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A N A D D R E S S

delivered by

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in

LYMINGTON HALL,

West End Lane, N.W.

on

L O R D ' s D A Y E V E N I N G ,

13th. April,
1930.

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Scriptures Read,

John:-

Ch. 6.
Verses 22 to 71.

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This is one of the chapters, dear friends, that without question perplexes many of God's people. You see, there are passages of scripture that are quite simple and plain so that a little child can understand them. But there are passages and you know they speak of deep things; and they are not so easily apprehended or understood. That is, of course, we have to bear in mind that this chapter records the words of our Lord which were spoken to the Jews and pharisees. And He spoke of things that they would easily understand - but which are not so simple to us. Now first of all, perhaps I had better state that many think this chapter is the Lord's Supper. Now to start with, there is nothing about the Lord's Supper in the chapter; and we may say a little more - there is no reference to the Lord's Supper. The thought of the Lord's Supper is the very opposite and it is the contrast to this. This is a question of life - receiving life - sustaining life. The Lord's supper is a calling to mind; just the same as though a mother, handing something to her daughter, were to say:- "Keep this in remembrance of me"; and every time her daughter looked at it, it would call her mother to mind. The Lord's Supper is a "calling to mind"; and of course no person should ever take the Lord's Supper unless they are saved by the grace of God.

Now dear friends, though we have stated what this chapter is not, let us seek to try to ascertain a little what is the teaching. Now first I will ask you to notice how the Lord takes up very simple figures; take for instance - every day of the week we eat bread; every day of the week we drink water. You cannot live unless you eat and drink.

And while you may colour water, nevertheless it is absolutely necessary and bread is absolutely necessary. You know we have attached a lot of non-essentials - but those are the two essentials. If you have plenty of bread and water you will not hurt. Those are the kinds of figures that the Lord is pleased to take up. In this chapter it is bread and in the next chapter it is water. Now let us remember that it said in the Law that "he that doeth these things shall live by them". The Law was given to God's people and their life would be in doing the things the Law said. Now the Lord puts Himself in contrast to that and He says;- "I am the Bread of Life". Our life is not sustained by doing; Christ is the sustenance of our whole life and just the same as we have to eat bread to live naturally, now we must eat Christ to live ~~and~~ spiritually; and that life cannot be sustained only by Christ who is the Bread of Life. Now if the Law shewed how man could live by doing, Christ is the revelation of God - and man has got away from God. Now God's Beloved Son has come out of Heaven, come down into this scene and He has revealed - made known - the marvellous love of God. You can see all that God is in the Person of The Lord Jesus and hence, the Lord Jesus has brought life. He is the revelation of God and you can see, in that way, all that God is in love and grace, and in that way Christ is the food of our souls. And He is the Sustainer of the life of the believer day by day and lets him know what it is to feed on Christ.

Now I would like to make this remark; I may feed read the scriptures and not feed on Christ - but I will not be likely to feed on Christ unless I do read the scriptures. That is;- I must read the scriptures to find Christ in them; and if I do not read the scriptures to find Christ in them and see how He is presented to my soul, then He

will not be food for me. It is Christ who is the food and every verse in the scripture has Christ before it and so the word ministers Christ to me and that is the food for my soul. After the Lord has spoken and said He is the Bread of Life, the pharisees and Jews - they murmur. Now you must notice in the chapter that there are different classes of persons, and the Lord addresses these different classes differently. There were those that had eaten of the bread that the Lord had supplied the day before in the wilderness. As you know, He made twelve loaves sufficient to feed that multitude. Those people had been following Him and they had missed Him; and evidently thought there was some miracle and they could not understand it. So they took boats and came to Capernaum - "seeking" it says "for Jesus". "That was a good thing to do" you say. Well, it is a good thing; He is a person well worth seeking. But the question is:- "what leads you to seek Him"? Ah! it was not a good motive that led them to seek Him. So when they find the Lord, the Lord says:- "You seek Me because you saw the miracles. You are coming after Me for what you can get - not because there was the witness that God was among you". And so the Lord begins and says to them:- "Now the wise thing for you is to" 'labour not for the meat that perishes but for that which endures to life everlasting'. They wanted to know how He came but He would not satisfy their curiosity. He told them not to labour for that which would perish but for what would endure. Then the Jews murmured; they start a controversy because they are upset at the Lord's word - saying He came from Heaven. They were looking at the thing in a natural way. They say:- "We know his father and mother and his brothers; how is it he says he came from Heaven"? Of course, He had a

mother but didn't really have a father. On the natural side - well - it appeared a false claim. But that was the truth and faith recognises it. Now when the Jews murmur - if you notice - the Lord makes some very strong statements; and those statements are what I wanted you specially to notice because they are so misunderstood. Now in verse 51:- "I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever". Now dear friends, notice the statement;- if a person eats this bread he lives for ever. No person can eat this bread without living for ever. Whatever can it mean? - "make it your own". Suppose I have a loaf of bread here; suppose I take it up and eat it, well, it becomes part of me; I make it my own. And unless a person makes Christ his own - eats Him - well, he does not get blessing; if he does, he will live for ever. The Lord says:- "and the bread that I will give is My flesh" - "my flesh which I will give for the life of the world". Now when did the Lord give His flesh for the life of the world? There was only one time; that was when He was lifted up on the Cross. He was lifted up there and He died. He gave His "flesh for the life of the world". He gave Himself; He gave Himself as a man here so that any person in this world may have life through the grace of God. Now mark, the Jews - it is not the multitude that followed Him but - the Jews. In reading the gospel of John you must notice how the Spirit distinguishes between the Jews and others. The Jews were downright opposers - thoroughly opposed to the Lord Jesus - rejected Him. These Jews strive among themselves saying:- "How can this man give us his flesh to eat"? Now you see they looked at it in simply a literal sense. In a literal manner they thought He meant His actual flesh. The Lord said He would give His flesh for the life of the world - speaking of His death.

The Lord did not tell them they had made a mistake - why? Because they were deliberate opposers. My dear friends, if we come in contact with deliberate opposers, the wise thing is to give them some statement from God and leave it - not have anything more to do with it. That is how the Lord acts. If you notice, the Lord said to them (verse 53):- "Verily, verily I say unto you except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". That is a great statement that is misunderstood; that is the statement that I want to try - if I can - to make clear. First of all, dear friends, it is certain we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. If we haven't, we have no life at all. No person has life unless they have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood. Now you have, in your mind, just to go back to the 3rd. chapter and you will easily understand the verse. It says in the 3rd. chapter and the 14th. verse:- "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness - so must the Son of Man be lifted up". Now dear friends, where was He lifted up? on the Cross; and the Lord actually died on the Cross. Now no person ever has life but through His death. And it is only through His death that a person has life; and no person has life unless they have appropriated - or eaten - Christ in death; in death. If I can - just for a moment - refer to those who hold that it is the Lord's Supper, you will see immediately what a mistake it is. They say that the bread and wine becomes the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus. Well, we will not say any more as to what a monstrosity that is; but, dear friends, notice - that is a continuance of Christ's life and the very opposite to His teaching. This is a question of Christ in death and how you appropriate Him in death to have life.

Supposing I believe in Jesus - believe that He lived a beautiful life and all that kind of thing - there is no Heaven in that. What is it, dear friends, that really saves a person? If a person learns their lost condition and see that the only way by which they can be saved is by the death of the Lord Jesus Himself and they trust Him, then dear friends, they are saved. So in this verse, we eat His flesh, drink His blood, or "appropriate Him in death" so that we might have life. Now we will look at that again. Some of us were saying this afternoon something on the same line:- the christian has life in a ^{risen} ~~living~~ Person - a risen Person. Now you can take the Cross and see the Lord Jesus there - dying. Why was He dying? Because of what man had done. And so in His death, dear friends, what took place? Every question in connection with sin was gone into and settled for God. Then He expired - gave up the ghost. He came out from among the dead and the One that came out from among the dead - He is my life. I have life in the One that has died. I appropriate Christ, the One that went into death for me. Then dear friends, I have life in Him - risen, risen. Now there is one more thing I will ask you to notice. We can look at the death of Christ in different ways. I can look at the death of Christ as that which simply meets all my need; that is a blessed thing; or I can look at the death of Christ as the revelation of the ~~the~~ love of God, because the death of Christ alone reveals the heart of God to me. That is a great point in this chapter. Christ went into death and makes known - by going into death - what the marvellous love of God is; I appropriate Him in death, then life is mine. After the Lord has told them that unless they eat His flesh and drink His blood they have no life, He adds these words:- "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life"; "and I will raise him up at the last day".

Who has got eternal life?- the one that eats His flesh or appropriates Him - the One who has been down into death on their behalf. Perhaps "appropriate" or "eat" may be difficult to some minds so I will refer you to what took place right back in the beginning and perhaps it will convey the idea. You remember that Adam had two sons - Cain and Abel. Both of those children were born outside of Paradise and consequently - as far as the natural person went - there was no difference; they were sinners alike. They were born of fallen parents outside of Paradise; and they followed two different vocations. And now they are going - both of them - to approach God. Immediately there is a great difference. There is no difference in the persons but there is a marked difference in their offerings. Cain, he brought the fruit of the earth - the fruit of the ground that God had cursed for man's sake sin - thinking it would be acceptable to God. To put that into other words, Cain ignored the fact that he was a sinner. He came to God just as though he was inside Paradise and everything was all right. Abel, he approached God. The question with Abel was:- "How can I, a poor sinner, approach God"? And so, dear friends, he went off to his flock and he got the best little fatling that he could. He brought this lamb and he slew it; when he had slain it he approached God. When he approached God with that young lamb - the best he had - what did that say to God? - what did Abel say to God? What did Abel say to God by approaching God in that way? He owned to God that he deserved death and that it was only by death that he could be saved. God looked on that offering and saw Christ in the offering and God accepted Abel. Now do you see you are just a poor sinner? Do you see that you have no claim whatever upon God?

Do you put Christ between you and God? If you put Christ between you and God - the Christ that has died for poor sinners - you "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood". God looks upon this offering and it means - immediately you have everlasting life; you are saved; you are justified through His wondrous grace. To "appropriate" is - in that way - just to take for yourself the blessed Person of Christ and simply trust Him.

When the Lord has said that if they eat His flesh and drink His blood they have eternal life, He adds these simple words:- "For My flesh is meat indeed". Yes dear friends, His flesh is food indeed; why? It reveals what a wonderful love the love of God is. Look at God giving His Beloved Son to be lifted up on the Cross; can you have a plainer evidence of love? Could there be greater love than that? There could not be; so the lifting up and the giving of the Son of Man was the greatest proof to man that could be of the marvellous love of God. So His flesh was meat indeed. And His blood declared that God was bringing in life for man - "is drink indeed". That is to see the spiritual import of giving His Son and shewed that His blood - it is the sustenance of your soul. Then the Lord adds a little word:- "- as the Living Father hath sent Me -" (now notice the words) "- and I live by the Father". How did Christ live as a man on earth? He lived "by the Father" - in daily and hourly communion. "So", says the Lord, "he that eateth Me shall live by Me" How, as a christian, am I going to live? Just by Christ - in the same blessed, simple way that He lived by the Father.

Now it may be of interest to some to mention that this was the great time when a change occurred in the Lord's ministry. Up to this time

the multitudes had followed the Lord. From this time onward, the multitudes began to disappear. The disciples began to get less in number. The Lord, as He went on His way, gradually reached that time when even all his disciples forsook Him and fled. Now, dear friends, what was it that led them to turn their backs upon our Lord? Just this one fact; that in His death, man in the flesh is set aside - set aside and has no place. And that was the witness of the marvellous love of God to men. And so we read here that "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him". And then the Lord turned to the twelve and said;- "Will ye also go away? Will ye also go away"? And now Peter, the one, you know, that is ever ready to speak, he replies;- (what are his words) "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Now dear friends, I must ask you this - look:- the whole question is:- "What is Christ to you?", that is the question. IS CHRIST ANYTHING TO YOU? I might have a Bible and have, as a system, the doctrine from Genesis to Revelation. Ah! but do you know the Person of Christ the One of Whom the scriptures speak? - because what gives real blessing - what brings life to the soul - is response to that Person; no believing doctrine or ideas. And that is the faith that Peter had;- "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life". He had Christ; and if you remember, you know, a little verse in the first chapter - it says;- "- to as many as received Him, to them gave He" right, or privilege, to take the place of children of God "even to them that believed on His name". "To as many as received Him?" Have you received Him? Ah! dear friends, let us make no

if a person has received Him, the blessing is theirs. But if they have not received Him - no matter what they may know or profess or who they are - if they have not received Him, the blessing is not theirs. And you know the Lord turned to the twelve - when Peter had replied - Jesus answered them;- "Have I not chosen you twelve-" and then a most solemn word, -"and one of you is a devil". The Lord had chosen twelve to be what you might call "special disciples" - like intimate friends and right amongst that number - twelve - what was there? - one that the Lord had to say was "a devil". He was speaking, of course, of Judas; "for He knew from the beginning who it was that should betray Him". Dear friends, let us remember, just being in right company - that will not save us. We may be amongst God's people - surrounded by them - that will not save us. There is only one thing that will save and that is - HAVING CHRIST - HAVING CHRIST. And if a person has got Christ, they have the blessing; and if they have not Christ - no matter what they have - they have not the blessing.

I will just close this evening with reminding you of one verse you have often heard but, dear ~~fx~~ friends, we may say is a very blessed one and one that is, on the other hand, a very solemn one;- the last verse of the third chapter of the gospel of John. And if you notice, he speaks of two persons and that is why - in one way - it is so striking. Now those two persons represent everyone on the face of the earth and you are one of those two persons tonight. But if you are in the first part of the verse, well then dear friends, you belong to a very large company of the redeemed. But if you are in the second part - ah! - you belong to a very large company, but a company that is going the wrong way. The verse runs, look;-

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life". Notice, dear friends, there is no doubt about it - no question about it. There are no hard words to understand; it is simple and plain language - as plain as can be. You know is marked for his simple language. John, though he is such a deep writer, really uses mostly monosyllables. Ah! dear friends, his statements are so plain that a little child can understand them. "He that believeth on the Son" - is that you? - "hath everlasting life". Who has everlasting life? The one that believes on the Son. Who says so? The Son of God says so. But remember, the Son of God says something else:- "He that believeth not the Son -" There is the other person. What is it the Lord says about that person? "- shall not see life". If you are not a Believer on the Son of God you will never see life; not only not have it but NEVER SEE IT. Never see it? NO! NEVER SEE IT! My dear friends, the one that does not have the Son of God, those that do not receive Him - they will have to stand before God as Judge and they will never see life. And what else? "- the wrath of God abideth on him". You know in one way these are the most solemn words in the New Testament. Think of the force of that. "But the wrath of God abideth on him"; never lifted off - it remains. "But the wrath of God remaineth on him" - never lifted off. If a person refuses Christ - refuses the Saviour when God has brought Him in-to the world and when the work has been done by which he can be saved - if that is refused - there can be no hope whatever, but the wrath of God remains, and remains on that person.

Pardon me if I ask once again. Read that last verse of the 3rd. of John. Are you in the first part or are you in the second part? You cannot be in both; you are bound to be in one or the other, and one is as different from the other as the North and South Poles - and as far apart. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

May every one here present, through God's mercy and grace, be that person in the first part of the verse - for His name's sake.