

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, July 31-August 6 (B) – John 6:24-35

The Choices of Discipleship – Life or Death?

Focus Question: *How do we turn to Jesus as our bread for daily living?*

word of life

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’” John 6:35 (NRSV)

Read John 6:24-35

The story begins after Jesus had fed the crowd of 5000 and walked across the water to join the disciples. (John 6:1-21) The crowd is quite baffled. Apparently, they had kept close watch on the activities of Jesus. They had seen the disciples leave in the single boat, but Jesus had remained behind to pray. How exactly did Jesus get to other side of the lake to rejoin the disciples? The people did not suspect or imagine Jesus crossed the lake by walking on water.

1. *What does it appear the crowd is concerned about?*

Jesus invites his listeners to see the bigger picture. They had witnessed healing miracles as well as the feeding of the 5000. With food in their bellies, the crowd appears ready to hear Jesus' encouragement to consider matters other than food. Jesus moves the discussion to eternal life. After feeding them with food, he feeds them with his teaching.

2. *Does the crowd seem receptive to the teaching of Jesus?*
3. *Have you found people to be more receptive if they are not physically hungry?*

The crowd asks Jesus about performing works of God. Jesus does not give a long list of laws to fulfill in order to be righteous before God. Instead, Jesus keeps it simple: believe in him.

4. *If a person believes in Jesus, what kind of works of God will the person try to do?*
5. *Which comes first: faith or works?*
6. *What is the relationship between faith and works?*

Unfortunately, the crowd is not convinced. They want additional signs, something like manna in the wilderness. Manna was bread from heaven that sustained the freed slaves as they wandered in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. Some seemed to think Moses gave the gift, not God.

7. *After all the crowd had witnessed, how could they have had the audacity to ask for more signs?*
8. *If manna would be given to the crowd, do you believe they would have been convinced?*

Again, Jesus offers clarity. It is not Moses who gave the gift of manna, but the giver was God. Now God is doing something new among them. This time, manna has come in the form of flesh and blood. This time, manna has a name – Jesus. This time, manna will be given to the whole world for life itself.

The crowd enthusiastically responds, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus responds with a bold declaration, “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35 NRSV)

9. *What does Jesus mean when he says, “I am the bread of life”?*
10. *What is important to learn from this text?*

word among us

Take a moment to reflect on the lyrics of “I Received the Living God,” a communion hymn in With One Voice (Hymn 700).

Jesus said: I am the bread kneaded long to give you life;
You who will partake of me need not ever fear to die. (Verse 1)

(Refrain) I received the living God, and my heart is full of joy.
I received the living God, and my heart is full of joy.

Jesus promises eternal life for those who believe. It is a promise of life now and life eternal to come.

1. *What do you imagine eternal life to be like?*
2. *What difference does it make to receive the living God?*
3. *Knowing you shall live forever, how does it make a difference in daily life?*

The song concludes:

Jesus said: I am the life far from whom no thing can grow,
But receive this living bread, and my Spirit you shall know. (Verse 4)

We are urged to believe in Jesus. He is the one to fill our hunger and thirst. Yet some people struggle with believing in Jesus. Sometimes, we can become apathetic or complacent. We lose any sense of urgency concerning our faith. It's as if we think we can live for hundreds of years on this planet.

4. *What do you do when your commitment to Christ wavers or weakens?*
5. *What advice do you have for others?*

Some churches see every conversation as a potential opportunity to share and receive the living God. They carry a strong sense of life and death deep in their heart. Christ is the only answer.

6. *What might we learn from other Christians who passionately witness to the life and death invitation of Christ?*
7. *How urgently do you see the gospel message?*
8. *What does it mean for you to believe in Christ?*
9. *As a disciple of Jesus, how do you make a choice for life over death in your daily life?*

Prayer

Bread of life, enrich my life so I might believe and live in you accordingly. Amen

Dig Deeper

Numbers 11:1-15

last word

Take time this week
and bake a loaf of bread
(or purchase a homemade loaf).
Share it with a friend.



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