

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, August 14-20 (B) – John 6:51-58

The Choices of Discipleship: *Connected or Disconnected?*

Focus Question: *How does the Sacrament of Holy Communion connect you with Christ?*

word of life

“Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.” John 6:57 (NRSV)

Read John 6:51-58

This passage repeats the final verse assigned to last week’s gospel lesson as a transitional verse, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (John 6:51 NSRV) Jesus continues with his lengthy discourse on bread.

1. *Why do you think Jesus invests so much time and energy with the image of bread?*

The Jews who have listened to Jesus continue to become more and more discontent. How or why would Jesus expand his speech on bread to include eating of the flesh? They were having enough difficulty in swallowing the understanding of Jesus as the bread of life, even before Jesus begins talking about people eating him.

2. *What might Jesus gain by this kind of discourse?*

A greater disconnect is being created between the Jews and Jesus. They are not on the same page at all. Jesus deepens and widens the chasm as he instructs people to not only eat of his flesh, but also drink of his blood.

3. *What is Jesus talking about in regards to eating his flesh and drinking his blood?*
4. *Is the reaction of the crowd understandable?*

Jesus uses the word *abide* as he invites the listeners to be connected to him. The eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood are means of that connection. We have the advantage of living on the Easter side of the tomb, so we read this passage from a sacramental perspective. Participating in the Sacrament of Holy Communion connects us with Christ and the body of Christ in a unique way.

5. *How is the Sacrament of Holy Communion related to this text?*
6. *Is it fair to expect the crowd to understand the meaning of the words of Jesus before they knew of his crucifixion and resurrection? Why?*

To abide in Christ is to be connected to his life – on this earth and forever. Bread is a basic staple used to sustain life throughout the world in almost all cultures. Bread is not a dessert or a frill; it is a fundamental source of nourishment and life. Jesus does not expect a fast from bread but invites believers to turn to him for life. He can give the gift of eternal life.

7. *What is the message for us?*

word among us

We continue our reflections on communion hymns with “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Hymn 362).

Praise we Christ, whose love divine gives his sacred blood for wine,
gives his body for the feast - Christ the victim, Christ the priest. Alleluia!
(Verse 2)

Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, paschal victim, paschal bread;
with sincerity and love eat we manna from above. Alleluia!
(Verse 4)

Each time the Sacrament of Holy Communion is offered, Jesus invites us to a feast of sacred love, a place where the blood and body of Christ is given for us. Consider your own place of worship.

1. *How does the Sacrament of Holy Communion at your church resemble a banquet?*
2. *How do you experience communion as a feast?*
3. *What is it like to not receive Holy Communion for an extended time period?*
4. *What is it like to be away from the body of Christ for an extended time period?*

Jackie has not come to worship for so long, she cannot remember taking communion. Lately she has felt a calling to return to church and especially to receive communion, but something is holding her back. She knows you are a Christian. Thus she comes to talk, but she isn’t sure even of what questions or concerns she has about the issue.

5. *How might you respond?*
6. *Have you ever sponsored a new Christian in the faith? What was that experience like?*
7. *If you have not, how might you go about sponsoring and supporting a new Christian?*

Jesus invites us to abide in him, connected to the life source of our being. To be disconnected from Christ is to choose a path of death. In the process of abiding in Christ, we are connected to other Christians and the body of Christ. The feast of love is spread throughout the world as the body of Christ shares in the banquet from heaven.

Take a moment to think about being part of the body of Christ and God’s gift of Christ in your life.

8. *What images express your connections with others and Christ?*

Prayer

Christ the King, thank you for including me in your banquet feast. Keep me close and help me to abide in you. Amen

Dig Deeper

Isaiah 25: 6-9

last word

Gather your closest friends and family,
and enjoy each other’s company
while breaking bread
with each other.



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