**The Ven Andy Broom, Archdeacon of the East Riding, reflects on John 6.56-69 for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 25th August.**

There are so many things in life I simply don't understand, things that I just don't get; like cryptic crosswords. I have no idea how to solve one. Anything, to be honest, that comes in a flat pack from Ikea, I don't really get that, I never get it right. The letter my wife got from her pension company the other day, I didn't understand it - financial gobbledygook - I just didn't get it.

Well, in our gospel reading today from John chapter six, we see the crowd just don't get Jesus, they don't understand his teaching. Do you remember, it's all sort of focused around Jesus saying, “I am the bread of life,” and he talks about how he comes from the father and his relationship with the father.

He talks about what it means to receive eternal life. And in what seems to be especially complicated for the hearers, he talks about how he gives his body to be eaten and to be drunk. And the crowd don't get it. They really don't understand. And Jesus isn't surprised, he says to his disciples when he's talking to them, I know this is a hard teaching.

But he also knows that unless the crowd understand who he is, then understanding his teaching is almost impossible. You see, they thought they were coming out to hear, to see a miracle worker. Maybe to hear someone who would tell good stories, perform signs and wonders, entertain them. And instead, they got difficult and challenging teaching. They didn't understand the one who was giving it.

They didn't know who he is. And it's only when we understand who Christ is that we begin to understand the teaching. And from that, faith begins to grow in our lives and in our hearts. And so Jesus watches the crowds disperse. He sees the outer ring of disciples who had begun to follow him also shrug their shoulders and say, “It wasn't what we expected,” and they leave him too. And so he turns to the 12 and says, “And what about you?” In effect, have you had enough as well? And in those lovely words, Peter says, “But to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. You are the Holy One of God.”

We know those disciples hadn't fully understood who Jesus was. Peter hadn't really begun to grasp all of the meaning of those words that he said. Faith had been sown in their hearts. They had got a grasp of something, of who this Jesus is, and he was worth following. And they weren't going to give up on him now.

And like those disciples, we are also called on an adventure of faith, aren’t we? We don't always understand this life, things happen that we simply struggle to make sense of. However long we've been following him, I expect there are some teachings in the Bible that we still struggle to really get, struggle to fully understand. But like those disciples, let us keep our eyes on Jesus. Let us keep our eyes on the one who has the words of eternal life, the one who is the Holy One of God.

And whilst we may not fully understand who he is this side of heaven, and whilst we most certainly won't fully understand and make sense of all his teachings this side of heaven, we will be journeying with the one who alone is worth following, the one who changes lives, the one who leads us to eternal life and the fulfilment of life here and now.

So let us follow Jesus and let us not give up on him. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we give you thanks that you have the words of eternal life, and you are worth giving our whole lives to you. So, help us to follow you, and as we do, deepen our knowledge in you, deepen our understanding of you, and deepen our faith in you and your father. Amen.