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WORDS OF LIFE ??

You have experienced the destructive power of words. "*Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me*" just doesn't work all that well. But hopefully you've also experienced the constructive power of words -- words of encouragement, affirmation, good will, hope and promise.

The words Jesus speaks are even MORE powerful. They bring "spiritual" and "eternal" LIFE -- which you can get nowhere else. Only from Jesus. The powerful closing scene of John 6 spells it all out for you.

In verse 35 Jesus proclaims, "***I AM the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.***" Puzzling words, coming right after His miraculous multiplying of the loaves and fishes by the Sea of Galilee. He explains the significance of the sign. It's not about the physical or material, it's about the immaterial -- the spiritual. Moses fed the multitude in the wilderness, but not with "true living bread" like Jesus is. The bread of Moses perished. But Jesus is eternal. He's the source of eternal life for all who believe in Him. Verse 57, "***As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me.***"

Earth-bound Israelites hearing Him stumbled over these words. Jesus is talking about bringing spiritually dead people to spiritual life. It's not about a sacrament, but His sacrifice. You're not saved by rituals, you're saved by the ransom of the Risen Lord. Jesus is the great "I AM" of Exodus 3:14. As the Lord of life, He is God come in the flesh to save His sinful people who are spiritually dead. He gave His own body and blood on the cross to pay for sin. He asks you to believe that He lived and died and rose again to save YOU. Because you are unable to save yourself, you must trust wholly in Him -- for His spiritual life.

Jesus makes a marvelous promise in verse 37, "***All that the Father gives Me WILL come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.***" There is much mystery here, but we must not make the mistake many do by trying to elevate the responsibility of man above the sovereignty of God. The Bible is clear, even if the concepts seem unclear in our finite minds. Apart from Christ no one has the "moral ability" to choose Jesus. Everyone is "dead in sins" until they are "*born again from above by the Holy Spirit.*" Jesus said in John 3 that anyone who does not believe in Him is "*condemned already*" because they have not believed. That's why you need a Savior -- because you CANNOT save yourself! You can only be saved by believing in Jesus, but you can only do so by the gracious provision of the Father to draw you to Jesus in faith. Jesus explains this as the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit -- which results in a real coming to Him in faith that becomes reality all by the amazing grace of God Himself.

This helps us understand responses to Jesus' words. Verse 60 records that when many of the disciples heard Jesus' words, "***they said, 'This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?'***" And verse 66 says, "***After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.***" Religious faith is the same as anyone's "faith" in anything, in that it is logical and reasonable and based on evidence. Faith doesn't require you to understand everything. The test of faith is whether the OBJECT of your faith is trustworthy. And when it comes to Jesus, you are asked to believe what HE says because He is GOD. Can you trust Him? Then you can trust all that Jesus says. Such faith is a gift of God!

In verse 67 Jesus turns to his inner circle, the twelve disciples, and asks whether they also want to quit following Him. Simon Peter answers, "***Lord, to whom shall we go? YOU have the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and have come to know, that YOU are the Holy One of God.***"

How much of what Peter just confessed did he fully understand? We'll not know until Jesus answers ALL our questions in heaven. But if you are trusting Jesus in the same way as Peter, then surely God is at work in your heart and mind and will. So TRUST Him with your whole being. He promises to save all who come to Him in faith. Believe in Him who said "***I WILL***" raise up on the last day all who "***believe in Me.***"

Will YOU reject Him or receive Him? Will you listen to earthly words of the world, the flesh and the devil? Or the eternal words from Jesus' lips? That's the confidence of faith -- to trust in Jesus AND to share His good news with others. You can be sure that SOME WILL believe because Jesus promises to save ALL who come to Him in faith. You don't do the saving, but you must do the sharing of His "***words of life!***"