

**Sermon for Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 (Trinity 12) 'How deep is your faith?'**  
from Fr. Mike

- 1 Kings 8.1,6,10-11
- Psalm 84
- Ephesians 6.10-20
- **John 6.56-69**

The sixteenth-century Spanish conquistador, Hernando Cortez, tells how he was so committed to his mission that he ordered his men to burn their ships so that they would never be tempted to turn back in defeat.

The call to follow Jesus, as set out by St. John in this morning's Gospel reading, is a call to burn all our other ships and never settle for second best in life.

Peter can see what the crowd cannot see that day. He realises that Jesus Christ is God's eternal bread come down from heaven, and that he has the words of eternal life. As a result, Peter becomes a partaker of two great possessions that St. John also offers to you today, in Christ's name. Firstly, **faith** -- the inward conviction that Jesus Christ is who he claims to be and will do everything he promises to do. The faith John offers is not mere emotion. It is action. Perhaps the following acronym might help: **FAITH** - Forsaking **All I Trust Him?**

When we receive Christ by *faith*, we then receive the second great possession of those who come to Christ completely - namely the possession of Christian

experience. It is evidenced over time in new desires, new goals, new direction for your life, a full heart, and in the first-hand experience of seeing Christ do all he promises to do for those who follow him. Scripture says if anyone is *'in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold all things are become new'* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Look around you. See what is happening in some areas of the Church. There are those who leave the church because they say, "I don't get anything out of it ... that church did not feed me ... it didn't meet my needs." For them, church is all about what it does for *them*, with little or no thought given to what they might do for the church or its master. They run from fellowship to fellowship looking for the most recent famous convert, newest gospel gimmick, or a warm fuzzy feeling of comfort. Let us be painfully honest: what they really want is just entertainment, not devotion to the Lord of the universe!

**Remember: authentic disciples cannot walk away from Jesus.**

Peter answers for the twelve, **'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life'** (v. 68). There is, when all is said and done, only one way to follow Jesus Christ, and that is with conscientious self-abandonment, taking no step except those we take with him, and for his glory alone.

Peter knows that his life is changed for the better by walking with Jesus. This in itself is enough for this unique moment when he has been offered an

opportunity to join in or walk away. Certainly, there would later come a time when Peter would deny the Lord and go his own way (for a while) but we know the reality is that even then he could never *really* walk away.

Once we have tasted the light of Christ's glory, once we have received his body broken for us at Holy Communion, and have sensed the touch of the master's hand on our lives, and once we have known the best that he has to offer us, we will never again be satisfied with second best. Simon Peter *eventually* knows that for sure, proclaiming openly to Jesus his belief '**... thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God**' (v.69).

In 2021, we may wander away for a time, but like the prodigal son (and Peter the 'rock' of our Universal Church) we will eventually come to our senses and remember that life in the House of God is life worth living; and then we will come home!

**How deep is your faith?**

**The call of this day is for each of us to honestly examine our own commitment to Jesus Christ.** Do we simply follow him for what we imagine he can do for us ... or for who He is, and what we can faithfully do for His glory?

**Forsaking – All – I – Trust – Him!**

Fr. Mike (Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021)

