

John 6: 60-69

**When many of his disciples heard it,
they said: “This teaching is difficult....
who can accept it?”**

**But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it,
said to them: “Does this offend you?”**

Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?

It is the spirit that gives life: the flesh is useless.

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

But among you there are some who do not believe.”

**For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe,
and who was the one that would betray him.**

And he said,

**“For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me
unless it is granted by the Father.”**

**Because of this many of his disciples turned back
and no longer went about with him.**

So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?”

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.”

Meditation

You know...

His teachings were...and are... hard...

but I wonder if it was only his teachings

the bread and wine being his body and blood.

or was it his teachings about Kingdom of Heaven on Earth....

which is already here!

That inside the Kingdom we should/would/could

forgive each other over and over,

we should/would/could offer compassion to our enemies,

and we would ..absolutely would experience the

inconceivable, seemingly irrational, unconditional love of God.

Last week we reflected upon the metaphorical nature of Jesus teachings:

that, metaphorically, bread and wine were his body given to us

so that we might understand who and whose we truly are...

so that we might become aware of the Power of Love

that is given to us so that we can make the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth

visible in and through our lives here and now,

Our lives have been given to us so that the Life and Love of the Holy One

might be made visible on this magnificent Planet, this day, in this place.

Our lives... all of life is a gift given so that beauty, joy, wonder and love can be experienced

in the here and now....by EVERYONE .

That is the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth!

What Jesus understood better than many of us...

what we all need to learn to various degrees

is (as Richard Rohr puts it):

Life is not about me...I am about Life.

Sure, of course, it is good for us to personally

experience joy, happiness, beauty and love

but when injustice or circumstances or dominating powers prohibit others

those same possibilities and opportunities...

well...it is our responsibility to do what we can

to offer companionship, hope, and possibility.

It is our responsibility to do what we can do, to help correct injustice

to help alleviate suffering,

to help liberate anyone held captive by scarcity and fear.

Now...these teachings ARE hard!

To be honest...many of us would rather stay in our little corner of the world,

helping our friends and our family but not going much further...

These teachings are much harder than simply closing our minds and say that we believe

some teachings about eating the body of God, talking snakes,

and creating the cosmos in 7/24 hour time periods.

To do as he did....

To live as he lived...

to love as he loved

isn't easy...

We all know that!

I've been seriously trying to do so for 50+ years

and some times wonder if I've grown spiritually at all!!

I understand Peter's response when Jesus asked him if he too is leaving: to whom shall I go?

Whom else should I follow??

While I see the wisdom that is found in other traditions...

For me...I have come to believe Jesus has the words of eternal life.

For me, I have come to believe that Jesus,

is the teacher, sage and way maker that I will follow.

Absolutely sometimes his teachings seem sometimes totally outrageous...

turning the other cheek, walking the extra mile, loving my enemy

Yes, sometimes his teachings are not popular such as we must

Care for and about the immigrant...

feed the hungry even though it is their own fault...

Yet, I have come to believe that his teaching are the way of Life, capital L.

His teachings are the way that humanity will finally break the cycle

of vengeance and fear and

finally make visible the Kingdom of Heaven visible on Earth.

Jesus and his followers were mocked and humiliated...

they were told to get real...

And the same will be for us, more than likely!

We will be accused of being impractical, foolish and naïve ...

so what?

Tell me...what is the greater loss:

to give up what our heart knows to be true

or to give up wanting other people's admiration?

For some of us, that can be a difficult choice.

But it is our choice to make....

In spirituality class, we just finished a series entitled:

"Saving Jesus"

Basically it was pastors, theologians and Scripture scholars trying to save Jesus from the accumulation of ideological beliefs that the institutional church has laid upon him and us.

This series taught us about Jesus as an historical human being who risked everything:

his reputation, his honor, his family and his life

because he knew...he knew not only in his head,

but most especially in his heart

that his Abba God was not a god who needed to be appeased or flattered or placated...

As a real person in history, Jesus knew,

that allowing the Love of God to permeate our consciousness would lead to salvation.

But salvation did not mean getting into heaven at the end of our earthly lives.

It meant liberation here and now...

being liberated from feeling unworthy, unloved, and unlovable...

being liberated from our ego and

being liberated from our fear...

our fear of being insignificant,

our fear of never having or being enough...

our fear of God.

and on top of all that, Jesus knew none of this was about him...

One time, Peter calls him 'Good' and he immediately turns and reprimands him:

"No one is good but God alone"

Jesus never wanted to be worshiped...he wanted people to follow him...

To live and to love like him...

Unfortunately for millennia

Christians have been taught to worship Jesus.

**Worshipping Jesus and worshipping him is MUCH easier
than loving like him.**

Enough!

No more need to worship...only to love...

There is no need for fear,

only for feeding...

There is no need for worry...

only for celebrating the beauty and wonder of life..

When we love all peoples, all beings as ourselves...

when we desire and work for others what we desire for ourselves:

justice and sufficiency,

we will experience LIFE in its fullest, possible way...

we will know the Presence of the Ultimate Mystery.

We will experience the Presence of Power and Love

that is beyond our rational minds.

We will know that Love is our beginning, our middle and our ending...

and then, even if at first His way seems hard

**we too shall know that it there is no other way we wish to go....
and we will have nothing left to say, but THANK YOU! amen...**