

Sermon on John 6:24-35
Tenth Sunday After Pentecost
August 1, 2021
By Deacon Robert Millott

Please pray with me. Christ our Savior, come thou to dwell within us, that we may go forth with the light of thy hope in our eyes, and thy faith and love in our hearts. Amen.

Last Sunday Father John talked about the Disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee again. They were on their way to Capernaum which is on the northwest edge of the sea. Another storm kicks up on the sea and Jesus saw them struggling while He was standing on the western side. Several weeks ago, in my sermon I mentioned how shallow this lake is and how quickly a storm can come up. This lake is very shallow and is about 700' below sea level. Being this far below sea level, hot air from the lake surface rises and cooler air from the higher elevation descends and the two airs collide creating high winds and a rough surface on the sea resulting in waves as high as 30'. Jesus walked towards the disciples who were struggling to row against the high seas, but instead of going directly to them He walked past them so they could see Him. The disciples saw Jesus and became terrified thinking He was a ghost. Jesus called out to them and told them "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." The literal Greek translation of the word "I" is "I am". Remember

now that in Exodus when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush in Ex.3:14 he said, “I AM WHO I AM.” Here Jesus demonstrated that He is Lord over all creation. So, there was no need for Peter or the rest of the Disciples to be afraid.

However, Peter was afraid and while he was walking to Jesus his fear got the best of him and Jesus had to pull him up from the water and said, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” On the way to church last Sunday, I saw on a church sign this wording: **Fear immobilizes, Faith mobilizes.** I thought that is exactly what was going on with Peter in today’s Gospel.

This verse of Peter lacking faith reminds me of the story in Mark 9 where a father came to Jesus and asked Him to heal his son. He said to Jesus in the second half of vs22 “But **if** you can do anything, have, compassion on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can!” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe, help my unbelief!” Peter believed but still had unbelief to deal with. This story also brings back memories of the Columbine shooting on April 20, 1999, when Cassie Bernall was asked by one of the shooters if she believed in God. She said yes and was killed for her faith and belief God.

Now back to John 6. The boat had reached Capernaum and soon thereafter some of the people who were on the other side of the lake that listened to Jesus teach them began to arrive. They saw Jesus and wondered how He got there since they saw the disciples leave without him.

The people were searching for Jesus not because they saw signs from him in the feeding of the 5000, but because they were seeking material benefits and not spiritual benefits. The signs they saw pointed to Jesus' divine nature and identity as the true Messiah.

Remember now the people were living under some bad oppressions because they were occupied by the Romans. They wanted a messiah who would lead them from oppression and high taxes to having peace. We saw some examples of this during Vacation Bible School a couple of weeks ago when we watched episodes of the tv series *The Chosen*. If you have not seen this tv series, I highly recommend you do.

The crowd had a dialog with Jesus and in this dialog, they ask Jesus what must they do in order to be doing the works of God? Jesus told them that the works of God are to believe in him whom he has sent. They then asked Him what signs Jesus would give them so they could believe Him. The people had already forgotten how He had fed them a few days earlier. They wanted more signs and wonders for them to believe. They asked Jesus various questions and acted like they were trying to teach something to Jesus when they said their fathers ate the manna in the wilderness that Moses provided. Jesus corrected the crowd when they said in John 6:31 "He gave them bread from Heaven to eat." Jesus also corrected them when He said in John 6:32 "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who gave you the bread the from Heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the

true bread from Heaven.” When Jesus taught, He often taught in a manner that was familiar to the hearers. He would teach in a manner the ancient Jewish teachers or Rabbis did. He paraphrased and explained to the crowd but they still did not understand Him. What He was telling them may have been too hard for them to understand. Sometimes the ancient teachers explained things in their lectures that would be too hard for the hearers to understand on purpose. That was done to sort out those that were real followers from the general population.

Notice here Jesus was speaking in the present tense and not the past tense as the crowd was. The crowd was thinking of Exodus 15:15 “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.”

Jesus admonished them and told them not to be looking for food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of man will give them.

For the bread of God is He who came down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Jesus then tells the crowd John 6: 35 “I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” This verse is very similar to what is found in John 4 where a woman from Samaria comes to a well to draw water and Jesus asked her for a drink. The woman was surprised by being asked for a drink from a Jew. Remember Samaritans were not accepted by the Jews from Judea. She said to Jesus John 4:9 “How is it that you, a Jew ask for a drink from, a woman of Samaria?” Jesus answered her, “If you knew the

gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." Then Jesus told her that anyone drinking water from the well will be thirsty again. He then told her in the second half of John 4:14 "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. God provided water in the wilderness and also bread for them to eat. Jesus provides us with living bread and water for eternal life.

Today's reading closes with John 6:35. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Jesus never compared himself to Moses who the Jews held in high esteem. Jesus had to remind the crowd that it was God and not Moses who provided the water and manna in the wilderness.

In the several miracles stories for the feeding of the multitudes Jesus made a lot of bread from just a few loaves of bread. He changed water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Jesus took care of the physical needs first and then he took care of theirs and our spiritual needs.

The manna in the wilderness can be thought of as foreshadowing the True Bread that is Jesus. The Real Bread from heaven is Jesus. The begotten of God the Father is the true manna, the bread from heaven to all humanity and he was born in Bethlehem which means House of Bread.

When Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” remember that God said “I AM” when He spoke from the burning bush. Jesus is God the Father. The disciples and those in the crowd still did not understand this. Still talking to the crowd Jesus said, “I am the bread of life” He was talking about giving spiritual food. Then in John 6:51 He said “I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” Here Jesus is referring to His death on the cross. Then in John 6:53-55 Jesus said “Truly, truly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.” We read in 1 Cor. 10:16 “The cup of blessing that we bless is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” Also, in 1 Cor. 11:23-26 “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also He took the cup, after supper saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Every Sunday we are fortunate to be able to do this.

To summarize:

1. Peter was immobilized when he walked on the water towards Jesus. Fear got the best of him.
2. The people were looking for a messiah who would free them from the tyranny and oppression the Romans put them under.
3. Watch the tv series the Chosen.
4. To do the works of God are to believe in His son Jesus the Christ.

Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen