



DATE: September 13, 2009

TEXT: John 6: 16-40

TITLE: "John XVI: The Bread of Life"

There are more and more T.V. shows and movies dealing with time travel. Have you ever imagined what it would be like if you were able to travel back in time and stand on the sidelines and watch and listen to Jesus? You would have to learn Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek, but it would be fascinating to watch Jesus. Our text this morning is two encounters with Jesus... one by the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee and the other on the shore. The actions and the words of Jesus are amazing. We of course, can not travel through time, but we can look at the word of God and see the truth it teaches us.....I want to share 4 lessons from this amazing text.

**Lesson # 1** We see that knowledge of Jesus does not necessarily indicate understanding of Jesus. We see two examples of this in our text

**First**, we see it in the disciples. They were sent into a boat over the Sea of Galilee. At this point the sea is less than 7 miles wide. A storm comes up and they were unable to make headway against the wind. Suddenly a figure is seen walking on the water. The Gospel of Mark

tells us there first thought was that it was a ghost. Finally Jesus says.... “it is I” or “I am” I love this line in the text READ *verse 21*

**21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.**

Think about this for a moment.... before he spoke they refused to let him in the boat. I can just see Peter yelling to Andrew....”there he is.... quick row away from him... row harder.... get the oars... keep him away.” Only after he spoke did they allow him to come aboard. So many people see Jesus... but they keep him away... they keep him at arms length.

But there is also the crowd. The next morning they either followed in other boats or walked around the Sea and encountered Jesus again. Jesus speaks these words of condemnation to them.... (*John 6: 26,27*)

**26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.**

The truth is this... there is a great deal of difference between knowing about Jesus Christ and following Jesus Christ. The truth is this... When God acts in the lives of his people he almost always gives an alternative explanation so that we may attribute the act either to Him or to

someone or something else. The disciples thought it was a ghost. The crowd thought Jesus had found another bat across the water. Jesus said this to the crowd....

**36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe**

They always found an alternative explanation. There is a commonly used expression....

“seeing is believing.” Jesus is changing this expression. Jesus is saying “believing is seeing.”

The truth is this... a person can walk through an entire life without seeing the hand of God.

There will always be an alternative explanation. They may believe in Jesus... but do not follow Him. But once we turn to Him in belief... we constantly see his hand in our lives. Believing is seeing.

Disciples lived in darkness and struggled against the wind.... until Jesus entered the boat...

Then “they reached their destination.” and dawn came. I don’t want to be overly metaphoric in reading scripture.... but this is a description of our lives. When we invite Him in... the battle is won and the light enters our lives.

**Lesson # 2** We must work at surrendering to Christ. *John 6:27-29*

**Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."**

**28**Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

**29**Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Here is the most difficult idea in Christianity to understand and to carry out. Christianity is not a religion of obedience... it is a relationship of surrender. This is what separates Christianity from every other religion in the world. To be a good Muslim you must pray 5 times a day facing Mecca. During the month of Ramadan you must eat during the day. Islam is a series of rules and regulations. Even to be a good Jew you have to observe all the dietary laws. You must obey the 10 commandments. You must follow all the rules of Judaism. What is the work of a Christian? Jesus answers this... **"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."** We have seen many times.... belief is not intellectual assent.... belief is total surrender. People say... 'just believe that is easy... a lot easier than Islam or Judaism.'" When you hear people say this you know they have not truly surrendered their life to Christ. As we all know... surrender is by far, the most difficult act we try to undertake.

Have you ever tried to surrender your worries to Christ? Jesus gives us these words...

**25"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?..... 27Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?**

Have you ever tried to truly obey this text? Give Christ your financial worries. Give Christ your health worries. Give Christ you worries about your children. Give Christ your worries about your job. If you have tired I believe you have discovered how difficult surrender truly is. At least for me....I give the Lord my worries in prayer... and then I snatch them right back. A few years before I came here I was having medical problems. I had this great pain in my side. I went to the doctor again and again to try to get a diagnosis. He did test after test.... in the end he said... "Doug the official diagnosis is Irritable Bowel Syndrom... but he said... what is really is, is stress and worry. You have to stop taking on the problem of everyone around you. I have learned to thank the Lord. When I begin to over worry and allow stress to build up in me... he gives a excruciating pain in my side. He is telling me.... surrender.... trust.... relax.

This is the lesson of Christianity. Your act of surrender is the work required of you to receive the presence of Christ. I often wish it was a list of actions. I wish it was "10 easy steps

to being a Christian.” I could do the steps and say ‘done.’ But it isn’t. It’s surrender. Not once. Not once in a while. Continual surrender of every area of our lives.

**Lesson # 3** Notice the absolute sufficiency of Christ. *John 6:35*

**35** Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

This is the first of the “I am” saying in the Gospel of John. The entire Gospel is based around the 7 “I am” sayings found in John. You can see the entire text I read today.... the feeding of the 5000 and the walking on water are leading up to this text. John puts them in his Gospel as an introduction for the “I am” saying.

Here is the wonderful truth of Christianity. Christ and Christ alone is sufficient for all our needs. Let me say this... I do not believe this is a promise that Christ will meet all our spiritual needs. I do not believe in what is called the “health and wealth” gospel. I truly get angry when I hear T.V. preachers who say “Send in your \$100.00 and discover how God will multiply our riches.” I get angry when I hear T.V. preachers say “If you just pray enough and believe enough God will heal you... God never desires a person to be sick.” I get very angry. Health and

wealth preaching is a fabrication of scripture. I have been to a number of 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries. I have seen more faith in Jesus Christ in a small church in Bolivia or a small church in Mexico, or a small church in Brazil then I have seen in some of the great cathedrals in the US. These people can barely feed their family. These people struggle every day to stay alive... but their love for the Lord just flows out of them. No, never tell me that true faith brings wealth.

I have seen some of the most godly men and women that I know suffer from terrible illness. Some times these illness last for months... even years... even decades. I have seen tremendous men and women of God go through terrible tragedies in their families. Never tell me it is because they lacked faith. Hogwash. No where in scripture is there a promise that Christians will not go through the terrible trials on earth. No where does scripture tell us that Christians will not suffer the terrible, terrible consequences of a deeply fallen world. We do and we will.

But Scripture does tell us this..... Christ is sufficient. Christ is the Bread of the World. Christ is the light of the World. Christ is the answer in this world. He fills our deepest needs.

When we face tragedy.... he is present. When we face death... he is our Comforter. When we face illness... he grants healing..... sometimes that healing is by allowing us to die... but he grants healing. *1 Corinthian 15 states.....*

**For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting**

Do you see this truth... yes, our bodies must die..... yes the mortal must fade so the immortal can emerge..... but that is victory. There is no sting... there is victory! We have victory in Christ. He is the Bread of the World. He sustains us. He fulfills us. He is our all and all.

Surrender to Christ..... every day... every hour... every minute.... and receive His victory.

AMEN