

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, August 21-27 (B) – John 6:56-69

The Choices of Discipleship: *Focused or Uncertain?*

Focus Question: *To whom do we go for life and eternal life?*

word of life

“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’” John 6:68-69 (NRSV)

Read John 6:56-69

Once more, this passage overlaps last week’s lectionary text and continues the bread theme. Jesus claims to be the bread of life, sent by God from heaven. In an escalating controversy between Jesus and the Jews, Jesus asserts that any who want eternal life needs to believe in him, eat his flesh and drink his blood. His words are challenged by many in the crowd.

Even the disciples admit the difficulty of his teaching. Jesus has dealt with the complaints of the crowd, but now he has to deal with the complaints of his own disciples.

1. *Is Jesus expecting too much from his followers?*
2. *Is Jesus going too fast for his students? Why or why not?*

Jesus realizes some of his own group does not believe. At this point, the followers include more than the twelve disciples. Jesus is even aware of one among his followers who will betray him, but that does not deter him from keeping the course. Jesus realizes his teaching is too much for some of the disciples. They choose not to follow him and turn back.

3. *Does it surprise you to learn about some of the disciples turning back?*
4. *If they could explain their actions, what might they say?*
5. *What makes the teaching of Jesus so difficult?*

Jesus directly asks the disciples, who have remained and not deserted him, “Do you also wish to go away?” What a question! It is decision time. Following Jesus is not easy.

6. *What would it mean to stay with Jesus?*
7. *What would it mean to decide to leave him?*
8. *What if someone could not decide? Is that a decision?*

It is Simon Peter who responds, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68-69 NRSV) Thankfully, Simon Peter is focused and clear. He is committed to staying with Jesus. And so he stays, at least for a while. When Jesus is arrested and crucified, Peter is not around; but at least on this day, Peter is focused on Jesus. He has his eyes and heart clearly set on following Jesus. Thanks be to God.

9. *Where else could people go to seek eternal life?*
10. *Where else is eternal life found?*
11. *What do you want to remember from this story?*

word among us

Jesus concludes his discourse on bread with a challenging question. He knows his teaching has been difficult. Many have turned away from him. He gives a chance for the disciples to choose an easier path. And so Jesus asks his disciples of every age, “Do you wish to go away?”

Think about that question, “Do you wish to go away?” Consider it wisely.

1. *What is your response?*
2. *Do you wish to go away from Christ?*
3. *What would that mean for your life?*
4. *Can you imagine it?*

This series of Daily Discipleship has focused on choices. The choice given to the disciples by Jesus is a significant one. There is not room for a middle ground. He asks directly, “Are you with me? Are you willing to walk the difficult walk ahead?”

It is refreshing to hear Simon’s Peter’s response. He is focused and clear. Although Jesus gives him an option, Peter replies that there is no option. To leave Jesus would be to choose death. And so Simon Peter responds, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68 NRSV)

In most Lutheran churches, we stand and sing Peter’s response as we anticipate the reading of the Gospel:
Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.

As we stand to sing, we join Simon Peter in his own words and other disciples of each age as we declare our confession of faith. Although we have a choice to follow, we realize there is only one option for true life. We like Simon Peter acknowledge that there is no where else to turn for life and salvation. It is Jesus who provides the words of eternal life. It is Jesus who is the bread of life and from heaven. To whom can we go?

5. *What does it mean to you to sing those words?*
6. *Where else have you searched for peace and eternal life?*

Discipleship is a choice of each day of life.

7. *What do you hope you can remember about being a disciple of Jesus?*
8. *How can you invite others to be disciples?*

Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for calling me to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Send your Spirit to inspire and guide me. Help me to invite others to follow you. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Revelation 21:1-8

last word

Make a commitment
to be intentional about
your choices to
follow Christ.



Daily Discipleship

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