



*"...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life..." John 6*

A while back, I attended the 50-year anniversary of the last church my father pastored before he died. Resembling him physically, I was blessed with many stories of who he was and how he ministered. One in particular continues to impact my life.

A young couple's 5-year old daughter expressed a desire to become a Christian. Being a new experience to them, they made an appointment with my father. "Amy, why do you want to become a Christian?" he asked. Without hesitation, she responded, "So I can have crackers and grape juice." He smiled and turned his attention to her parents to encourage them to run by the store for some crackers and grape juice to enjoy with dinner that evening.

Then he looked back into the eyes of that sweet and honest little girl and said, "Crackers and grape juice are wonderful, but Jesus is so much bigger and better than crackers and grape juice. Someday you will want Jesus just for who Jesus is, then you will be able to become a Christian."

A few years later, Amy fell in love with Jesus just for who Jesus is and asked him to be her everything.

Several years after that, Amy wasn't a little girl anymore and she caught the eye of a young man. "Mom, how can I go out with him, he's not a Christian?" "Honey, it's okay to be friends with people who don't love Jesus, but guard your heart." "How do I do that, Mom?" "Hmm...just offer to pay your own way." Amy agreed to a night of bowling, but only if she paid her own way. "Why can't I pay for you?" he asked. "Because that's how friends do it." "What if I want to be more than friends?" "Oh, we can't do that because I'm a Christian and you're not." "But I believe in God." "That's great, but it's not the same thing."

He continued to pursue her, even attending church with her family. But Amy soon recognized that his interest in Jesus was merely a means to an end. She looked him in the eyes and told him the story of that visit to her pastor's office when she was a little girl. "Someday you will want Jesus just for who Jesus is, then you will be able to become a Christian...but in the meantime, I'm not your crackers and grape juice."

I met the grownup version of this young man a couple of months ago. He had recently answered Jesus's call to full-time international missions and our church was one of the churches he visited to share the story of his calling.

It was so good to meet him, his wonderful kids, and his sweet and honest wife, Amy. All those years earlier, Amy's words had led him to a crisis of belief. He began to ask questions, explore the Bible, and to desire Jesus just for who Jesus is.

How often do we come to Jesus for something he can provide for us rather than coming to him just for who he is? Is Jesus a means to an end, or is he everything?

The crowds gathered around Jesus many times when he walked this earth, seeking some miracle, or provision, or knowledge. But when he taught the difficult reality that true life is found only in making him your everything, most of them walked away.

*"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.' After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered him, '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.'" John 6*

Someday you will want Jesus just for who Jesus is...

In the van on their trip to visit our church, Amy's youngest son asked Jesus to be his everything.

He shared his new story with our church that Sunday morning. My eyes filled with tears as Amy and her family made their way up to the communion table. For the very first time, that sweet and honest little boy got to have some crackers and grape juice with his family...and with Jesus, his bigger and better everything.



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