

Reflection for Sunday, August 25, 2024

14 Pentecost, Proper 16, Track Two:

- Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18
- Psalm 34:15-22
- Ephesians 6:10-20
- John 6:56-69

Opening Prayer: Let's pray!

Holy God, thank you for freely giving yourself to us and for keeping your eyes upon us. Thank you for hearing our prayer as we ask for wisdom to illuminate our understanding of the mysteries of your holy scriptures. Come Holy Spirit and speak to us because we are listening. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen!

Title: "Abide in Him!"

In Saint John's gospel, we continue to witness the opposition of the Son of Man during Passover Time in Galilee as Christ announces, "I Am the Bread of Life" sermons. We heard from Miriam about how Jesus addressed the crowds (John 6:22-40) and Rev Lissette as Jesus spoke to the Jews (John 6:51-58).

In today's gospel, we come to the end of Jesus' teaching of the bread of life discourse (verses 56-69) as He shared this message to His Disciples.

Jesus said, "those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. I am the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

How many of you at times felt like Christianity is a mystery?

I concurred. At a young age of nine, I recalled having a tremendous quest for God. Although I grew up attending St James Anglican Church in St. Vincent & Grenadines in the Caribbean from the girdle and was surrounded by a loving family; I still felt a void in my life. I wanted to **know** like Simone Peter, who is this God that everyone talks about. I knew, I could not see Him or touch Him, so I was perplexed.

Now after the disciples heard the above message, they said "this teaching is difficult." This is crazy talk!

I think one of the reason why Jesus was rejected by many of His followers was the fact that Jesus wanted them to exercise they faith instead of their deeds. The majority of His disciples did not believe.

As I continued my journey in life, it was around my senior year of high school when I fully understood what it meant to be a follower of Jesus Christ. My confusion lifted and my commitment to live for Jesus Christ became my priority. My faith grew.

I believe in partaking in the blood of Jesus and the body of Jesus Christ as an Eucharistic form of worship. The blood that brings power enables and empowers me. As a soldier of GOD, I have the full armor of God as per Ephesians 6:10-20. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..."

I encourage you to spend some time studying the rest of this Ephesians passage to stand firm and prepare yourself for battle everyday. What soldier goes to war and not be prepared? Remember to use God's word and His Name to solve or conquer any situation that may try to test your faith. We have the words of eternal life.

Jesus anxiously wants us to know who He really is. Clearly, that is where true faith comes from. Believing and knowing that God wants to partner with us. We have to do the work. We have to pray. We have to lay hands on the sick. We have to be charitable. We have to walk in love.

The human problem is that some people walk by faith and some people don't. Jesus said it in today's gospel, "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life", but among you there are some who do not believe."

My hope and prayer is that you don't wait to accept Jesus Christ as the "Bread of Life" because He is the bread that sustains us and connects us to the Holy One of God.

Last week I was reminded of how fleeting life is. In a small town in Sicily, a superyacht sunk and some passengers were able to escape and some were not able to. It was said due to a powerful storm the yacht suddenly went under water. Those who did not survive, I wondered if they had the opportunity to accept the mercies of God before it was too late. Let's keep the families that were affected by this incident in our prayers.

God wants to transform our hearts. He wants us to abide in Him. As a community we have to embrace the love of God that was poured to us through His son Jesus Christ and accept it and pass that love on to everyone we encounter. Truly, our love for God is demonstrated by how we treat others.

"Don't turn away, walk with Jesus everyday!"

That's how you will get to know and serve Him. Jesus wants us to be one with Him. He wants our life to resemble His. Here are some examples: by loving and caring for one another, being compassionate, kind, joyous, peaceful, humble, providing for the poor and needy, remembering the oppressed and those who suffered loss, etc. We especially remember Marcia Hartley, our newly beloved priest, Anne Hartley's mother, who has recently passed. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Closing Prayer: Let us pray!

FATHER, we're your people who are called by your name. The name that is above every other name. The name of Jesus Christ! We have chosen to worship you and serve you as our God in all sincerity and faithfulness. Strengthen us to make the vision clear and to declare

with all our hearts, “but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Thank you for ransoming and protecting us and as we put our trust in you, you promise to preserve us from punishment and give us eternal life. Amen!

Done by *Yolande Franklin*