

Sermon Title: **“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.”**

Bible: **Ephesians 5:15-20 & John 6:51-58 (NRSV)**

When: on Sunday, August 15th, 2021

Where: about 25 people (including YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, during this challenging time, we come to you. That’s because we need you and we want you. You are our true food and true drink. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer.

Amen.

### **1. How to Know God: Experience**

What is my first name? Hwapyoung. Hwapyoung comes from the Korean Bible. It means “peace” from the word peacemaker. This means that my parents are Christians. When Koreans hear my name, they know that I am a Christian. Most times, they ask me if my dad is a pastor or if I am a pastor's kid. I was baptized when I was a baby. I cannot remember my infant baptism. But I went to church with my parents. Sunday School was one of my favorite places. I have been loved by many great Sunday school teachers. I really loved the Bible stories. During many summer youth retreats in Korea, many of my friends received the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. I am not sure if you have seen those who speak in tongues. I saw them praying for more than one or two hours very easily, as their souls were praying. I envied their passionate prayers. Because I also wanted to receive this spiritual gift, I prayed and prayed, but somehow,

God did not give me the gift of speaking in tongues, which is an obvious evidence of the Holy Spirit for themselves and for others. Do you have any personal experience of the Holy Spirit or an encounter with God?

One of my significant personal experiences with God happened at a monastery when I was a college student. In this monastery, silence is one of the most important spiritual practices. At that time, I could not pray, and I did not want to pray. So, I chose this monastery. In the time of silence, and in silent prayer, I encountered Jesus Christ who was on the cross, and who was silent, even though He had the power and the right to speak up. This encounter was a big turning point in my faith journey. When I look at the cross, it means it is not only for the forgiveness of my sin, but also for God's Holy presence in my suffering, and in our suffering. I am still thankful for this experience, and it works like a fountain to me. It gives a lot of comfort, healing, confidence, and strength. It is a safe place to be silent, to have tears, to cry, just as who I am. Do you have any miraculous or unexplainable experience with God? How can you describe your God in your experience?

## **2. How to Eat: Normal Life**

Today's Scripture reading of Ephesians talks about our spiritual life. The Gospel reading of John teaches us that Jesus Christ is the living bread. Jesus said, "My flesh is true food and my blood is true drink." He also said, "Those who eat and drink abide in me, and I abide in them." I understand this as a relationship, a relationship with a living God.

I know that it is not easy to eat out these days, because of COVID-19. But before COVID-19, how many times did you eat out? Everyday? Once a month? Or only on some special days? In my understanding of our spiritual life, eating out is like a special miraculous or awesome experience with God. Eating out on special days can create unforgettable moments. But we cannot eat out every day. Can't we skip meals, because we had a great celebration last weekend? No, we need to eat day by day, even if it is not a special food. Likewise, we cannot have miraculous spiritual encounters everyday. Of course, we should be thankful for our awesome, miraculous, and unexplainable experiences with God. But as you know, our God does not give us miracles every moment, or every day. Our God wants to be with us in our normal life as well. That's why I believe that Jesus describes himself as bread, a very normal food, in the time of Jesus. Jesus wants to be with us in our daily life, as we need bread day by day. As we pray with the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," we need Jesus day by day.

### **3. Jesus Christ is a true miracle.**

I hope that all of us have some miracles, or God moments in our life. All of our spiritual experiences are great and awesome, because God is there. I also hope that we can meet our God in our normal life. If we know that our God is in our daily life, isn't it a miracle, even when we cannot feel God? There are many spiritual practices or disciplines: worship, small groups, prayers, reading the Bible, fellowship, serving others, singing hymns and songs, or just being yourself, as God created you in God's image. Because of COVID-19, there are many challenges in our faith journey and our faith communities. But can we still see God, even at this time, in

our daily lives and in our new normal life? Jesus Christ Himself is a miracle, a true miracle to us.

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you so much for your miraculous and awesome encounter with us. It gives us a special memory, gratitude, healing, and strength. Thank you so much for our daily bread, your daily presence, our daily relationship with you. Even in our normal life, you are with us. Please lead us to see you, and to live with you in our daily life. In Jesus' name. Amen.