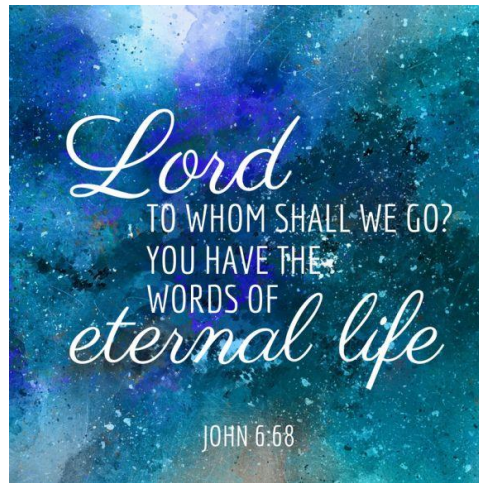


Coop's Scoops # 229 Sunday August 22nd, 2021



Readings: 2 Samuel 23: 1-7 Psalm 67 Ephesians 6: 10-20

Collect: Almighty God, we are taught by your word that all our doings without love are worth nothing. Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: John 6: 55-69

⁵⁵ for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is 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." ⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you

were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ 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. ⁶⁵ 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. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Sermon: It would be so much easier today to preach on the Old Testament lesson, or the Epistle about the whole armour of God. The Gospel is so challenging. Like the disciples who first these words, I find it difficult. There are whole universities full of books specifically about this Gospel, and none of them agree with one another. I still struggle to comprehend what Jesus was saying but I owe it to you to try.

So....difficult, yes. Once when I was reading this very same Gospel up in Thunder Bay where we had a big gaggle of children, when I spoke the words “Eat my flesh and drink my blood” a child of about 8 boomed out “Ew Yuk”. And then you could have heard a pin drop. Because, truthfully, everyone was feeling that same way but would never have expressed it in words. It gave us all a real reality check.

As Christians we have become accustomed to hearing those words and immediately thinking “ah, the Eucharist!” Those words aren’t about real flesh and real blood it’s about that little white wafer and the chalice with the wine. Well, that’s what Anglicans believe. The disciples of Jesus didn’t even have the Eucharist to think about. That hadn’t never happened. And in fact, what Jesus was telling them contradicted what they had always believed, what the book of Leviticus clearly taught. God Himself had commanded that blood never be consumed. Ever. Drinking blood was an abomination, eating any flesh with blood in it was also unholy; blasphemy! They start to grumble about it. Jesus notices, and ups the ante... If that offends you, what would you think if you saw Me

ascending to Heaven from whence I have come? These words placed Jesus as more than Moses, more than Elijah, more than the manna which satisfied hunger only for a day. Sadly. It was just too much for the disciples well, and they just packed it in and went home. We hear no further news of them.

Can you imagine how sad that made Jesus? These folks walking away were not “the crowds”, they were the disciples, the followers, the ones who believed, the ones who had given up everything to follow along, the ones who went on their own missions in His name....good people, all....people who were orthodox about their Scriptures... people unable to hear the new good news which Jesus proclaimed. Still happens today, doesn't it?

But what of those who did stay? Jesus had question for them. “Will you also go away?” This was a real question; they might have done; imagine if they had all “quit”, it's a tough day for Jesus as well as for them. Peter who often responds for the group says “ To whom would we go?” If not to Jesus, to whom? To what? If possessions, and power, and popularity, and success do not fill the hungry human soul, how could their hunger ever be satisfied if not by Jesus? And Peter sums it up with a full confession of faith “ You have the words of eternal life, and we have come to believe and know that You are the Holy of God” They will stay. Jesus leaves them pondering when He tells them that even among those who remain there will one who will betray him. I think that might have been the first time the 12, including Peter, were wondering “Who is it? Is it me?”

What do we say this morning? We have begun our faith journey with Jesus and I am certain that we are all committed to staying on that journey, whatever obstacles, doubts and fears may arise along the way. Yet we too need to ponder what Jesus meant when He said “ Those who eat my flesh and drink m blood abide in Him? Whoever eats Me will live because of Me?

And finally I get to conversations with Gregory. I remember when we first tried to introduce him to broccoli. He touched it, and said “ I like how it feels” and pushed it around for a while with his finger. Then he picked it up and smelled it and said “Yup, it smells good, I really like it”. Played with it a bit more. Then he smiled and said “ I really LOVE broccoli!” So I said “That's great, Gregory, down

the hatch with it". And went " Well, I love, it but I sure won't eat it". He just didn't understand when I told him he couldn't say he LOVED broccoli, if he refused to eat it.

HMMM. I think that there are many people who like to sort of poke away at Jesus, pick Him up a bit and look closely then say "I really like the things He did, He was amazing, good and kind". And then maybe they like to get a little closer and "smell" Him....delve into what His teachings and His miracles and His great love...and say "Ah, there is an aroma of God about Him". But to be a disciple, to become one with Jesus, requires that we consume Him right into our own being. That He becomes one with us. And we become one with Him. Sounds a bit like eating and drinking, doesn't it? Could that be close to what Jesus may have meant? We pray that way with Scripture....asking that we may read, mark and inwardly digest them. Perhaps "eat my flesh and drink my blood" means something like that.

I hope you have not found anything I've said offensive, as my whole intent is to honour the profound truth that Jesus spoke, the Truth who Jesus is, and the Life that Jesus gives through His own Body and Blood, given upon the Cross for our redemption. Let's just recommit ourselves today to staying on the journey. He will never leave us or forsake us. May we never leave or forsake Him either.

Prayers:

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are known, grant us a true faith, that we would honor You not only with our lips, but serve You faithfully with all of our heart, mind and strength. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless with your wisdom and faith those who lead us as the people of God. We pray for our Archbishop +Anne, Archdeacon Kelly, Priest Judie+, our wardens Paul and Peter, our Parish Council and our Options group, led by Susan. Our hope is in the living God! Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, give joy and hope to all Your children in remembrance of their Baptism. We pray for Stella Mary Ann to be baptized September 5th, for her parents Blaine Lovelock and Laura Miller, and grands Mary and Frank Lovelock and Gordon and Mary Hall, and for her godparents Joshua Lovelock and Darcie Easton. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear our prayers for our nation and its leaders, for all civil servants, for the coming election of faithful and godly leadership which will serve all people well. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of life, encourage with Your Word and grace all who suffer physically, emotionally and spiritually on account of illness, including Bob, Marg, Lil, John and others whom we know and love. May they know Your loving presence and be comforted in their suffering. Bless all medical professionals with the skills necessary to bring healing, relief and the comfort of a good death at the right time. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen the faith and sustain to life everlasting all who receive Christ's body and blood this day in Holy Communion in churches throughout our world. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing:

May the peace of God which passes all our understanding keep your hearts and minds fixed on the love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you!

- Judie+

