

Thanksgiving 2021 – You are what You Eat

1. You'll notice by looking at the altar tonight that we are going to be celebrating the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Here you will taste God's grace in the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
 - i. And you will experience the unity it brings to the Church as we gather as brothers and sisters in Christ to receive this meal together.
 - ii. But this is holiday that most of us are unified in something else, too – our Thanksgiving meal.
 - iii. Turkey and stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce, pecan and pumpkin pie, you name it.
 - iv. You might say that Thanksgiving is all about the food and lots of it.
 - b. But that's how most of us operate the other 364 days a year in America.
 - i. Unlike the home-cooked meal we're waiting to enjoy, we've become a fast-food, prepackaged society; the satisfaction of a meal is based more on its quantity than its quality.
 - ii. It's estimated that today the average American family eats 40 percent of their meals out.
 - iii. And we're paying the price: the incidence of adult-onset diabetes is at an all-time high as are heart disease, high cholesterol, obesity, etc.
2. I mention this not to ruin your Thanksgiving meal or next trip to McDonald's, but to allow us to ponder for a moment: **you really are what you eat.**
 - a. And what's true of the body is true of the spirit.
 - i. We are not just physical beings; we were created in the image of God.
 - ii. In our physical bodies, nourishment comes through what we eat, but for the soul, our nourishment comes through our eyes and ears.
 - iii. And just like the body, the health of the soul is affected by what it's fed. This begs the question, "What's on the menu for your soul?"
 - b. In our world it's becoming increasingly difficult to make good food decisions for our soul.
 - i. Consider television shows, advertisements, and mainstream music.
 - ii. What messages do they send? Have we put ourselves on a steady diet of junk food?
 - iii. Many of us are more than willing to sit down for a two-hour movie and be fed all the alternative social, moral, and ethical values of Hollywood, but we can't seem to take an extra hour of time once a week for Bible study or find fifteen minutes a day for study and prayer.
 - iv. And we fool ourselves into thinking we can handle it saying, "It won't affect me," but we become more desensitized to the depravity as we watch.

- c. And what has been the result?
 - i. Like our lab work reveals about our bodies the result of our “Netflix and chill...turn on, tune in, drop out,” culture has been devastating.
 - ii. The CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics estimate there were 100,306 drug overdose deaths in the United States during 12-month period ending in April 2021, an increase of 28.5% from the 78,056 deaths the year before.
 - iii. I don’t need to remind you of the state of marriage and family: the epidemic of single parent households, abuse, gender confusion, etc.
 - iv. All of this at a time when Church attendance and Biblical literacy are at historic lows (yes I believe they are related) – yet we convince ourselves that it’s all normal

3. So, what’s the remedy for all this?

- a. For all the money and effort that go into marketing McDonald’s, a huge amount also goes into marketing the quick-fix for the problems our choices create.
 - i. Take this pill, lose weight while you sleep, have this procedure—all intended to counter the effects of bad decisions and bad nutrition.
 - ii. But in the end, we all know the only real fix is to change your diet.
- b. What’s true for the body is also true for the soul, and the apostle Paul is our dietitian as he writes, **“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, what-ever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”** (Phil 4:8)
 - i. Our spiritual diet begins by consuming the truth. “Whatever is true,” he says, “think about these things.”
 - ii. But what is truth? This is the same question Pilate asked of Jesus, not understanding that truth was staring him in the face.
 - iii. Jesus is the truth. He is all things true. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, **“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”** (Jn 8:31–32).
- c. To our sin-sick souls, Jesus has come to bring life and forgiveness by his death on the cross.
 - i. He is the remedy to all the bad choices—not the burgers and fries but sin—all the failures, all the pain of life.
 - ii. His blood covers the multitude of our sin and frees you from the shackles of death.
 - iii. Praise be to God there is a remedy for our soul disease, and his name is Jesus!

- iv. And as we feed ourselves on the truth of Jesus, we come to know what is honorable, what is just, pure, lovely and commendable. What is excellent and worthy of praise.
- d. Jesus, the Word Made Flesh, Is God's Food for Our Souls.
 - i. As I mentioned earlier our souls are nourished by what we see and hear, but there is a time when the feeding of our souls comes through what we eat and drink in the Lord's Supper.
 - ii. In the mystery of the real presence, nourishment comes to us in our mouths.
 - iii. When we feel the bread in our mouth and the wine on our tongues, we are tasting redemption and salvation, partaking the forgiveness of sins.
 - iv. Beloved in the Lord, this is soul food, the kind that sustains and nourishes us, body and soul, in the one true faith unto life everlasting – you are what you eat, Happy Thanksgiving. Amen.