

The food we eat goes right to our heart, our soul. Some of us long for food from grandmas. No one makes it like her. Nothing like when grandma cooks. Perhaps the apple pie she made, doesn't get any better than that. But of course you Americans and your Apple Pie cannot compare to German Apple Streusel. Of course, there are mysteries to food. How can you eat a ½ lb. of cake and gain 2 lbs. We all have passion about foods.

What foods do you crave? Some crave if you could go to grandma's house to eat, sit at her table once more. What food do you long for? Oh that we would crave the food Jesus desires to give us. You are what you eat. As true spiritually, as it is physically. **If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, the bread I give, is my flesh for the life of the world.**

The incarnation, the fact God has become man, most important truth in human history. The scandal of Christianity is we worship a man; our God is also true man. Our salvation rests in this flesh and blood person. The Word became flesh; to consume this flesh is to consume the Word.

Living bread from heaven, Christ and Him crucified. Fed on this bread in Bible study, the liturgy, holy absolution spoken to you earlier, in the splash of your baptism -still working in you, the hearing of His Word. And greatest of mysteries, as He says, I give you true food, true drink, My flesh and blood in His Supper. These are the only nourishment for our weak faith. Strength for the journey, a promise of the future. Food for true Life, the only life worth living here.

Pay attention to this...Ch. 6 of John's Gospel begins with thousands and ends with only 12. His words cause people to be offended, leave Him; even after spending day and night listening to perfect sermons, Bible study, after all the miracles they'd seen. And Jesus is not softening the message to win them back; He's not chasing after those He offended. Our Lord's Gospel is not tolerant of different views, opinions, or man's ideas. Jesus does not back down when they take issue. He's even more blunt, **My flesh is real food, my blood real drink.** Still true today. Many offended by Jesus words. Reject His Words as too hard to believe, too harsh, too intolerant. They've chosen the food of their own reason or desire over His flesh for the life of the world.

What about you? Will you leave also? Peter speaks up for the 12. **Lord, where else can we go, you are the holy One, there's no other place of eternal life.** Jesus does not ask us to surrender our minds at the door of His church. But calls us to trust in Him, to place His Word and promise above our reason, understanding, and desire.

Jesus says **the one eating my flesh, drinking my blood has** (present tense, right now) **eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.**

Eternal life, when you grasp the depth, the implications of what the gift of eternal life means for you today, each day, it can make so many of your troubles

and worries seem inconsequential, trivial. And! it means that your lost moments and time with loved ones who died in Christ -will be undone. You will eat with them and grandma and grandpa again. You miss your loved ones now but to know you will be given all things with them, eternity.

Lord to whom shall we go? What about you? We are not here to be feed with entertained, amused, or even emotionally uplifted. If that is why you came, you will likely leave as disappointed as the disciples who left Jesus. And this isn't a rehab place for sinners, or for good people to become better. You are here to die. A place for sinners to die. To die to your sin, be emptied of yourselves, to be filled with the food He gives, raised to new life in Him.

To whom shall you go; His glory is there, lifted up to draw all people unto Himself, His glory to forgive you. Make you His disciple, a baptized, beloved child. Live like it, act like it, as in the Epistle reading, for the foods of this world, will give you eternal death.

So the mission of the church -not to bring people into an abstract relationship with Jesus, some abstract love for God; but the concrete reality which brings sinners into our Lord's presence, His saving mercy thru the proclamation of the gospel and the means of grace, Word and Sacraments, not found in feelings, or choices, but upon a font, pulpit, altar, in a specific place. Where He has placed Himself, His promise.

You may hear people say, "I'm very spiritual, but I'm not religious." Have pity on them. Like those in John 6. They wish to believe in God on their terms, which is idolatry, not according to His Word, His doctrine. They don't want a God who tells them what they must believe, what they must eat.

The truth is I don't have the foggiest idea how to have a true relationship with Jesus apart from the Word and Sacraments. Where He has chosen to make Himself known. Where else does He bring Himself and promise forgiveness and life? The only grace known to us in the living Word of Christ, baptismal water of life, the holy supper. Greatest of all mysteries how a sip of wine and a piece of bread is the fullness of your Lord. Is means is, and there is nothing more real in your life.

So real, true, right here for you. **He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in Him.** Food right to your heart, your soul. **Lord, to whom shall we go?** You know, where He is, the Word joined to your flesh that He joins to your flesh with the promise, **I will raise you up on the Last Day.** Eat this bread, drink His blood, you will live forever. We, you cannot live with this flesh and blood this Sacrament. This is the pinnacle of worship, the centrality of your life. You have wealth and food beyond all human imagination, all by grace, all His works, all His feeding you with eternal gifts of His kingdom.