

## Where Else Can We Go?

**Josh. 24: 1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Ps. 34; Eph. 4: 32-5:1-2, 21-32; Jn. 6: 53, 60-69**

Life is full of decisions. From the time we get out of bed in the morning, we are faced with decisions. In fact, getting out of bed is a choice that we make each day. Often we say we have to do something. 'I have to do this or I have to do that.' The father of a Jewish friend of mine had this saying: 'The only thing you have to do is die. Everything else is a choice.'

Thankfully, most of our decisions are fairly unimportant: What am I going to eat for breakfast? What colour socks am I going to wear today? But some decisions are critical; they are life-changing.

In the First Reading, Joshua puts an important choice in front of the people of Israel whom he had led to the Promised Land. Are they going to serve the God of their ancestors; the Lord God that had led them out of slavery in Egypt and cared for them as they journeyed through the desert? Or are they going to serve the gods of the people who live in the land that they are entering? For clarity and to guide them in their decision, Joshua told them that he and his household were going to serve the Lord.

In a similar way, Jesus puts a hard choice in front of His followers. In the Gospel readings over the past few weeks, Jesus has said several times that He is the bread of life, the bread that came down from heaven, and that whoever believes in Him would have everlasting life. Now, He tells them that unless they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they have no life in them. This is too much for most of them and they turn away from Him.

Then Jesus asks the twelve apostles if they, too, wished to leave Him. Peter, the one who was to deny Jesus during His Passion, even though he did not fully understand what Jesus was telling them, made the choice when he said: 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Peter's 'choice' was actually a 'no-brainer'. Notice that his choice was framed as a question. Where else can we go? This was not a choice between two equally appealing options. This was not a choice between blue socks and red socks. In his mind, there was only one viable option. He believed in Jesus and knew that his faith would lead to everlasting life in heaven. The alternative would lead to oblivion.

We are faced with the same choice as the Israelites, and it is a crucial one. What God will we serve? Will we serve the God who sent His only Son into the world to suffer and die for us? Will we serve the God who, through the sacrifice of His Son, opened the gates of heaven to us who had been shut out by the sin of Adam? Or will we serve the gods of the society around us; gods such as: the inordinate pursuit of pleasure, position, power, wealth and so on.

As with Peter and the apostles, the decision is clear and simple. Do we choose Jesus who has 'the words of eternal life' or do we serve gods that may provide momentary pleasure but will not last for eternity. Even though we, like Peter and the apostles, may not have a complete understanding of the meaning of Jesus' words, let us put our faith in Him and claim our inheritance; everlasting life in heaven. There is no appealing option.