

WHOLE WHEAT, FRENCH ROLL, OR LIVING: THE CHOICES OF BREAD

1. WHERE DO YOU FIND GOD? ANSWER: WHERE GOD HAS PROMISED TO BE.

God is everywhere all the time But he is present for us in certain ways and at certain times according to what he has promised in his Word. And so, we have the words of Jesus that tell us:

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Take the example of a church softball team. Is there any way that Christ is especially present with us while I'm trying hit a home run? Are we at that point "in his name"? We're actually there to play softball.

2. WHAT IS MEANS TO BE GATHERED IN HIS NAME?

We have to get back to what he has invited us to do in his name: do this in remembrance of me. We get to do something by his authority and with his blessing. According to his word he has promised to be there. If this is what Jesus has commanded then this is in his name and he is there.

*Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying,
"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

3. JESUS IS LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN: BOTH FLESH AND BLOOD. (John 6:51-58)

This is not a cannibalistic eating and drinking. (John 6:52)

He is truly present and at work in his supper forgiving sins.

He has located himself there, as nowhere else, in his body and blood.

As we eat this meal we actually receive Christ's body and blood. Not an image or a picture or a symbol

4. HOW CAN THIS BE TRUE?

Our position is not founded in reason or experience, but rather in Scripture. We hear the words of Jesus, listen to his offer to receive him in his body and blood, and trust his words. This is the body and blood of Christ because Jesus says so. Communion is a word of promise. It's Good news! When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament.

Monday, August 17th Read John 6:51-58

Let's start today with a little Luther. This is what he writes in the Small Catechism regarding the Sacrament of the Altar. This phrase "Sacrament of the Altar" means the same thing as Holy Communion or the Eucharist. Martin Luther defined a sacrament as an act or rite:

- a. instituted by God;**
- b. in which God Himself has joined His Word of promise to the visible element; and**
- c. by which He offers, gives and seals the forgiveness of sin earned by Christ.**

Here's what he writes:

[VI] THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

IN THE PLAIN FORM IN WHICH THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHALL TEACH IT TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

¹ What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

² Answer: Instituted by Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.

³ Where is this written?

⁴ Answer: The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

⁵ What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

⁶ Answer: We are told in the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sin." By these words the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

⁷ How can bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects?

⁸ Answer: The eating and drinking do not in themselves produce them, but the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." These words, when accompanied by the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and he who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins.

⁹ Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?

¹⁰ Answer: Fasting and bodily preparation are a good external discipline, but he is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words: "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." On the other hand, he who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

Tuesday, August 18th Read John 6:51-58

We must receive and partake of the Bread of Life. When we do, we receive five wonderful things or results. The outline of the lesson is as follows.

1. The religionists were perplexed over Jesus' words (v.52-53).
2. Result 1: eternal life—conquering death and being resurrected (v.54).
3. Result 2: true, not false satisfaction (v.55).
4. Result 3: supernatural companionship and fellowship (v.56).
5. Result 4: a life that is full of purpose and meaning (v.57).
6. Result 5: incorruptible food received within the heart—energizing life forever (v.58).

In v. 52-53 the religionists were perplexed and argued among themselves. The word "argue sharply" (*emachonto*) means to fight, argue, or debate. They were debating what Jesus meant. He had just said in **John 6:51**: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*"

1. The Jews (religionists) began to argue over the meaning of the words. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"
 - ⇒ Some interpreted His words as a parable, in a figurative and symbolic way. They knew He often spoke in parables.
 - ⇒ Others had no idea what He meant, but they did see that He was claiming to be the most important person in the world, the very Savior. This, of course, bothered them beyond reason. How could any man claim to be so important to the world? As materialists and humanists they asked, "How can this be? He is but a man. How can He give His flesh for the world and the world receive eternal life?"
 - ⇒ A few disciples, genuine followers of the Lord, perhaps understood.

The point is that the religionists were disturbed. The message had been going on for a long time and Jesus had made claim after claim—all most unusual. Moreover, what He was saying was not clear and some of it was offensive. Therefore, they were angry and perplexed and began to argue among themselves about what He meant and how they should respond to Him.

2. Jesus responded by proclaiming a much more shocking thing: unless you partake, that is, receive Him, you have no life dwelling within you.

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Ephesians 5:14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

1 Timothy 5:6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

Revelation 3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Wednesday, August 19th Read John 6:54-55

1. The first result of receiving Christ, the Bread of Life, is eternal life. Note three things.

1. The word for "eat" (*trōgōn*) is different. It means to eat eagerly, to grasp at chunks, to eat with pleasure. It is the picture of hungering after Christ and eagerly wanting to feed and feast on Him.

2. The tense is also different. It is present tense, which means continuous action. A person must continue to eat and to develop and grow into the habit of feasting upon Christ. Christian growth day by day is the picture.

Now note the point. A genuine believer, one who really receives Christ, is one who partakes of Him continually. Day by day the you will feast upon Christ. It is this person who has the promise of eternal life, and eternal life includes three great things.

a. **Abundant and eternal life.**

b. **The conquest of death.** (See John 3:14-15.)

c. **The resurrection.** (See John 5:28-30.)

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

2. The second result of receiving Christ is true satisfaction, not false satisfaction.

1. **The word "indeed" (*alēthēs*) means true as opposed to false.** The things of the world do not feed and fill men, not with a true satisfaction. Worldly pleasures and satisfactions are false; and false satisfaction does not last, not permanently, not with full assurance and confidence and security. Worldly pleasures and satisfactions always leave us somewhat empty, dissatisfied, craving, void, unassured and wondering if this world is all there is—wondering if there is not more to life than what this world and its possessions have to offer.

2. **True satisfaction comes from receiving Christ into one's life, and it comes only through Christ.** This is the Lord's point in this verse. Just as real life on the earth comes from eating and drinking food, so real and abundant life comes from eating and drinking Christ. One must receive Christ in the closest and most intimate and nourishing sense in order to have true life, life that is abundant and full of...

- assurance
- strength
- meekness
- goodness
- love
- security
- decisiveness
- temperance
- patience
- joy
- confidence
- courage
- faith
- gentleness
- peace

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

John 4:14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Psalms 107:9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Thursday, August 20th Read *John 6:56; John 15: 1-8*

3. The third result is supernatural companionship and fellowship, care and being looked after. This is seen in the word "dwell" (*menei*). It means to abide, continue, dwell, rest in or upon. It is being fixed and set and remaining there, continuing on and on. Such is the state and condition and being of the person who receives Christ. The person receives Christ into their being, and Christ enters the person's life and abides within them. The person is also taken and placed into Christ, that is, placed with all other believers into the spiritual body of Christ. The person abides in Christ even as Christ abides in them. This, of course, means fellowship and companionship with Christ and the presence of His care and watchful eye in looking after us. It also means fruit. You producing something.

In John 15 there are four stages of fruit-bearing given: (1) no fruit ([John 15:2](#)), (2) fruit ([John 15:2](#)), (3) more fruit ([John 15:2](#)), and (4) much fruit ([John 15:5, 8](#)).

What does it mean to say a Christian is to bear fruit? It means to bear converts ([Romans 1:13](#)), to bear righteousness ([Romans 6:21-23](#)), to bear Christian character or the fruit of the Spirit. Note also the conditions for bearing fruit in life: cleansing ([John 15:3](#)), abiding in Christ ([John 15:5](#)), and obedience ([John 15:10, 12](#)). A true Christian is a person who really does abide in Christ ([1 John 2:10](#)). John said that to abide in Christ means eight things.

1. A person walks in open confession before God. S/he walks through life opening up his/her life to God; one confesses all known sin. One does not walk in sin, and does not allow any sin to go unconfessed ([1 John 1:6-10](#)).
2. A person walks and fellowships with Christ. One lives and moves and has their being with Christ. You commune and live in a consciousness of God's presence, and from God's presence you learn of God, and draw the strength and authority to live victoriously day by day ([1 John 2:6](#); [1 John 2:27](#); cp. [Psalm 16:11](#); [Proverbs 3:5-6](#)).
3. A person continues in the church; and has not gone out from the church ([1 John 2:19](#)).
4. A person possesses confidence, an unashamedness in life that prepares for eternity ([1 John 2:28](#)).
5. A person does not walk in continuous sin ([1 John 3:6](#)).
6. A person actively surrenders himself to obey God's commandments ([1 John 3:24](#)).
7. A person experiences the indwelling presence and witness of the Spirit ([1 John 4:12-13](#)).
8. A person dwells in love and unity and fellowship with all other believers ([John 17:21-23](#); [1 John 4:16](#)).

Friday, August 21st Read *John 6:57-8*

4. The fourth result of receiving Christ is a life that is full of purpose and meaning. This verse is dealing with purpose, meaning, and significance.

- a. **Jesus he, "lives because of the Father."** This means at least two things.
 - a. **He lived by the Father, that is, because of, on account of the Father.** His life (in all its purpose, meaning, and significance) was due to the Father.
 - b. **He lived for the Father; that is, He lived to do the Father's will.** The Father "sent" Him to live on earth for a specific purpose. His life in all its purpose, meaning, and significance was lived for the Father: to fulfill the Father's will and task.
- b. **The one who receives Christ ("feeds on me") lives by Christ.** They begin to live in all the purpose, meaning, and significance of life, for apart from Christ there is no life. Note: the tense is present, continuous action. A person must *continue* to partake, eat, and feast upon Christ to keep his sense of purpose and meaning, to really live and live abundantly.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- c. **Jesus called God "the living Father."** What do you think that means?

5. The fifth result of receiving Christ is incorruptible food within our hearts—energizing our lives forever. Christ made a strong, descriptive contrast.

- ⇒ The manna eaten by Israel in the Old Testament *did come* from the clouds above, but it did not give life to the people. They were *all dead*.
- ⇒ "This [the Lord Himself] is that Bread which came down from heaven...s/he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

The idea is striking: it is the Living Bread, Christ Himself, who energizes and allows you to live forever. Christ has the quality, the power, the substance to energize us and give eternal life. However, He and He alone has such energizing power.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

2 Timothy 1:10 *but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*