

Advent: The Feast of Christmas

John 6:22-59

December 18th, 2011

Praise reading: Psalm 148

*“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!*

*Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!*

*Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were
created. And he established them forever and ever;
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.*

*Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, fire and
hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!*

*Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds!*

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and maidens together, old men and children!

*Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.*

*He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!”*

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

This is the 4th Sunday of Advent, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We also anticipate His victorious return back to the earth where we will live with Him forever and ever in His Father's kingdom. If you will remember the 1st Sunday of Advent we lit the candle of Prophecy. All week long our families turned to the Old Testament, and we saw and read the great promises of our God about a coming Messiah who would ultimately fulfill Isaiah 53, and Psalm 22. Those passages speak about a suffering servant who would literally go to a cross and die to redeem us from our sin.

On the 2nd Sunday of Advent we lit the candle of Redemption. And with that candle we are reminded that we have been redeemed once and for all, for not only the penalty of sin, but from the power of sin. At the return of Jesus Christ, sin will be banished once and for all. In glorified bodies, we will be set free from the presence of sin for all eternity.

On the 3rd Sunday of Advent we lit the candle of Reconciliation. Because of the promises of God that were foretold and the coming of a redeemer, we understood that the ultimate purpose of God was to reconcile us back to Himself through the death of His Son. There was a great exchange on that cross. On that cross, Jesus Christ actually took our sin, and He gave us His righteousness. Right now each one of us who have been to the cross of Jesus Christ is in a right relationship with God. We are no longer enemies of God but we have been reconciled to God, and He calls us His friend.

On this 4th Sunday of Advent, we come now to light the candle of Fulfillment. This week as families, we are going to turn our attention to the New Testament and we are going to read Scripture after Scripture that tell us without a doubt, that Jesus Christ has fulfilled what was spoken of Him in the Old Testament. We no longer look for our Messiah to come the 1st

time, He is already here. But we still look for His coming because we know the Bible says He is coming again to establish an eternal kingdom. So this morning we light the candle of Fulfillment. As we do, we build toward next Sunday morning, Christmas day, when we will light the Christ candle. Do you realize there are places in the world where the Christ candle does not shine? There are places where He shines very dimly because there are so few Christians among vast populations of people who live in darkness. So this week as we celebrate this 4th week of Advent, we also want to turn our attention away from ourselves, and toward parts of the world that do not know Jesus Christ.

Scripture: The Bread of Life: John 22-39

“On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, ‘‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’’ Jesus answered them, ‘‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.’’ Then they said to him, ‘‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’’ Jesus answered them, ‘‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’’ So they said to him, ‘‘Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’’ Jesus then said to them, ‘‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life

to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me-- not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me,

and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum."

Review of Advent Sermons

We are going to continue looking at another one of the traditions that we have during the Christmas season. Each one of these traditions, we hope will point us to the true meaning of Christmas. We have already challenged you that when you see the lights of Christmas, whether they are on a house, in a park, or on a tree, that you truly think of who the true light of Christmas is, and that is Jesus Christ. We also want to remember that the Christmas tree that we have in our homes is to point us to the true tree of Christmas, and that is a place called Calvary where on a tree, Jesus Christ gave His life so that it might redeem us to God. And then last Sunday morning we looked at the tradition of giving and receiving gifts to remind us of the true gift of Christmas, which is God's gift of His Son to you and me.

Introduction: The Feast of Christmas

This morning as we continue thinking about the many different Christmas traditions we have, on this 4th Sunday of Advent, I want you to think about one of our favorite traditions. It is not necessarily for children, because the children cannot wait for it to get over. But it is one of our favorite parts of Christmas, and that is the feasting. Our Christmas will actually start Thursday at TG and Nancy's, which are Celisa's dad and his wife. Now every year we anticipate going to their house because she will fix this incredible pork loin and we will literally feast well into the evening on that loin, and all of the other things that will accompany it. Then the next night we will find ourselves at Gran and Ron's, which are Celisa's mom and her

husband. She will have the traditional, yet very luscious ham and turkey. Wow, what a feast we will have there! Then on Christmas night we will end our tradition of Christmas at my mom and dad's, which is Mammy and Pop's. Now Pop always kills the fatted calf for Christmas and serves us nothing less than filet mignon, wow, it is incredible!

Now get this picture, we will not only have those main meats to feast on. I mean from the moment we get there the appetizers will be endless. You are almost stuffed before you get to the meat. There will be so many sides that we always joke that we need sideboards for our plates to hold all of the dishes that accompany the meat. When you think you cannot eat anymore, they bring out all of those succulent desserts. We vow every meal to never be hungry again! But the next meal we are ready to eat again. Now I will tell you what is going to happen, it has happened every year for the last so many years that I cannot count them. We will start to go to Mammy and Pop's on Christmas night, and my wife will say, "I sure do miss Mamaw's rolls". According to my family, my Mamaw made the best rolls anyone has ever eaten. Celisa will begin to miss Mamaw's rolls. I have to confess, being a grandson of Mamaw; I never ate one of Mamaw's rolls. The reason is because when I was growing up I was a loaf bread and canned biscuit kind of guy. I know that sounds really strange for a kid in the south, raised on a farm, but that was just the kind of kid I was. I cannot tell you how many times Celisa will say, "I cannot believe you did not eat your Mamaw's rolls"! I stand before you this morning on the 4th Sunday of Advent to say to you; it is too late for me. I will never get the privilege of eating or tasting one of my Mamaw's rolls. That is one thing. But it is another thing to have never tasted or eaten the Bread of life, and never truly understood the feast of Christmas.

The Birth Place

The birth narratives are clear. Luke makes it clear, and Matthew does too, that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. And after Mary had wrapped Him in those swaddling cloths, she laid Him in a manger. We know that He was

laid in a manger, not because there was a cruel innkeeper who was so greedy that he turned the poor peasants away. Luke makes it clear, with his choice of the word ^a **topos**, or "place", that an inn was not a fitting place for a mother to give birth to a baby. So because the inn was not a fitting place for Jesus to be born, He was actually born in a cave outside of Bethlehem. That cave was used as a stable. So after He was born, and she had wrapped Him, she laid him in the feed trough of the animals. You know the Bible makes it clear that during the birth narrative there were a lot of things going on and Mary treasured, and pondered most of them. But it would not be until sometime later that the world would truly understand the significance of Jesus being born in Bethlehem.

You see at 1st, the birth narratives tell us clearly that Bethlehem is the city of David, and that is why Mary and Joseph had to go there. Jesus being in the line of David as a king, we understand. But the very name ^b **Bethlehem** means "house of bread". It was the grain belt of Israel. Get this picture; in the house of bread, God laid the Bread of life, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Feeds the Crowd: verses 1-25 (for context)

This morning we are going to use what might be to you, and at 1st was to me, a very unusual passage for Christmas. It is the story of John chapter 6. As we begin to search through Scripture for different passages dealing with the incarnation of Jesus, we keep seeing this phrase, "I came down from heaven". That phrase is used often by Jesus in John chapter 6, so let us turn our attention there as we think about the feast of Christmas. Let me remind us of the context. In the 1st part of John chapter 6, he records the feeding of the 5000 men. There were a few loaves, and a few fish, and when they feed the 5000 men and pass the trash can to collect what is left over, there were 12 baskets full. Suddenly the people begin to realize that this may be the prophet Moses talked about coming into the world. Jesus knew they were quickly coming to the conclusion that He would be a great military king because if He could go into a battle and feed the army immediately, this could be a great tactical advantage in warfare. So He

slips out of their midst, and He takes His disciples to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberius. The crowd wakes up the next morning and Jesus is gone, so they get into boats and come to the other side of the sea and they find Him in the city of Capernaum. In 1990, Celisa and I had the privilege of standing on this very site where this took place. The remains of the synagogue of Capernaum have been excavated and we have seen the foundation stones with our very eyes. Jesus quickly looks up and tells the crowd that they are here for the wrong reason. Now get this picture. Jesus saw right into their heart. He realized that the only reason most of them was following Him was because He had fed them miraculously and they had filled their bellies. They decide if they follow Him they would never have to work again. So they are following Him strictly for material blessing. He begins to tell them that they missed the sign.

Signs Pointing to Jesus

Here is what you need to remember. In John chapter 20:30-31, (make a mental note of that) John says there were many other signs Jesus did that has not been recorded in the gospel of John, but these are written, meaning signs. Now in John's gospel you are going to see 3 words. You will see the word **wonder**, the word **miracle**, and you will see the word **sign**. It is important for you to note this. When Jesus did a miracle and a wonder, the miracle and the wonder pointed to the defying of the law of nature. This is cool; this is neat! It was something that was not possible, but became possible, and you witnessed it. Many of the so-called miracles of Jesus are not called miracles by John, they are called signs. John is pointing out that the motive for Jesus doing the sign was not to draw attention to the miracle, but to draw attention to who He is. So what He did at that moment should reveal to you who He is, so that you could now know where you stood in relation to Him as the Jewish Messiah. John is saying that when Jesus fed the 5000 men, not counting women and

children, it should point you to Him, and who He is. You should not desire more food, but to desire spiritual food. But they totally missed it.

Have you ever missed a sign? Have you ever gotten a sign? I hate it when I miss signs, but I love it when I get signs. I remember the 1st sign that Celisa gave me after we got married. I am telling you husbands, it is important you pick up the signs in marriage. If not, you are going to be miserable because she is going to be miserable. When Mama ain't happy, nobody is happy! Celisa and I had the privilege of going to a real evangelism conference in Atlanta, Georgia. At that time we had a neighbor named Thomas Lovett who went to Atlanta quite regularly. When he heard I was going to hear Bailey Smith, Charles Stanley, and other guys like that, he said you need to feed yourself physically, not only spiritually, so make sure to go to this restaurant named *Aunt _____* (I cannot remember the name). I told him I did not know if we would have time but we would try. We had a wonderful evangelism conference, and on the last evening before we were going home, we decided to go to that restaurant. Now you have to remember, we are in Atlanta and the atmosphere in that restaurant set us back 150 years. We knew it was a great restaurant because the waiting line was an hour. We finally got in and sat down; the place was packed. We are in a house that is over 200 years old. There is a live band. Now the menu is actually a wooden card that a little boy brings to our table. The only choice on this menu is what meat you want to eat. You do not get to choose your sides, or your appetizer, or your dessert, you just get to choose your meat. You have a choice of chicken, beef, and pork. Being in the south, they recommended the chicken, southern fried chicken. Now get this picture, we are a young married couple, and even though we are in a crowded restaurant, it is very romantic. We are just a few feet from the live band, the service is incredible, and now they bring out the appetizer. Now remember this is not what we chose, it is what they brought. Can I remind you that we have already been there for over an hour? I have been to the conference all afternoon and I am starving, and it will be about 45 minutes between each course. So when they bring the

appetizer out, without even thinking, Celisa begins to eat it. At that time I was not big into appetizers, especially ones that I did not choose. But after a while I found myself taking my knife and cutting off little pieces of the appetizer, and slapping some butter on it, and munching on it. About 15 minutes have passed and all of a sudden I began to notice a countenance change in my wife. I began to look around because I am not going to insult her and be one of those husbands who does not understand what is happening to her and look insensitive. So I am trying to figure out what is causing her countenance change. I do not recommend you ever try to do that guys, because you never get it right! Suddenly I look back and my lovely wife is in a rage. I am desperately looking around to see who has offended her because I know I have not offended her; I have been the most precious husband on the face of the earth this night! Finally I cannot hold it in anymore and I say to my wife, "Honey what is wrong?" And without hesitation she spit these words out of her mouth, "If you can eat *Aunt*_____ cornbread, you can eat mine!" I have eaten homemade cornbread ever since...I got the sign.

Looking for a Sign: verses 22-34

Jesus is working here to get the Jews to understand they are following Him for the wrong reason. They are not following Him for their deepest need, which is spiritual; they are following Him because of the physical. We really need to be careful this morning as we celebrate the 4th week of Advent. Have we truly seen the sign of who Jesus Christ really is? What He is going to begin to teach here is that the Jews are laboring for food that perishes, but there is a food that endures to everlasting life. Can you imagine being a Jew and hearing Jesus say that there is a food that endures to everlasting life? So the Jews ask, literally in the Hebrew language, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" You see the Jews associated anything from God as being something that in order to attain, they had to work for. So Jesus, in verse 22-34 of John chapter 6, begins to teach them about the work of God and what you have to do to get what God wants to give you. He basically says you have to believe in Me, who God has sent.

By believing in Me, you can have everlasting life. Then they begin to say now hold it, when Moses gave our fathers the bread in the wilderness, He gave them a sign. What sign do you give us? Jesus had to remind them that Moses did not give them a sign, God gave the sign; God gave the manna.

Have you ever noticed when you read Exodus chapter 16 that the children of Israel were griping about being in the wilderness and not having anything good to eat? They compared what they were eating on the wilderness journey to what they had in Egypt, and they really wanted to go back because the food was better. So God told them they would have quail in the evening and bread in the morning. They went out that morning to collect bread, and when the manna fell, do you remember what the children of Israel's reaction was? "What is it?" Did you realize the word ***manna*** means "what is it"? We would have never called the bread from heaven manna if the children of Israel had understood it was bread! But when they went out and saw the manna as dew on the ground, their 1st reaction was what is it? They basically said *manna, manna, manna*. They did not recognize the bread. In this story Jesus is dealing with the Jews, He is performing signs, and the Israelites are saying *manna, manna, manna*. Who are you? Do you know who He is? He is the Bread from heaven. What He is going to teach is that the Father gave bread to their forefathers, but He is now giving them the true Bread from heaven. In verse 35 He is going to teach who that bread is, and that is Him.

Bread from Heaven: verse 35

One of the first arguments Celisa and I had when we got married was over bread. I was a loaf bread guy. My mother and my aunt worked at IGA in Murray. And I if could just be on record, IGA bread at that time was the best bread ever baked. Every time my mother brought home bread, it was fresh and I could devour a loaf of bread. I loved IGA bread. When Celisa and I got married, she did not use IGA bread, she used another kind of bread. It was just bread; it was not the true kind of bread. IGA bread was

the true bread. Since she did the grocery shopping I cannot tell you how many times she came home with the other kind of bread. I would say to her, I want the true bread. She would say she was not on the IGA side of town. I told her it did not matter, you need to go there and get IGA bread. Do you know what my wife did to me one day? She actually came home with Wonder bread, which was her bread, and my IGA bread wrapper was empty, so she actually took the time to take the Wonder bread out of its wrapper and put it in my IGA bread wrapper! She put the little yellow twist tie on it and set it back on the table. I opened it and pulled out the 2nd slice of bread, (I never start with the end piece) and put it into my mouth and I almost gagged...it was not IGA bread! She still cannot believe to this day how I know true bread.

Do you understand what Jesus is doing here folks? Listen to me. It is so easy to get caught up in Christian things. It is so easy to have been in the atmosphere of the Church your whole life, and just like the children of Israel not recognize the true Bread from heaven. That true Bread from heaven is Jesus Christ. Look with me at John 6:35. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life". Then He makes a statement, and if you are in the literal it does not make sense. But if you are in the metaphorical, you understand it. He says, "Whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst". You and I know that physical bread and water can only temporarily quench your hunger and thirst. Jesus is teaching a concept that if you come to Him spiritually, you will never hunger or thirst again. You see this group has been coming to Him physically, but they really have not been coming to Him spiritually. Do you see this? Here is what John is trying to say. There are thousands of people and they are coming to Jesus, they have crossed the sea to get to Him, but they have not really come to Him. They have not believed in Him. You see here is what he is doing in verse 35. He is using parallelism to tell you and me what it means to come to Jesus. In the 2nd sentence it says "whoever believes shall never thirst". What he is saying is the way you come to Jesus, and have Him as the Bread of life, is to believe in Him.

He never uses the noun form of belief, which is faith. You will note this in John's gospel. Have you noticed this about John? In his gospel, anytime you see the word believe and it is relating to salvation, it is always going to be in the verb form. It is because John knew that faith was not passive. Faith was not static, it was alive, and it was active, and it was life changing. Therefore he always put it in the verb form. It was an action word to John, not a work's word. It was a word that meant that if you came to Christ and you have a moment of faith, that moment will issue into a life of faith. It is because once you feast on Jesus, the God-man, you receive a brand new kind of life, eternal life.

Two Sides of Salvation: Verse 36

Then in verse 36 Jesus looks around and says hey, some of you have seen Me but yet you still do not believe. Then Jesus does something amazing here. He begins to teach the 2 sides of salvation. There is a divine side of salvation where God initiates salvation. Then He teaches there is a human side of salvation where man must respond to salvation. Do not ever forget there are 2 sides of salvation. It did not start with you, it started with God. He broke into your life and initiated and you responded by faith. But I want you to watch this.

Divine Side of Salvation: verses 35-40

In verses 35-40, he is going to clearly teach the divine side and how Jesus accomplishes that. Watch this. He is going to teach that this is the will of the Father. Of all those God has given Jesus, He wouldn't lose anyone, but He would actually raise them up on the last day. Then in verse 40, He is going to say that this was the will of the Father, that "whoever looks at Me and believes has everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day". Now if you will go back to John 6:37, Jesus said there was a group of people that were given to Him. When that group that has been given to Him comes to Him, He will never cast them out. There are two things here about Jesus as the Bread of life. Once you come to Him, you are in and the reason is because He keeps you in. You cannot ever get out once you get

in. He will never cast you out, He will protect you. But then He says the will of God for Him is that He does not lose a one of us. Wow, do you see this? But what does God want Jesus to do? He wants Him to raise you up on the last day. What is the Son's accomplishment of the Father's will? It is to keep you once you get in, and not ever let you fall out. You do not ever have to worry about Him losing you, or forgetting about you. And on the Resurrection Day you will be raised.

Flesh and Blood of Jesus: verses 41-59

Now watch this. The Jews began to grumble because He has told them that He is the Bread that has come down from heaven. They begin to question how He could be the Bread who came down from heaven because they know who His parents are. They know He is from Nazareth. You see they have forgotten that He was born in Bethlehem. They do not know what Mary and Joseph knew, that when Mary got pregnant, that child was not Joseph's. He did not marry Mary because he got her pregnant and had to. He was going to divorce her privately, but the Holy Spirit told him who Jesus's Father is, and it is God. They are grumbling and now Jesus is going to tell them, He is going to contrast, He is going to teach them what true salvation is. If you will look in verse 51-59, I want to draw your attention to verse 53 and 54. I want to make sure we understand this during Christmas. Every time you sit down to a meal and you say pass the bread, I want you to ask yourself this. Have you eaten of the Bread of life? Look at verse 53, "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." In verse 53, the word eat is an aorist verb, which means it is punctiliar action. It is defined as action that happened, and the moment of that action is over. So here is what the Bible is saying. When God initiates salvation to you, you understand that in Bethlehem's manger God placed the Bread of life, and that Bread is Jesus. He grew up, went to a cross, and on that cross died for you. Salvation is in Him, and you have to ask yourself this question. Have you eaten of Him? Has there been a moment in your life when the Holy Spirit convicted you, and you responded to Jesus by faith and right now you are relying on Jesus, and you are trusting in

Him? You know there has been a moment when you committed your life to Him. The Bible says then you have everlasting life. But I want you to see this. To tell you what belief is, Jesus compares it to eating and drinking His flesh. Do you understand what it means to believe in Jesus? It means you have completely taken Him into your life. You made a total commitment. You are only relying on Him, you are only trusting in Him.

Now look at verse 54. Here is how you know everlasting life; here is how you know you have been made right with God. In verse 54 it says "whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Now feeds and thirsts are not verbs, they are participles, present tense participles. To get eternal life you have to believe in Jesus. Believing in Jesus in this passage means you eat of Him. This word ^d **feed** is different than the word eat. It is the word that literally means "to munch, and to be noisy while you are munching". Have you ever heard someone munching, and it is really noisy, and it gets on your nerves? Have you ever had to tell someone to not eat so loudly? That is what this word means. I love this. In our relationship of faith to Jesus, faith has its moment. But once it has its moment, faith issues into a life to where the person who is in a right relationship with Jesus Christ just cannot get enough of the Bread. So when you look at your relationship with Him, it is characterized as a continual munching on His flesh, and on His blood.

John 6:40 says you looked at Jesus, you looked at what He did on the cross, you looked at who He is, and you believed. In the context Jesus is physically in their midst and they see Him, but they do not see Him. You know how you can see but not see right? This word ^e **look** is where we get our English word spectator from. It means to "watch, to gaze, to analyze". When you come to Christ you have to 1st gaze at Him, you have to scrutinize Him, you have to understand who He is, and you have to understand what He did. But that does not save you. You have to commit to what you are looking at. You have to trust in Him. The moment you trust in Him you become a child of God. You now have everlasting life. The

evidence that you have everlasting life is in verse 54, you feed on His flesh and you drink of His blood. They are present tense participles meaning continuous action. The action of your relationship to Jesus Christ, once you have eaten of Him, never stops.

Closing

Can I point this out in closing? In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the children of Israel were not allowed to drink the blood. When they killed their fatted calf, they could not eat the blood. They could eat the meat but not the blood. The reason, according to Leviticus 17, is the blood is reserved to make atonement for your soul. When Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, laid His life down on the cross, you not only eat His flesh as the Bread of life, you drink His blood as the Lamb of God. His blood on the cross is what makes atonement for our sin.

When someone asks you to pass the bread during a meal, you are going to pass the bread, and sometimes, if you are like me, you are going to reach across the table and your elbow is going to get in someone else's plate. The reason is that sometimes the person wanting the bread is not the person beside you, but you are going to pass it directly to them, manners or not, because there are going to be people at that time who do not want the bread. During this Christmas season, can we remember that not all of our family members have eaten of the Bread of life? God has called us to pass the Bread, not just to those who are hungry, but to those who do not know Jesus Christ. Let us be heartbroken over those who will eat bread and be hungry again. But know that if they eat of the true Bread, they will never hunger again because in Jesus Christ there is total satisfaction as the Bread of God. Let us feast this Christmas season.