

Sunday 26th August 2018
"You have the words of everlasting life"

Reading 1: Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18
Reading 2: Ephesians 5:21-32

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:2-3,16-21
Gospel reading : John 6:60-69

Gospel reading: *John 6:60-69*

Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Meditation:

Why do some find it easier while others find it harder to accept the claims which Jesus made? Many were attracted to Jesus because he offered them something irresistible - a visible sign of God's mercy and favour which Jesus demonstrated in his wonderful works of healing, deliverance, and miraculous signs, including the multiplication of the loaves and fish when he feed the five thousand who had gathered to hear him speak. Many stumbled, however, when Jesus made claims which only God can make. Jesus' discourse on "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" (see John 6:51-59) which pointed to the Last Supper, caused offence to many of his followers.

The blessing of full union with God through Christ

Jesus claimed to be the bread of heaven, the very life of God given to us as spiritual food to sustain us on our journey to our promised homeland with the Father in heaven. Jesus did not leave any middle ground for his hearers. They must either accept his word as divine or reject it as the claim of an imposter. Even the apostles admitted that this was a "hard saying". This expression meant that it was not just hard to understand, but hard to accept. Jesus pressed the issue with his beloved disciples because he wanted to test their faith and loyalty to him as the Holy One sent from the Father in heaven. Jesus promised his disciples nothing less than the full blessing of eternal life and union with God. Jesus assures his disciples that it is his heavenly Father who gives the invitation and the grace to believe and follow even in the "hard sayings". Jesus knew that some would not only reject him and his word, but would do so with violence fuelled by hatred, envy, and even betrayal by one of his own disciples.

"My words are spirit and life"

Jesus told his disciples that his words were "spirit and life" (John 6:63) - his words came from the heavenly Father who is the Author of life and the One who breathes his Spirit into those who believe in him. Through the gift of faith Peter was able to receive spiritual revelation of who Jesus truly is - the Holy One of God, the eternal Son sent from the Father in heaven to redeem a fallen human race and reconcile them with God.

Faith is a gift and a personal response to God's revelation of himself

Faith is a gift which God freely gives to those who listen to his word and who put their trust in him. Faith is a personal response to God's revelation of himself. Faith is neither blind nor ignorant. It is based on the truth and reliability of God's word. True faith seeks understanding. Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) said, "I believe in order to understand, and I understand the better to believe." The Lord Jesus offers all of his followers his life-giving word and Spirit to help us grow in our knowledge and understanding of God.

We can know God personally through his word

Paul the Apostle tells us that it is the work of the Holy Spirit who enlightens the eyes of our heart and mind to understand the truth and wisdom which comes from God (Ephesians 1:17-18). Faith is the key to understanding and experiencing God's action and work in our personal lives. Paul the Apostle tells us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). We can know God personally, and we grow in recognizing his voice as we listen to his word and obey his instruction. Ask the Lord Jesus to increase your faith that you may grow in knowing, loving, and serving him as your Lord and Redeemer, Teacher and Healer, Master and Saviour.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. How does God help you grow in faith and trust in his word, even the hard sayings which are difficult to understand?
2. How have you shown that you trust in the Lord and have faith in his Word?
3. Do you believe, as Peter did, that Jesus has the words of everlasting life and the power to change and transform your life? How have you allowed Jesus to impact your life?

"Lord Jesus, you have the words of everlasting life. Help me to cast aside all doubt and fear so that I may freely embrace your word with complete trust and joy. I surrender all to you. Be the Lord of my life and the Ruler of my heart. May there be nothing which hinders me from trusting in your love and following your will."

Source: www.dailyscripture.net, author [Don Schwager](#)