth bread and fish – the best they ever had.

Do you remember when He turned the water into wine? His first miracle. It was the same thing. The master of the feast [what did he say?] described the wine Jesus made as the good stuff, the choice wine.

*[14] Then those men, when they had **seen the miracle** that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

*[15] When Jesus therefore perceived that they would*

*come and*

***take him by force, to***

***make him a king,***

*he departed again*

*into a mountain*

*himself*

*alone.*

Basically, He fled the multitude.

But Jesus' mission at this time was **not** to be king. He was to preach the gospel of the kingdom, prepare disciples,

and go to the cross.

He sent His disciples in a boat toward Capernaum on the other side of the lake and into a storm. He walked on the water, beckoned Peter to do the same, and spoke the words that stilled the waters. They then went to shore. The next day, the mob pursued Him. They traveled by ship to Capernaum and found Him there.

John 6

*[25] And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when [did you come here]?*

Jesus didn't tell them that He walked across on the water in a raging storm. Instead, He deflected their question to describe their motives.

*[26] Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, [why?] not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

Notice that Jesus points out their true motives.

From here, Jesus transitions (this is our third point)

from the **physical**  
to the **spiritual**.

Remember, we covered metaphors, just looked at context, and now the spiritual point of view.

*[27] Labour not for the [food] which perishe[s], but for that [food] which endure[s] unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: ...*

*[28] Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

*[29] Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

He's preaching the gospel to them.

*[30] They said therefore unto him, What sign [do you show us] then, that we may see, and believe [you]? ...*

That's pretty sad. They had witnessed and had eaten of the miracle of multiplying the bread and fish, and they still wanted Jesus to do something else before they would

believe in Him. Jesus then reminds them of that miracle and gives them a spiritual application.

[31] *Our fathers [ate] manna in the desert;  
as it is written,*

*He gave **them** bread from heaven to eat.*

[32] *...Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
Moses gave **you** not **that** bread from heaven;  
but my Father give[s] **you** the **true bread** from heaven.*

[33] *For the bread of God is **he** which come[s] down from heaven,  
and give[s] **life** [ ]to the world.*

Jesus is saying that He is bread from heaven sent by God. And just as bread sustains life, this Bread from heaven gives **eternal** life.

[34] *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

Does that sound familiar? Do you remember the woman at the well just a few pages back? Jesus spoke of “living water.” The woman responded with “Sir, give me this water” (John 4:15).

[35] *And Jesus said unto them,  
**I am the bread of life:***

This is the first of four *I am* statements in this passage.

*he that come[s] to me shall never hunger;  
and he that believe[s] on me shall never thirst.*

[36] *But I said unto you,  
That ye also have seen me,  
and believe not.*

Despite all they have witnessed they remain unbelievers.

[41] *The Jews then **murmured at him**, because he said,  
**I am the bread** which came down from heaven.*

Does that sound familiar? Remember long ago, the ancient Jews murmured about the manna in the wilderness. How ironic. Now **these** Jews are murmuring about the true Bread from heaven.

[42] *And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?*

They’re denying or are oblivious to the virgin birth. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Joseph was his stepfather.

*how is it then that he saith,  
I came down from heaven?*

[43] *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.*

[47] *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth on me** hath everlasting life.*

He continues to hammer home His theme. He's talking about [what?] **salvation**.

[48] ***I am that bread of life.***

He repeats what he said in verse 35.

[49] *Your fathers did eat manna [physical bread] in the wilderness, and are **dead**.*

[50] *This [referring to Himself] **is** the bread which cometh down from heaven,  
that a man may eat thereof,  
and not die.*

[51] ***I am the living bread** which came down from heaven:  
if any man eat of this bread,  
he shall **live for ever**:*

Those who believe in Him receive eternal life.  
*and the bread that I **will** give is my flesh,  
which I **will** give for the life of the world.*

He's predicting here His death on the cross.  
Remember John 3:16

[16] *For God so loved the **world**, that he **gave** his only begotten Son, that  
whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**.*

[52] *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying,  
How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

They still don't get it. Jesus explains:

[56] *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,  
dwelleth **in me, and I in him**.*

He's saying, this is my point. I'm **not** saying to literally eat my flesh and drink my blood. I'm using a metaphor for the covenant relationship I have with those who **believe in me** – who **accept**, who take in, just like food, My gift of grace. Just as in a marriage man and woman become one flesh, believers in Me are **joined** with Me to become one in spirit.

He is **in** the believer and the believer is **in** Him.

[57] *As the living Father hath sent me,  
and I live by the Father:  
so he that eateth me,  
even **he shall live by me.***

Jesus said “I and the Father are one.” In a similar way (John 10:38; 15:5), believers become one with Jesus Christ when they accept Him, and Jesus gives the believer life.

[58] *This is that bread which came down from heaven:  
not as your fathers did eat manna [physical bread], and are **dead**:  
he that eateth of this bread [again referring to Himself as spiritual bread] **shall live for ever.***

[60] *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, **This is a[] hard saying;**  
who can [accept] it?*

That’s why we’re studying this today.

[61] *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples **murmured** at it,  
he said unto them, Do[es] this offend you?*

Next, He gives the **key** that He is speaking in **spiritual** terms not **physical** terms.

[63] *It is the spirit that [gives life];  
the flesh profit[s] nothing:  
**the words that I speak** unto you,*

Don’t miss this. What are these words?

*they are spirit,  
and they are life.*

Jesus is **not** talking about **physical** eating and drinking,  
He’s talking about the covenant relationship that Christians have with Him.

[66] *From that time many of his disciples [not the twelve, but others] went back,  
and walked no more with him.*

Now, some of you may be thinking, this eating His body and drinking His blood sounds a lot like the Lord’s Supper or communion that Christians celebrate. How does that figure into all of this? Let’s quickly look at that. We’ll use the account from:

[19] And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, **This is my body** which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me.*

[20] Likewise also the cup [referred to earlier (v. 18) as fruit of the vine or wine] *after supper, saying,*  
**This cup is the new testament in my blood,**  
*which is shed for you.*

Notice that Jesus is using two metaphors.

He says:

1. The bread **is** His body.
2. The cup **is** the new covenant in His blood.

While **similar** to our hard sayings passage, the metaphors differ, as well as the intended audience.

In our hard sayings passage Jesus is telling **unbelievers** about **salvation** to receive eternal life:

Symbol	Represents
Jesus flesh called the bread from heaven	Spiritual life and sustenance
Jesus blood	Life-giving (Leviticus 17:11), covenant-keeping, power

In the Lord's Supper, Jesus is giving **believers** a **remembrance** of His sacrifice on the cross:

Bread	Jesus body
Wine	Jesus blood covenant

### Application

So, what do we make of all of this? Remember the example of the hungry teen?

Jesus said:

Matthew 5

[6] *Blessed are they which do **hunger** and **thirst** after righteousness: for they shall be **filled**.*

And He said this when He was **very** hungry -- after going forty days without food:

Matthew 4

[4] *...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word** that proceed[s] out of the mouth of God.*

We know from John that Jesus, the Bread of Life, is also the Word of God (John 1:1, 14).

Do you remember the verse we read from the Psalms?

Psalm 34



*[8] O **taste** and see that the LORD is good:  
blessed is the man that trust[s] in him.*

Oh, that we would have the same hunger for the spiritual that we have for the physical.

**Benediction**

*Now the God of hope  
**fill** you with all joy and peace in believing,  
that ye may abound in hope,  
through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:13)*

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