

The STORY CHURCH

Personal & Group Study Guide: September 18, 2022
Message Series: DEEP TRACKS: The Lesser-Known Teachings of Jesus
Message Title: Eating Flesh and Drinking Blood

Series Intro: Anyone can sing along to the hits, but it takes a true fan to know the *deep tracks* - an album's less popular songs that get buried between the more radio-friendly Billboard bops. If Jesus' teachings were an album or a playlist, scattered among his *greatest hits* (*The Good Samaritan, The Golden Rule, Love One Another*) you'd also find his *deep tracks* that may shock or even offend you - such as *Hate Your Parents, Die Fig Tree Die, and I Came to Bring the Sword!* What are we supposed to do with the most confounding things that Jesus had to say? Join us Sept 11 - Oct 2 as we explore the deep tracks of Jesus.

Let's take a look at this week's DEEP TRACK found in John 6:53-54: *Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*

What's your first, instinctive reaction to this passage? If you're a longtime Christian, and you immediately thought about Communion, try to imagine how Jesus' words must have sounded to his followers *before* he instituted the Last Supper. **How do you think they might have reacted upon hearing Jesus insist that they eat his flesh and drink his blood?**

CONTEXT MATTERS: Whenever you come across a passage of Scripture that is confusing or hard to understand, it's a good idea to explore its context. **What happened just before Jesus offered today's "deep track"** (John 6:1-15)? **In the aftermath of this miracle, what did the people want Jesus to do for them, and how did he respond to their intentions** (v.15)?

When Jesus' adoring fans tracked him down in Capernaum, they approached him with several pointed questions (*When did you get here? What must we do to do the works God requires? What sign will you give that we may believe you?*). Their verbal exchange with Jesus raises three questions for every Christian today (and for anyone who is thinking about following Jesus):

Question #1: _____?

John 6:35 - *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry..."*

What is significant about how Jesus said, "I am the bread of life", and what's the Old Testament connection?

What is unique about Jesus' repeated claim that he is divine? Why is this important to remember when many (if not most) people today are under the impression that all religions are basically the same?

Question #2: _____?

John 6:26 - *Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."*

What sort of accusations did Christianity's earliest critics levy against the Church?

Look at John 6:66. **How did many of Jesus' followers react to this "deep track" teaching about flesh and blood? Have you ever considered walking away from Jesus? Why or why not?**

Do you think most Christians are following Jesus because of who he is, or because of what he can do for us? And what about you? Do you follow him primarily for who he is (identity) or for what he does (benefits)?

Question #3: _____?

Jn 6:27 - *"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*
How did Jesus say this "bread of life" can be attained? (See vv.28-29) What does belief in Him entail?

Which bread do you want - the bread of this world, or the Bread of Life? Which have you been working for?

CS Lewis once wrote, *"Aim at heaven, and you will get the earth thrown in. Aim at earth, and you will get neither."* **What do you think he meant? How do you plan to "aim at heaven" this week?**