

## **The Challenge of Discipleship**

Jesus' teachings often provoke strong reactions. In today's Gospel reading from John 6:60-69, many disciples were overwhelmed by the implications of his words. They struggled to understand the deeper spiritual truths he was conveying. This moment highlights a crucial aspect of discipleship -- following Jesus is not always easy. It requires us to confront uncomfortable truths and to embrace a path that may lead us away from popular opinion or even our own understanding.

When Jesus turns to the Twelve and asks, "Do you also wish to go away?" He is not merely seeking a response; he is inviting them—and us—to consider the depth of our commitment to him. Are we willing to stay with him, even when the teachings challenge us? This question resonates deeply in our own lives, especially in times of doubt or confusion.

Simon Peter's response is one of the most beautiful declarations of faith in the New Testament: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life" This statement encapsulates the essence of true discipleship. Peter recognizes that, despite the difficulties, there is no alternative to following Jesus. He acknowledges that Jesus alone holds the key to eternal life.

In our own lives, we may face moments when we feel tempted to turn away from our faith due to challenges or misunderstandings. Yet, like Peter, we are called to remember that our relationship with Jesus is unique and irreplaceable. He offers us hope, purpose, and the promise of eternal life.

The passage also serves as a reminder of the importance of perseverance in our faith journey. Many disciples left because they could not accept the hard teachings of Jesus. However, those who remained, like the Twelve, chose to embrace the mystery of faith, even when it was difficult to comprehend.

In our contemporary world, where faith can often be questioned or dismissed, we are invited to stand firm in our beliefs. Following Jesus means embracing a life of humility, service, and sacrifice. It means being willing to engage with the complexities of our faith and to seek understanding, even when answers are not immediately clear. As we reflect on this passage, let us consider our own responses to Jesus' call. Are we willing to stay with him, even when the path is challenging? Like Peter, may we affirm our faith in Jesus, recognizing that he alone has the words of eternal life. Let us commit ourselves to a deeper relationship with Him, trusting that in our journey of faith, we will find the strength and grace to persevere. Amen.