

You have the Words of Eternal Life

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost) is John 6:51-69. This text has two subsections. Verses 51-59 deal with Jesus pointing to the eating and drinking of himself as the way to eternal life. Verses 60-69 has many followers being overwhelmed by what he had been saying and would soon leave. It is when Jesus asks his disciples if they want to leave that we have the powerful statement from Peter: "*Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."* (6:68).

Flesh and blood here point to Christ as the crucified one and the source of life. These words emphasize the fact that we should not separate faith from the person of Christ. To believe in Christ means to be united with Christ, who is flesh and blood.

Again and again Jesus came back to the truth that those Jews resisted. By including his blood in the picture, he made sure they would be proven wrong if they took Him literally. But if they saw the spiritual truth they would see in Jesus' blood the blood of atonement. With the blood the reference to His sacrifice on Calvary was complete.

To summarize and close His talk, Jesus repeated the comparison He made earlier with the manna (verses 49, 50). Those who heard Jesus that day did not misunderstand Him. He made sure of it by continually returning to key thoughts. Each of the following repeats several times:

- Jesus is bread.
- Jesus, the bread, came down from heaven, sent from the Father.
- Whoever eats the bread, that is, believes in Jesus, has eternal life.
- Jesus will raise that person up at the Last Day.

Jesus taught these truths at the synagogue, where worshipers met regularly.

When Peter says: "*the words of eternal life*" (6:68) he was not speaking of a formula but of the thrust of Jesus' teaching. He perceived the truth of v. 63. We sing this verse when we about to hear the Gospel lesson as a part of our worship service. Like Peter, we are saying that this is the only word that counts and we want to hear it. These words sustain us in our daily lives and ultimately carry us to heaven.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for your life supporting Word. Continue to hold us near and dear to you and maintain our faith to eternity. Amen