

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

John 6:51-66

By Raymond White

*John 6:51 ...if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread...is my flesh.*

Jesus fed 5000 miraculously, making food from nothing. Then the next morning the crowd was back for breakfast. Jesus said to them, you shouldn't have come here looking for breakfast, you should have come here looking for me: I am the bread you need to eat.

This is a good metaphor and not at all outlandish as the crowd made it out to be. We say similar things today: "My bills are eating me alive," and "You are what you eat." The Jews also had such metaphors involving food and eating.

*Psalms 14:4 ...workers of iniquity...eat up my people.*

*Ecclesiastes 4:5 The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh.*

In other words, lazy people go broke. That's not hard to understand as long as you don't take "eat his own flesh" literally, which no one did. Obviously it's hyperbole. The only reason anyone would take such a thing literally, to be intentionally stupid, is to ridicule the speaker in an argument where you want to make your opponent's words appear ridiculous.

That is exactly what the crowd did to Jesus. He used a perfectly fine hyperbole, an exaggeration to make a point, and they deliberately took him literally to make his words appear ridiculous so they'd have a pretext to walk away. What was really on their minds was, "Well, if you're not going to feed us again, we're outta here."

*John 6:52 How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

They literalized his words because they didn't like his demands. They weren't stupid. They knew he didn't mean "eat me" literally. As long as he gave them stuff they wanted, like free food, they were willing to follow him.

This is just like American voters who vote themselves benefits from the public trust. We vote for the politicians who promise the most goodies, no matter that they bankrupt the economy.

But as soon as Jesus demanded something from them, well, they didn't like that and were gone, and used a very thin pretext to justify their exodus. Here's what he said and here's how they reacted.

*John 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. :56 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. :60 This is a hard saying: who can hear it? :66 From that time many...walked no more with him.*

Why did Jesus use such a strong metaphor? Because it said exactly what he needed to say and what they needed to hear. Consider this about food: You can study it, smell it, taste it, philosophize about it, paint pictures of it, grind it, chop it, freeze it, but food will never do you a bit of good until you eat it and it becomes you.

Our nature is death —

***John 6:53*** *Ye have no life in you.*

His nature is life —

***John 14:6*** *I am the way, the truth, and the life.*

To live, we need Christ's nature ingested, by some means, into ourselves. The metaphor is figurative, but it is not figurative to say we must become what he is if we are going to have eternal life. So we must take on the properties of his life into our life — in a picture, “eat his flesh and drink his blood.”

Why flesh and blood? There are two issues here: [1] His flesh. He came in the flesh, he was born, he was is a real person, human, not a fiction, a fantasy, a legend, or a story fabricated by Hollywood.

***1 Timothy 3:16*** *God was manifest in the flesh.*

That is literal and not at all figurative.

Then [2] His blood. He died for you. Not just died, but executed as a criminal. Nobody receives Christ without his death. He was not just a prophet miracle worker, he was the sacrifice for the world's sins.

***Romans 5:10*** *We were reconciled to God by the death of his son.*

Do you want eternal life? Then you have to get *his* eternal life because there is no other. And the only way to get his eternal life is to take him into yourself. You must swallow (his metaphor, not mine) all of who he is. His flesh, his blood, his life and his death. Then you will be “in him” and “he in you.” And that is how you get eternal life.

***John 11:26*** *And whosesoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

***John 14:20*** *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

***John 15:4*** *Abide in me, and I in you.*

***John 17:21*** *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*

***1 Corinthians 3:16*** *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

It is almost symbiotic, isn't it? Maybe that's exactly what it is, symbiotic, and quite literal after all.