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Proper 16B - Ordinary 21B - Pentecost +12

Sunday, August 23, 2009

John 6: 56-69

## Abiding in Jesus

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>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." <sup>59</sup>He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>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. <sup>65</sup>And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father." <sup>66</sup>Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup>So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

I've got a new word for you today – "abide." That might not be a word you've heard before. To abide means to stay or remain with something.

When you are a family, you abide with one another don't you? You are so special to your parents that you will always be a special part of them – and they will be a special part of you. You will abide with one another your entire lives. Even when you are a grown up yourself, you will have that special connection to your mom and dad.

In today's gospel story Jesus is, once again, comparing himself to bread – and speaking of our communion in him. He tells the disciples that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood – what we do at communion – will abide in him forever.

Isn't that interesting? Notice that he didn't say that he would abide (or stay) *with* him...but rather that we will abide *in* him. When we take Jesus' teachings into our hearts, he's not just a part of our lives (like a friend who's always nearby) – he becomes a part of us and we become a part of him. This way Jesus is alive within each of us.

Listen carefully today and see if you can spot when Jesus uses that word – abide.

Can we pray?

Dear God,

Our connection to you is so strong. We abide in you and you in us.

Amen