



Summer Sermon Reflections

Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?

Whether one's a long time Christian, new to the faith or still recovering from bad past experiences of the church, there comes a time when we know in our hearts, souls – in our bones – that is not just about the outward trappings of religion. It just makes sense, on all levels of our lives, to follow Jesus.

John 6:61-68

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.'

For Personal Study

Today's text reveals that many disciples left Jesus after He had fed 5,000, walked on water and then taught them that He, Jesus, is the Bread of Life. While we often look at the 12 who stayed, let's spend some time examining those who left Jesus.

Some left because it was getting late in the day. The day was fun, entertaining, and they felt good for awhile. But they had responsibilities at home; they couldn't be expected to keep following the Son of God, could they? Money must be earned, chores done, or finding out what the neighbors were up to was on their minds. In our lives today, we face this same challenge: all the demands of our lives push Jesus and His salvation into a brief moment on a Sunday morning. How can you work towards making your relationship with Jesus central in your life, and not just a part of your life?

Some left because they found Jesus' teaching to be hard (v. 60). They were happy to participate if it was easy and straightforward. But when Jesus presented them the challenge of following

Him, they said "No thanks, that's too hard" and stopped their faith journey. In the post modern world and with our modern conveniences, following Jesus' teachings can feel 'harder' than ever. In what ways can you work at your faith all the time and face the challenge of being a Christian in the post modern world?

Some just didn't 'get it'. Following Jesus is about faith, and some just couldn't make that leap. They got hung up in the literal, rather than the true meaning of what giving themselves to Jesus is all about. Jesus taught in parables so that the people he was teaching, were able to 'get it'. He talked about things in their everyday lives. Now, 2000 years later what situations in your everyday help you 'get it' and explain it to new believers?

For those who stayed, their lives were never the same, they were reborn in Jesus. It takes some effort, a seed of faith, and an investment to share your life in the support of Christian community, but you can be one of those who stayed with Jesus!

Readings & Questions for Individuals & Groups

Monday, August 28

Job 1:13-21 Misery seems to multiply sometimes. How does Job's example show you the way through your life's challenges?

Tuesday, August 29

1 Timothy 1:12-14 Paul's conversion shows the power of Jesus to challenge our belief in ourselves and to place it in Him. How are you being changed as you let Jesus become the center of your life?

Wednesday, August 30

Mark 14:35-36. As you face your fears and doubts, how does Jesus example of bowing to God's will strengthen you to do what you must do?

Thursday, August 31

1 Cor. 12: 12-13 God in His wisdom gives us all different roles to play. What is your role in the community of St. John? How can you encourage others in their role?

Friday, September 1

John 6: 68-69 When and where do you remember to give thanks and praise to God for the gift that is Jesus in your life?