

Today we come to the last part of The Bread of Life Discourse

6 weeks of readings from the Gospel of John

All looking at various aspects of the Eucharist

Today we are presented choices

Choices the followers of Joshua had to make

Choices the followers of Christ had to make

Choices the disciples had to make

Choices we have to make

Not just words

But words backed up with action

Our first reading takes place in Shechem

A shrine second only to Jerusalem and the Temple

The Israelite nation has come to an impasse

Whom will they serve?

The ancestral gods of their fathers?

The gods of the people in the land they are dwell in

Or the LORD

The God of Jacob, Isaac and Abraham

A God not tied to their history or where they are living

Joshua makes it clear the path he will choose

And the people choose to follow his lead

It is not an easy choice

In all aspects of our lives

It is difficult to live Christian lives

St Paul's letter points to this in marriage

This reading is not about a power struggle

One person being over the other

It is about love

Self-sacrificial love

The love Christ has for his church

The love of offering his life for her

That is the love of a husband for his wife

That willingness to offer everything for the other

To be an image for the world to see

Not a love for the faint of heart

Now we turn to our Gospel

Where we find the followers of Jesus murmuring once again

This is a hard saying

Who can accept it?

What is it that makes a teaching difficult?

Either we cannot understand it

Or we cannot accept it

A hard teaching either goes against our intellect or our will

Many of Jesus' followers decide to leave

When he sees this

He remains firm

The words I give you are Spirit and life

Then he turns to his closest disciples

Do you also want to leave?

St Peter answers for all of them

Master, to whom shall we go?

We have come to believe and are convinced

You are the Holy one of God

Whom do we choose to follow?

Do we struggle with our faith life?

Or is it easy?

If it is easy, we had better take a look at it

Because being a Christian is never an easy life

Are we simply riding the surface?

Do we believe in the Real Presence?

That this bread and wine is no longer bread and wine

But has become the Body and Blood

The Soul and Divinity of our Lord

Do we believe in the Real Presence

That the words the priest speaks has the power to do what they say

To transform the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood

Do we believe in the Real Presence

But think the Eucharist has no power to transform my heart?

Do we make the connection of receiving Christ in the Eucharist

And our inner conversion

Do I let him influence how I treat my parents

How I treat my co-workers

How I treat my boss or employee

Do I let him have an impact on how I vote?

How I spend my time?

The movies I watch

Who my friends are

Do I take him with me to the workplace?

Do I receive him to fulfill a sense of duty?

Only to run out of the church as soon as I can

Do I believe in the Real Presence

Only to treat it as a precious jewel

Keep him locked up in the Tabernacle until next week

Keep him safe here in the church

Where he won't interfere with the rest of my life

This is a hard saying

Does it shock you?

Christ gives us himself to eat

Not so he can change into us

But so we can change into him

So we can become Spirit and life to the world

What do we choose?

Do we say with Joshua:

As for me and my family

I follow the Lord

Do we walk away with so many of Jesus' followers?

Do we say with St Peter:

Lord, you have the words of eternal life

To whom shall we go?

But Christ doesn't just want words

If we say with Peter

You have the words of eternal life

If we truly mean these words

What will our faith life look like?

Can we stay away on any Sunday?

What will take priority over Him?

Eternal life or a little more sleep?

Eternal life or Sports?

Eternal life or a bit of inconvenience?

What will we place over our relationship with Christ?

What will we place over eternal life?