

# Lesson 1

## Proper 15

### The Holy Gospel: John 6:51–69

1. What are some characteristics of John’s Gospel? How does this compare to Mark’s Gospel?

Teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus called Himself the \_\_\_ bread from heaven, in contrast to the manna that God had rained down for Israel in the wilderness. He specified that this living bread is His \_\_\_, which He would give for \_\_\_. He invited them to \_\_\_ His flesh and to \_\_\_ His blood— seeing Him as the true sustenance of true life. He said that \_\_\_ ate and drank would \_\_\_ in Him and He in them, and that they would \_\_\_.

In John’s Gospel, “the Jews” were the Sanhedrin and its representatives. They knew what Jesus was claiming with His “I am [*egō eimi*] the living bread that came down from heaven,” but they were unwilling to be drawn to faith in Him as the Messiah. John tells us they “disputed among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’ ”

2. What does their question reveal about their disputing among themselves?

The Jews’ *houtos*, “this man” or “this fellow” (v. 52), contrasts with Jesus’ *kagō anastesō*, “and [*I*,] I will raise him up on the last day” (v. 54). Jesus did not answer their question by explaining inconsequential details. Instead, He went back to His metaphor with even greater force and mystery.

3. What did He add to the picture of eating His flesh? To what did this reference to both His flesh and His blood point? What warning did Jesus sound out to these unbelieving Jews—and to us? What invitation and promise did He give them—and us? Do Jesus’ words about His flesh being true food and His blood being true drink refer to the Lord’s Supper?
4. What is the significance of our abiding in Jesus and Jesus’ abiding in us? What did Jesus point to that would assure our *living* as a result of feeding on Him?

At the beginning of this discourse on His being the bread of life, when Jesus admonished the crowd for pursuing Him only because they “ate [their] fill of the loaves”; it was *they* who brought up the manna

eaten by their forefathers in the desert. They were challenging Jesus to match what they credited Moses with doing. Jesus spoke to that three times, contrasting Himself as the true bread from heaven that nourishes people \_\_\_ with the manna that satisfied only \_\_\_ (see vv. 32–33, 49–50, 58). This contrast gave strong emphasis to what He was saying about Himself, and was all the more pointed because His metaphor became a foil for what they themselves had initiated.

John clearly organized his material for effect. His “the bread that came down from heaven” at the end of this pericope is the tenth time in the chapter that Jesus referred to His coming down from heaven or to be “bread from heaven.”

5. What was John’s reason for this repetition?

The crowd that had followed Jesus to Capernaum was infected by the unbelief of their religious leaders. They were not ready to listen to His “hard saying.” Not only was Jesus’ teaching hard or difficult (*skleros*; v. 60), it was also offensive to the point of being revolting (*skandalizei*; v. 61). Jesus projected them to the future, when some of them would see Him \_\_\_, and He spoke His powerful “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” But many turned back and no longer \_\_\_.

6. What does it say to the Church that Jesus did not soften His “hard saying” to accommodate the crowd and keep them with Him, and made even the Twelve face the choice of leaving or staying with Him?

7. What are some things you have learned over the last 3 weeks that you did not know before?  
How does this shape or change your faith, if at all?

Jesus turned to the Twelve, and Peter did not disappoint Him. Let’s say Peter’s familiar words together as we finish our longer look at the Holy Gospel: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God.”