

COMMENTARY - JOHN - Fredrikson

Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985),

John 6: 51-57 (Eat his flesh and drink his blood)

⁵¹*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.* ⁵²*The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'*⁵³*So Jesus said to them, '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.'*⁵⁴*Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day;*⁵⁵*for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.*⁵⁶*Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.*⁵⁷*Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.*

The bread these Jews are invited to eat is His flesh, which he shall give for the life of the world. "Flesh" to their ears is a lowly, vulgar (offensive) word. . The final giving of His flesh will be his sacrifice on the cross where he offers himself as the victim. ¹ He is the only true food, which brings life when it is eaten. Here is the **new Passover** for the entire human race. ²

But, like the Jews, we are often offended by this fleshly offer. We would rather have a vague, diffused presence or some impersonal abstract deity, not a particular Man who has come from heaven to live among us in the flesh at a very specific time and place. He is too near, too much with us. Our specific sins are now unmasked. We are caught swearing and telling lies, succumbing to our lusts and killing one another. So we struggle to make the flesh of the Son of Man unreal, to keep God Incarnate out of our world.³

Jesus insists, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." Then he states it positively in verse 54, "Whoever eats my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Professor Westcott has said it simply, "To 'eat' and to drink' is to take to oneself by a voluntary act and then to assimilate it and make it part of oneself. . . Those who feast on him constantly dwell in him. He becomes their permanent "home." This is also a reciprocal relationship, a "double dwelling." They dwell in him, and he dwells in them.⁴

The bread that is eaten and the blood that is drunk are signs of Jesus' life and death. It was through his flesh that Jesus lived out a life of holy obedience. **In eating this flesh, we partake of this life** of surrender and begin to manifest his life in all those fleshly places into which we thrown or called. It is in our temptations and defeats, or joys and our victories, that we are to bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:17). But we also to drink his blood. How abhorrent (distasteful) this was to the Jews who had been forbidden by Law to partake of blood. But in this act we take into ourselves his life sacrificed, his expiation (compensation), and his atonement. In accepting his life poured out, we are reconciled to God and live in grace as forgiven sinners. The son of Man, the One who has identified himself with us, offers us this incredible feast of life. We shall become like him as we continue to feed on him. It is the life of the Father that the Son shares with us. The Son has come in obedience to the Father and has no life apart from him.⁵

We then have the same relation to the Son that the Son has to the Father and are as dependent upon Him as the Son is on the Father. What an incredible relationship?

¹ Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 135.

² Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 136.

³ Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 136.

⁴ Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 136.

⁵ Roger L. Fredrikson. The Communicator's Commentary on *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 137.

The primary purpose of these verses is to teach us how to feed on the Son of Man, to take Him into our innermost being by faith. But an important secondary teaching here is the meaning of the Lord's Supper. For too long many of us have stripped this celebration of its deeper meaning, making it a barren exercise. We have spoken of the Eucharist as being "only a memorial" when we partake of the "elements," a term never used in Scripture. .. But it is Jesus' teaching and the giving of himself that guide and inform us in our understanding of the Supper. He is the Host who gathers us and has us feed on himself. We are constituted as his people by the very events we celebrate, fed with fleshly, common gifts. And is there not a mystery and reality in the bread and wine which goes beyond a remembrance of Christ and his sacrifice? ... We are nourished by him in a unique way when we partake of this physical food. And as the crowd of five thousand became a family when Jesus fed them, so we, in eating and drinking, become a believing community. We do not eat and drink as isolated individuals. If we are to grow in our understanding of the Lord's Supper, we need humility and openness so that we may learn from one another as the Lord teaches all his people the meaning of the Supper. ⁶

[Eating his flesh and drink his blood means that we are nourished for our own body, soul and mind. This means that we eat his thinking, values, and his way of life. He becomes a part of our ourselves and therefore, we will think like him. This is what it means that we live in him and he lives in us. Eating his flesh and drink his blood establishes abiding relationship. Christ's life is implanted in our life. His intimacy with us parallel with his intimacy with God.]

⁶ Roger L. Fredrikson. *The Communicator's Commentary on John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 138,