



Reflection by Rev'd Tony Meek

**Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity
John 6:56-69
25th August 2024**

This morning Jesus calls us to share with him in the eternal life of the spirit. Jesus: the one person in the whole of history who has been perfectly in tune with God's music. If you like, he's God's music made flesh. His life is dedicated to making God's music heard and loved by all so that everyone might respond by joining in, playing the music God composed for us.

Jesus calls us to share in that eternal life by eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

It was a difficult teaching when Jesus first said it and John tells us that many people gave up and stopped following him. It's a difficult teaching today: what are we doing when we eat and drink consecrated bread and wine, for us the body and blood of Christ?

Here's one way of looking at it. When we do this we are entering fully into the life of Jesus both as the human Son of Man and as the divine Son of God. We are allowing him to enter more fully into our human lives and our spiritual beings.

In our human lives we experience happiness and joy, anxiety and fear, laughter and tears, anger and longing. And into those experiences Jesus, Son of Man, brings the music of welcome and acceptance, love and compassion, healing and forgiveness. Themes that are present in all he says and does. He shows us how to live loving one another as he loves us.

In our spiritual beings we experience highs and lows, time of confusion and times of clarity, oneness with God and feelings of total isolation from him. And into all our experiences Jesus, Son of God brings the music of humility, peace, grace and truth. Music blending in perfect harmony with the music of God, his Father. Music which reaches our true selves, the selves God means us to be, the music only we can play.

After many people had left Jesus, stopped following him because his teaching was too difficult, Jesus asked his twelve disciples if they too wanted to leave and he gave them a choice. And he gives us a choice too. Typically it's Peter who replies on behalf of all of them, perhaps he speaks for us too:

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

Peter doesn't say he understands all that Jesus says or that he finds it easy to accept this teaching. He does say that however hard the words may sound, because they are spoken by Jesus he trusts them as words of eternal life and for Peter there is nowhere else to go to find such words.

We may not fully understand what we are doing when we eat and drink consecrated bread and wine. We may not fully understand all the church's teaching on theological matters. We might find it hard to say all the words of the creed or sing all the words of a hymn.

But somehow we have come to see that there is nowhere else for us to go. We have heard the music of God and seen it in action in the life of Jesus and have come to believe that it is in him that we find Love, Truth, Grace, Healing, Mercy and Forgiveness.

And so we make our choice: To join in the music of God, to dedicate ourselves to his eternal life trusting that his love and mercy will keep us in tune and in harmony with the whole company of earth and heaven!

(With thanks for her wisdom to Katharine Smith, formerly a Licensed Reader at St Mary's Church in Bishops Lydeard.)