

Do We Love Jesus?

John 6:53-59

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Would you take a Bible please and turn to John 6 and just listen to those words again. John 6:53.

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. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day for my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him."

That's why the early Christians in the first century were called cannibals by their Roman persecutors. That was one of the charges that the Romans made against the early Christians. They said, "These people teach their children to eat flesh and drink blood", and really you can see why they said that, because the words are so explicit. You must admit they are amazingly explicit. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood" --and these words set Jesus apart from every other religious leader.

Neither Mohammad nor Buddha nor Confucius nor Zoroaster ever directed their followers to regard them as an end in themselves, and that's what Jesus does. He says it's an end in itself to eat me and no other religious leader has said that. Even the Gurus who try to draw attention to themselves in these days never succeed in substantiating their claim to divinity the way the man from Nazareth did by His destruction of death and His resurrection.

These words are also the reason why we have bread and wine here on this table this morning. This is the heart of being a Christian, these words, and this is the heart of the purpose for which all of us, Christian or not, were created. This is the heart of life, loved ones. This is the very heart of why you were made. We all may never know the full meaning of Jesus' words but even a little child realizes that this dear Jesus is saying, "Come to me closer than close, Come to me closer than close."

A little child wouldn't get tangled up with the blood and the flesh. A little child would just know He is saying to me I have to come right up to, I have to get nearer to Him in breath, that's what He wants. He wants me to come right into Him. He wants to come right into me and that's at least part of it, loved ones. Don't let's get all technical about eating flesh and drinking blood, let's just be sensible and say this dear person is saying, "Come closer to me than close, come nearer to me than breath. Let me come into you and you come into me."

That daily relationship with Jesus like that is the heart of life and what gives life richness and sweetness and fullness. Actually, most of us have at some time or another experienced that kind of closeness with a person. Most of us here have had a dear Dad or a dear Mom who were just very precious to us or we've had a boyfriend or a girlfriend or a husband or a wife or a Mom or a Dad or a son or a daughter who've just been dear to us and we've experienced that with them. Not the intercourse that the world is preoccupied with, the physical intercourse that is just a shadow of the deeper intercourse -- but we have experienced real intercourse with these people.

Most of us here have had at least one dear person with whose personality ours has interpenetrated and our minds and our emotions and our wills have become just one together and we've been utterly involved in an intimate absorption with each other that gives life meaning at last. Most of us have experienced that with somebody. That's what Jesus is saying is the whole purpose of our lives; that we should experience that with Him and with our Creator who is really our father and that's the whole purpose of our lives and that's what gives life richness.

Is your Christianity getting dry? Are you finding that love isn't quite rising up from within you as it used to do? Are you finding that the duties are kind of bearing heavily on your shoulders? Are you finding that you are getting a bit brittle, just a bit brittle? You believe all the things, you talk about them, you even do the work of the Lord but it's all a bit dry and brittle. It's because you're trying to make one monthly face-to-face love session do you for the whole of your life. That's why. It's because you're trying to substitute one monthly love session face-to-face for a daily love session with Jesus. That's it, really. You'll never get a better answer than that, you won't.

If your life is getting dry, if your Christian experience is brittle, if you're not finding it real inside you, that's it, believe me. Not that you need to read more books, not even that you need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit -- that would all come, if you would get back to having a daily love session with Jesus. That's what sets him apart from every other religious leader. A love session face-to-face with Him is an end in itself, that's the purpose we were made for.

Actually all of us know that too in human experiences. Every husband and wife here knows it. In the early days, when you first met, I mean the Dad was often maybe right that you were doing something wrong, when you arrive so late in the car. Often he was right but just as often actually he was wrong and you were just sitting in the car looking at each other, just staring at each other and there were arguments. That's all you did and it was just great, it was wonderful! That was enough, just to be with each other and to be staring into each other's eyes and to be totally absorbed in each other -- a great sense of rest and peace, a great sense of the eternal moment, that life is just time passing.

I remember when we fell in love, we couldn't believe the evening had come. We fell in love in the morning and we couldn't believe the evening had come so fast because time does stand still, you just are utterly absorbed with each other -- and then the wedding, then the babies, then the diapers, then the mortgages, then the church meetings and the sewing meetings and somehow it isn't as much fun as it was.

And we all like to think "Well, well, you know love has to grow up" and it has, love has to express itself in practical everyday acts of obedience and service, that's right, it certainly has. But isn't the tragedy in so many relationships that that practical obedience and service has utterly supplanted the face-to-face love sessions? It's not the tragedy until you begin to feel "well, we are too old to do that in any way; the magic is gone and well, it takes too much effort." I don't know what we do just sitting, watching each other and yet, that's the way it started and it will take application to get back to it but that's what makes the marriage rich and full and real and makes the diapers easy to wash and makes the mortgages easy to bear, that's what makes it all possible. When you lose those face-to-face love sessions, you lose everything and it all becomes a bore and a round of duties and obligations and responsibilities like Christianity. It all becomes a weight and something to carry when you stop having a face-to-face love relationship daily with Jesus.

That's it, loved ones, that's what communion is. Communion is that and it takes just as much application to do it as it does to do it again with your loved one. You do have to get back into the way of it, you have to get back into the way of appreciating each other as you are without all kinds of side issues, all kinds of considerations about doctrine. You have to just get before Jesus and love Him and draw Him into yourself and eat of His flesh and drink of His blood. That's amazing but if you'll do that, you'll certainly begin to find sweet water coming up from inside again.

So, will you regard today -- Holy Communion we call it -- will you regard Holy Communion this morning as the pattern for your daily life? Will you? That's what we believe about Sunday. Sunday sanctifies all the rest of the days. Not it's set apart from them but it sanctifies them, it sets a pattern for them. Will you let Holy Communion set a pattern for your days and would you get your relationship with Jesus back into repair? That means, would you talk to Him? Would you love Him? Would you spend time in His presence? Just spend time in His presence. Stop babbling, stop talking.

Do you remember when you first fell in love? You couldn't talk. That's what Thomas found, "My Lord and My God", so it is when we're in love, we just haven't words to express, it's just too great, that's what loving Jesus is. So those husbands and wives who need to get back to that, I'd ask you to get back to it together and you'll need to have discipline -- need to get the television off, need to get the children and the dogs out, all the rest of it. You might even need to arrange a nice situation to do it in. See you'll have to work at it a little to get back to it.

Same with Jesus. Don't think it's going to be any easier. You'll have to work at it. You'll have to get up at 5:30 in the morning, give him half an hour - "half an hour Lord, just to think about You" -- that's it. And bit by bit loved ones, after the first few sessions, you will begin to hear Jesus speaking to you. It's amazing, you will begin to hear Him speaking to you, and that's the purpose of our lives. That's it. I don't know if you're really getting that one, because it is the end of the message, but that actually is the purpose of our lives. No more than that. So don't expect anything greater, that's it. That's the purpose of our lives, to love our Father and His son and enjoy them, that's it.

When you begin to do it, you'll find your life becoming richer really. So I'd ask you loved ones as you take part in communion today to look to Jesus and then to do it each day of your life -- to have a daily love session with him face-to-face. Let us pray.

We do not presume to come to the this table most merciful Lord trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table, but thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so by faith to receive thy son, our Savior Jesus Christ, that the bread which we break may be unto us the communion of His body and the cup of blessing which we bless may be the communion of His blood and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us.

The Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread and broke it and said, "This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me." In like manner he took the cup after supper saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant in My blood, this do as often as you drink it" for as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He come. Amen.