

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“We’re Out of Here!”

READING: John 6:53-56, 60, 66-69 – Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.” On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” From that 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 that you are the Holy One of God.”

Last week I watched a segment of the television show, “Below Zero.” It’s one of the programs that follows the adventures (and misadventures) of homesteaders above the Arctic Circle in Alaska. This particular episode was set at the time of the spring thaw, when winter was slowly releasing its grip and the seasons were turning. It’s also the time of year when many of these folks who live off the land are running desperately low on provisions. They depend so much on game meat that they harvested in the fall, and by the spring, they’ve nearly exhausted their supply.

It's sort of fun to watch these hardy outdoorsmen (and some women) and to try to imagine myself doing what they are doing. I can see myself hunting and taking down moose, bears, and caribou. I can see me fishing through the ice and weathering 60* below zero. But this particular episode made me say, “No, I could never do that! I’m out of here!” It was when one of the guys went into his larder for frozen meat and all he had left were three caribou heads. That’s right, caribou heads! He took one of those, skinned it out, boiled the eyeballs, ate some of the fat raw, and cut open the cranium to extract the brain. This he fried up and ate it with real enjoyment! It was at that point that I said to myself, “I’m going to stay right here in sunny, muggy Indiana and do my shopping at Meijer and Kroger. That’s not for me!”

In our text we see that Jesus had collected quite a few hangers-on who traveled with him and hoped to catch a few miracles. They fancied themselves to be his disciples, but after the feeding of the five thousand, they expected free bread and fish on a daily basis. They sought out our Lord in order to make him their Bread King. But instead of free bread, they were treated to a lesson about “real food” and “real drink”. Jesus tells them that if they want to live eternally, they’re going to have to dig in and eat HIS body and drink HIS blood. Unless they do that, they will be lost.

It's at this point that they take offense at him. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they say. “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” They walk away from the Savior without adieu. They do not stick it out and learn more from him. They were looking for physical comforts, not spiritual sustenance. They did not yet see Jesus for who he was, but rather a miracle worker and provider. They weren’t looking for a savior but for someone who could make their lot in life easier and more interesting. When the teachings got deeper and more difficult to understand, they said, “We’re out of here!”

You and I want to eat our fill and drink deeply of Jesus. We want to be in His word and to receive his Sacraments with joy and relish. We want to truly be His disciples and to stick it out even when the path becomes difficult, and troubles surround us. To hang on to Jesus and to trust him even when we don’t understand his plan or see his face. To trust that by being in him, he is in us, and we have the words of eternal life. The Twelve stuck it out, even when they didn’t understand all that Jesus said. They stuck it out

even when others turned away. Oh, they weren't perfect at it. They failed Jesus in the Garden, at the Cross, and on Easter morning. But they stuck it out and were rewarded by seeing his glory, watching his Ascension, and being filled up with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They believed his words of eternal life, and experience now his rest.

That's what we want to experience, too. Where else could we go? Jesus has the words of eternal life, and we are blessed to hear, mark, and inwardly digest them. Yes, his body is real food, and his blood is real drink. Let's dig in! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

- 1) Thanks to everyone who helped make Pastor Woods celebration of his 25th Anniversary of his Ordination such a joy. A special thanks to the Kitchen Crew for preparing the meal.
- 2) Now that Grace-on-Wednesday is in full swing, we can look forward to another new beginning as we look forward to the resumption of Sunday School on September 12 with an Inter-generational Celebration and regular classes on the 19th. There'll be something for everyone. Plan to make it part of your life in Christ.