

Service for Week 19<sup>th</sup>- 25th August  
2024 by Chaplain Andy

### **Our Opening Prayer.**

Gracious God, we thank you for the many ways you provide for us the love you so faithfully show. Forgive us for taking your goodness for granted instead of appreciating it as we should. Forgive us for failing to trust you despite all you have done, trusting instead in other people or other things.

Teach us to put our faith in you, knowing that whatever we face you will provide the help we need to face it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father who art in heaven, .....*

**Amen**

### **Bible Reading Jn 6:56-69**

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives

life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.

He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

**Thanks be to God**

### **Reflection.**

Recently we looked at the passage in John's Gospel where Jesus tells his disciples 'I am the bread of life' and in our reading today Jesus goes on to explain that if they have faith, then God's spirit will live within them to sustain them just as bread does for the body. We remember and celebrate this symbolically when we have Holy Communion in our church services.

In teaching that he will, through the Holy Spirit, become like food and drink (bread and wine) Jesus is telling his disciples that a time will come when he won't be physically there to teach them anymore. He will not be alive and with them so they must have faith and



believe that through Jesus' words and example God's Spirit will come into their lives to give them strength and to assure them of eternal life when he has gone.

But many of Jesus' disciples were distressed to think that Jesus would not continue to be with them to lead them, travelling around the country preaching and healing as he had been doing. Also, Jesus was talking about his body becoming just flesh and blood, implying that he was going to die. As many of them had left their families and their work to follow Jesus they were horrified at the thought that Jesus would be taken away from them and die or be killed. From other passages in the gospels, we also know that some disciples thought that by following Jesus they were part of a movement that would bring about real change in the Palestine. A change that would eventually overthrow the governing Roman army.

It was for these reasons that, as we read 'From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.' They just could not believe that this man they had put all their hopes and belief in, was now saying that he was going to die and no longer lead them.

And there are times when we may start to think like them. What was the point of Jesus' life here if it was just

going to end in failure and death? But Jesus reassures them and tells them that although he may die, they will see him (the Son of God) ascend to return to God. That although he will physically no longer be with them God's Holy Spirit will always be with them. 'The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing' he tells them.

Jesus knew that some of them could not accept this. They had pinned all their hopes on Jesus and now felt let down. Some would start plotting against him and many others would just leave and go back to their homes.

Jesus then asks his closest twelve disciples - "You do not want to leave too, do you?"

It was Simon Peter who answered for the disciples -and he answers for us also-

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." **Amen**

### **Closing prayer**

Loving God, I thank you that in the turmoil of life you are always with me- your love reaching out, your hand supporting me and your grace giving me strength.

Help me to truly believe that, not just in my mind but in my heart: to put my trust wholly in you, confident that you will never fail me. In the name of Jesus Christ, I ask it. **Amen**

Prayer inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett