

Eat My Flesh!

SHORT VERSION

In John 6 Jesus tells us: "I am the bread of life. . . . 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 . . . For my flesh is real food and my blood is real blood."

His disciples were perplexed by this teaching and many of them, schooled in Jewish law against eating blood, left him.

But Jesus wasn't talking literally about eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

He was talking about this: Communion.

And he was also talking about something more: Taking Jesus into our lives -- having spiritual communion with him.

For his teachings are spiritual food.¹

His life and example are spiritual drink.

And as you examine yourself before you partake, I'd like you to ask yourself: Am I taking Jesus into my life?

Too often, our spiritual fire goes from flames to embers. And for some, it goes out. Snuffed out by focusing on the worries of the world, the desire for pleasure or money, or the pain of having our pride hurt -- someone said or did something and we retreat from God, rather than rely on him.

My flame flickers when my eye goes from Jesus to the world and my desire for worldly pleasures eclipses my desire to live for God.

¹ Matt. 16:6 -- the yeast and bread of the Pharisees were their teachings.

And then God reminds me of how refreshing is the spiritual water of his word, how many times he has helped me, how much he loves. Communion is an opportunity to ask Him to blow again on the flames.

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life," he tells us.

You are about to partake again of that life. But it isn't just a wafer and the fruit of the vine. It's love, it's commitment, it's a lifestyle. It's taking Jesus into your life.

LONG VERSION

In John 6 Jesus tells us: "I am the bread of life. . . . 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 . . . For my flesh is real food and my blood is real blood."

His disciples were perplexed by this teaching and many of them, schooled in Jewish law against eating blood, left him.

But Jesus wasn't talking literally about eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

He was talking about this: Communion.

And he was also talking about something more: Taking Jesus into our lives -- having spiritual communion with him.

For his teachings are spiritual food.²

His life and example are spiritual drink.

And as you examine yourself before you partake, I'd like you to ask yourself: Am I taking Jesus into my life?

Too often, our spiritual fire goes from flames to embers. And for some, it goes out.

² Matt. 16:6 -- the yeast and bread of the Pharisees was their teachings.

Snuffed out by focusing on the worries of the world, the desire for pleasure or money, or the pain of having our pride hurt -- someone said or did something and we retreat from God, rather than rely on him.

Maybe you've cringed as I have, as you've seen the spiritual flame of people you care about, die. We first notice it as they attend church less frequently, they cut back on group Bible studies. But these are just the top of the Spiritual iceberg. In their private lives, reading the Bible is something to do tomorrow, praying is a chore, fellowship a burden, and using their gifts for God, a bore.

I've noticed in my own life that sometimes my fire seems to be on low.

And if I'm honest, I realize that this happens when I'm not reading my Bible, not praying, not listening to the sermon. Instead, I'm concentrating on my career or how my IRA is doing or what entertainment I'm going to enjoy that day, what show or game I'm going to watch when the sermon is done.

My flame flickers when my eye goes from Jesus to the world and my desire for worldly pleasures eclipses my desire to live for God.

And then God reminds me of how refreshing is the spiritual water of his word, how many times he has helped me, how much he loves. And his breath of life blows upon my fading embers until the flame grows bright again.

How about you?

Are you eating from the bread of Jesus teaching, by regularly reading your Bible? Are you listening to teachers and preachers of God's word and taking those words to heart? Are you asking God to fill you with his Spirit? Do you have people who you fellowship with who hold you accountable in your spiritual walk? Are you using the gifts God has given you for

Him?

Is your flame burning, fading, or close to going out?

Are you eating and drinking Jesus Christ?

Do you take his words daily, like your morning meal? A habit. A lifestyle. A commitment that you will not break.

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life," he tells us. You are about to partake again of that life. But it isn't just a wafer and grape juice. It's a love, it's a commitment, it's a lifestyle, it's taking Jesus into your life.