

How Does Observing the Lord's Supper Benefit You?

John 6:48-58

Intro:

1. **ILL: Bing Crosby & Bob Hope in a kettle in a village of cannibals.**
2. In the 1st Century some people thought Christians were cannibals.
 - a. Because they heard of this passage.
 - b. Because they heard that Christians ate flesh & drank blood in the communion service.
3. Are Christians cannibals?

I. v53 - What did the Lord Mean: "Eat My Flesh & Drink My Blood"?

A. The Jews of ancient times understood this.

1. In animal sacrifice, God supposedly entered into the animal during the sacrifice.
2. Part of the animal was then burnt on the altar.
3. Part was given to the priests & part was eaten by the one who offered the sacrifice within the Temple.
4. As they ate, they understood that they were eating a part of God.
5. When they finished the meal God was in them!

B. Non Jews (Greeks & Romans) also understood this.

1. Both Greeks & Romans had an official Pantheon (family of gods) they worshipped.
2. There were groups of people who had unofficial worship called "mystery cults".
 - a. These cults had passion plays (gospel dramas) & communion services.
 - b. Some prayers from the mystery religions:
 - c. Mithra: "Abide with my soul . . . that your spirit may dwell within me".
 - d. Hermes (a Roman god): "I know you Hermes & you know me; I am you & you are me".
 - e. Isis (an Egyptian god): As truly as Osiris lives, so shall his followers live. As truly as Osiris is not dead, his followers will die no more".

II. You Eat the Bread of Life Spiritually

A. You eat the Lord through receiving the Holy Spirit (His Spirit) when you surrender your life to the Lord.

1. **Act 2:37-38 - When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
2. At the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit", the Lord comes into your body & into your life.

B. You eat the Lord by devouring His word.

1. **I Pet 1:23 - For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**
2. **I Thess 2:13 - And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.**
3. **I Jn 2:14 - I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

C. You've got to eat (have faith) to live!

1. **v53 - If you don't eat (have faith) - you have no eternal life in you.**
2. **v54 - If you do eat (have faith) - the Lord will raise you up in the last day.**
3. **v55-56 - If you do eat (have faith) - you are dwelling within Christ right now!**

III. You Eat the Bread of Life Symbolically

A. Where have you heard about eating flesh & drinking blood before? In the Lord's Supper passages!

1. 1 Cor 10:16 - Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?
2. 1 Cor 11:24-25 - and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
3. Matt 26:26-28 - While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
4. Mk 14:22-25 - While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."
5. Lk 22:19-20 - And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

B. So how does observing the Lord's Supper routinely benefit you?

1. Lk 22:19 - You remember what the Lord did for you when He died for you.
2. You remind yourself that you have consumed the Lord spiritually when you surrendered yourself to Him & received His Holy Spirit.
3. 1 Cor 11:26 - You proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again.
4. 1 Cor 10:17 - You are reminded that we all are one body in Christ.
5. 1 Cor 10:16 - You remember that you are participating in the Lord's resurrection life.

This is how observing the Lord's Supper routinely benefits you!

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