

In today's gospel in verse 53 Jesus said,
"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you."

Earlier I said there is a big difference between doing life and having life within us. It is the focus of today's gospel where Jesus is reaching out and challenging us to take Him on His word, to believe in Him, to accept Him into our lives and keep growing and feeding on Him.

Kirby Puckett had everything a young man could wish for but he was running on empty with no peace, purpose or meaning in his life. He was just doing life. Are you just doing life, or do you have real life within you? Real life in Jesus Christ.

As we go to communion later on remember, remember and keep remembering what Jesus did for you, and the price He paid, take the bread and treat it as more valuable than a bar of gold, how precious it is as it represents Christ's body and the wine as it represents the blood of Christ, and imagine the pain and suffering he took on for us.

Let go of yourself, your concerns, your anxiety, your burdens, your failures, take them all and hand them over to Christ. Immerse yourself in His presence, fulfil the hunger within you and feed on Him, eat the bread and drink the wine.

Now you can step out of just doing life and have real life within you.
Real life in Christ. Amen.

SUPPLEMENT

SENTENCE, COLLECT, READINGS & HOMILY for today 22 August 2021

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sentence

**Jesus said, 'It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless.
The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.'**

John 6.63

Collect

Prayer of the Day

**Everliving God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear the prayers we offer for all your faithful people,
that in the ministry to which you have called them
each may serve you in holiness and truth;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

Prayer of the Week

Creator God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you:
teach us to offer ourselves to your service,
that here we may have your peace,
and in the world to come
may see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Reading from the Old Testament: 1 Kings 8.22-30, 8.41-43

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. ²³ He said,

‘O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart, ²⁴ the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand.

²⁵ Therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant my father David that which you promised him, saying,
“There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.”

²⁶ Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be

have trained and worked hard for this for years, he would have been well off financially and I guess with a lovely wife and family a nice home, flash car and other material things.

He had it all more than he could wish for, he was full but running on empty, with no real peace.

Can you relate to this? Maybe you are in a similar situation. If so you're not alone, there are multitudes of people out there just like this.

Even King Solomon's fame spread throughout the world. In his day he had more wealth and power than Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson combined, yet he wrote, “When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless” Ecclesiastes 2:11. What answer had Solomon come up with? Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

Out of God's amazing love for us He created us in His own image to commune one to one with Him, to worship and rest in Him in a deep and meaningful relationship.

There is an emptiness within us which only God can fill. He gave us the freedom of choice how to fill this void. Many choose fame, fortune material things, substance abuse - you name it and it's there, the result being a life emptiness and despair.

There is only one way to live a life of peace, with purpose and meaning and that is through Jesus Christ our Lord. In John chapter 14, verse 6 Jesus said,

“I am the way, the truth and the life,
no one comes to the Father except through me.”



In 1987 the Minnesota baseball star Kirby Puckett saw a childhood dream come true when he led his team to a win in the World Series Championship. Greg Gagne, the Twins shortstop, described the scene in the clubhouse after their win. He related the hugging, shouting, laughing, the obligatory pouring of champagne over the players heads, and the presentation of the trophy.

BUT, the memory that would stick with him forever, he said, took place ten minutes into the celebration when he noticed the normally cheerful Puckett sitting silently on a stool away from everyone else. Gagne wove his way through the media pack, players and coaches, and sat down beside Puckett and asked him what he was thinking about.

With deep sadness in his eyes, Puckett said,
“If this is all there is to it, life is pretty empty.”

Here was this young man, achieved a childhood dream, would

confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David.

²⁷ ‘But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! ²⁸ Have regard to your servant’s prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; ²⁹ that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you said, “My name shall be there”, that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays towards this place. ³⁰ Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive.

⁴¹ ‘Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a distant land because of your name ⁴² - for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm - when a foreigner comes and prays towards this house, ⁴³ then hear in heaven your dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and so that they may know that your name has been invoked on this house that I have built.’

Psalm 84

- ¹ How lovely is your dwelling-place:
O Lord God of hosts!
- ² My soul has a desire and longing
to enter the courts of the Lord:
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- ³ The sparrow has found her a home,
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young:
even your altar, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house:
they will always be praising you.
- ⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you:
in whose heart are the highways to Zion;
- ⁶ Who, going through the valley of dryness,
find there a spring from which to drink:
till the autumn rain shall clothe it with blessings.
- ⁷ They go from strength to strength:
they appear, every one of them,
before the God of gods in Zion.
- ⁸ O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer:
give ear, O God of Jacob.
- ⁹ Behold, O God, him who reigns over us:
and look upon the face of your anointed.
- ¹⁰ One day in your courts is better than a thousand:
I would rather stand at the threshold
of the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.
- ¹¹ For the Lord God is a light and a shield,
the Lord gives favour and honour:
and no good thing will he withhold
from those who walk in innocence.
- ¹² O Lord God of hosts:
blessed are those who put their trust in you.

blood, for the blood of Christ.

Jesus was saying that His life had to become their own.

In verse 51 Jesus said

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven.”
If anyone eats this bread he will live forever. This bread is my flesh,
which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews got into a sharp argument amongst themselves after
Jesus said this, but he went on even further and said

“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of
Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you”,
and the reading goes on further with powerful and telling words.
Read them again when you go home and soak it up like blotting
paper and let Jesus words touch you. He is speaking about more
than physical or biological life, but He is speaking about real life, life
that is beyond words, indescribable, and yet we know it when we
taste it.

Most of us spend a fair amount of time, energy, and prayer trying
to create and possess the life we want. In spite of our best efforts
sometimes we live less than fully alive. Sometimes the outside and
inside of who we are don't match up.

We ask ourselves, What am I doing with my life? We wonder if this
is all there will ever be.

Is this as good as it gets. We may lament and wonder what has
become of us and our life. Nothing seems to satisfy. We can
despair at what is and what we think will be. Despite family and
friends we find no place in which we really belong.
It's like treading water and going no where.

I want to share someone's life experience with you.

IS THERE LIFE WITHIN YOU?

That's a hard question and one which many will avoid or ignore. They will turn back and walk away rather than face the question. Many will say, "Fine", "busy", "good", and "doing well", but do not answer the question they cover it up. The question pushes to discover the hunger within us and the life Jesus wants to feed us. That's what Jesus has been trying to explain in the this chapter. He wants to feed us but we have to make ourselves available to accept it. He won't force feed us.

Earlier in Chapter 6 Jesus fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. They didn't understand, as they thought it was just about loaves and fish. It was really about life and where it comes from. Jesus challenges us to consider the bread we eat. Is it perishable or does it endure to eternal life.

Jesus declared himself to be the bread of life, the living bread that came down from heaven. In today's gospel He says "eat me, drink me." This is the only way we ever have true life within us.

How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat? To eat the living bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become one with Him. We are united with him in two ways, by believing in his death and resurrection and by devoting ourselves to living as He requires, by keeping His commands.

In verse 56 this looks like a shocking message, to eat flesh and drink blood which sounds cannibalistic. The thought of drinking any blood, let alone human blood and eating flesh is repugnant to us and it was to the religious leaders of the day which the law forbade. Refer to Leviticus chapter 17:10-11. Jesus wasn't speaking about literal blood or flesh. This is totally and completely a symbolic meaning. Today in the communion service we use wafers for bread representing the body of Christ and wine representing

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 6.10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

¹⁵ As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

¹⁹ Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Gospel of John 6:56-69

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. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.”

⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said,

“This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?”

⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them,

“Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But among you there are some who do not believe.”

For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵

And he said,

“For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve,

“Do you also wish to go away?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him,

“Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Homily “How Are You?” by Brian Pade 15 Aug 2021

The following Homily would have been delivered by Brian last Sunday at Nambucca and Bowraville but for the Covid lockdown. It is appropriate for this Sunday while we conclude our look through Chapter 6 of John.

A telephone conversation went along something like this:-

A friend of mine called last week. He asked,

“How are you?”

Its a common question, one we ask and are asked every day.

You and I both know the standard answers and I gave them.

I said

“Fine, I’m doing well. Things are really busy right now, I’m good.”

He laughed

“Are you trying to convince me or yourself?”

We have all had this type of conversation.

Most of us several times a day.

We offer the usual answers, sometimes we add something about our family, our health, (be careful not to ask some people how they are or you get a long spiel on their health issues and operations; as someone said professionally ill) conversations can also focus on where we’ve been or what we are doing.

We might be fine and busy with commitments, volunteering, caring for family and grandkids.

BUT there is a big difference, a vast difference between doing life and having life within us. Doing life or having life; that’s the issue Jesus is concerned about.

That’s the focus of today’s gospel. It is important enough that its been the subject from the start of Chapter 6 in John’s gospel. The readings in Chapter 6 brings us closer to the unspoken question behind today’s gospel.