

Confusion and Spiritual Vital Signs

May 29, 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. Services are presented on YouTube, Facebook and our website one week following recording. This week's message is titled "Confusion and Spiritual Vital Signs." Thank you to Alan, Geoff, Janet and Don for being part of the video and to Julie for leading us in song. The scripture reading is John 6:51 to 69.

Welcome

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Welcome to the Church of Christ in our Sunday morning service. And in case anyone else asks, yes, I did get a haircut and this is what happens when you don't pay attention. Happy birthday Steve P, Seth P and Barbara S happy anniversary. Don and Barb. Jim and Gloria. The Giving Knitters will meet May 31st at 10:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Please bring completed items. Prayer request: Olive Parker passed away on May 19th. Her funeral will be here on Tuesday, May 24th at 2 p.m.. Visitation from one to two before this service. Let us pray. Oh Lord, we come to you this day in humility and with great reverence and worship and ask that you be with us this day, that the words spoken here this day will resonate with individuals here and outside of the church. And we pray, Lord, that Don's message will come through and it will lift everyone's spirits and bring them back to that joy that God can provide. Amen.

Communion

Good morning. I took my cue from Don's reading for this morning's discussion around the Lord's table. And I think when you when you hear the reading, you'll see that it centers directly on what Jesus was saying to the people about him and his gift. At this point in his ministry, you would say that Jesus was a rock star. He's he was being followed by great crowds.

He crossed a lake, and they followed him across the lake. Then they were without food. And he had compassion on them and fed them. He crossed back across the lake in a boat. And this time, when they discovered that the boat was gone, they hired boats and they came after him again. John describes the people as the ones who had eaten the bread But Jesus reminds them that physical bread is unimportant.

The real substantive meal was the bread from heaven. The Hebrew people had been expecting a deliverer like Moses And under Moses, God had sent manna from heaven to feed them. But Jesus declares that he himself is the bread from heaven. He's the redeemer they've been looking for. And now he's going to try and turn their thoughts from food for their bellies. To food for their souls.

He puts it pretty clearly. He says, God doesn't want followers who follow because He performs miracles. He doesn't want followers who follow for a free meal after the sermon. He wants people who want just one thing: To believe in Jesus. He goes so far as to say that His true followers will eat of His flesh and drink of His blood.

No wonder they called that a hard teaching. It sounds barbaric to us. But he was never talking about physical eating and drinking. He says, Moses didn't give you the bread from heaven at all. This bread and this cup we take are to remind us of the real meal that we need. It's not to feed us physically. Rather, to feed us spiritually. It is the presence of God in our lives. In the Old Testament, the bread of the presence reminded the people that God dwelt in the Tabernacle in the same way God dwelt in Jesus in physical form. And now we are here to celebrate that relationship.

Earlier in the first chapter of John, and I'm reading from a very literal translation beginning in verse 12, but as many as received him to those who believe in his name, he gave to them authority to become children of God who are not born of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a husband, but of God. This bread and this juice represent Jesus' Sonship. He possessed that as God's true heir. And the fact that He gave himself up at Calvary bought us the right to be his siblings and to be called God's children. That's what we remember when we take this. Let's go to Him in prayer.

At this point, Father, it's so remarkable to me that you call us your children. Father, that from the very beginning of humanity, you planned for him to come and to give himself. And now, as we look at these emblems remind us, Father, that he took on flesh, that he walked among us that we might be redeemed. We thank you so much for this bread from heaven, Father. And as we as we partake of it, as we eat this bread, as we drink from this juice, father, we ask that where our wills are weak in belief that you will send your spirit in double measure to help us to overcome the times in the week when we're far from this time. But as we as we break this bread, as we drink from this cup, thank you that my brothers and sisters are here. They're everywhere around the world sharing in this to remember his gift. Thank you, father, for a gift that we could never deserve, but that you gave out of your love for us. We pray through the Christ who came to save us and the spirit that lives in us now. Amen.

Reading

Good morning. Morning. I'm going to read from John chapter six. Verses 51 to 69. And Jesus said, I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves. How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Jesus said to them, very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. And I will raise them up at the last day, for my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks, my blood remains in me and I in them. Just as the living father sent me and I lived because of the father. So the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. I'm hearing it. Many of his disciples said this is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of man ascend to where he was before? The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you, they are full of the spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe for Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe, and who would betray him. He went on to say, This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the father has enabled them. From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. You do not want to leave to, do you? Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon, Peter answered him. Lord. To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the holy one of God. OK. I made it!

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. Glad that you're with us today. There are times in our life when illness comes. And so one of the things, if you go to a physician one of the first things they're going to check will be your vital signs. Go to the doctor. He wants to check blood pressure, variety of other things. And I was thinking about how vital signs are important in many ways in life, in our relationships. How's it going? It's good to check in every once in a while in our relationships with her husband or wife or children or friends, just checking in on the vital, vital ness of this this this relationship that we have. It's true with work. How's the occupation How's work going? How's school going? Where? Where am I with this? And just every once in a while, just take a breath and just check in. How is my relationship with God? We know God's relationship with us. Pouring out

himself into our lives. And how do we live honoring that? I mean, it's absolute vital in our spiritual life to know how much God loves us and how we can express that love back to him. It's true with Jesus. It's true with the Holy Spirit.

It's also true with Scripture. It's Scripture. It isn't this command book that scripture is a revealing of Christ himself and him living in our lives. And so I just wanted to spend a couple of minutes this morning. It's not going to be a lengthy sermon at all. Probably be somewhat of a brief sermon just talking about these vital signs, checking in on ourselves, not necessarily being selfish, but just asking ourselves where are we in our spiritual life?

And I want to begin today reading a passage of Scripture from Matthew Chapter 12 verses 46 to 50. Interesting story before I read it. When Jesus begins his ministry and his mother and his brothers and sisters began to follow him, and they just thought something isn't quite right. If he's the Messiah, I don't know why he's doing what he's doing, spending time with Pharisees and debating them and so forth. We're really struggling with all of this. And so in Matthew 12 beginning in 46, this is what he says, While Jesus was still talking to the crowd. His mother and brothers stood outside wanting to speak to him. You can imagine what that conversation was going to be like. Someone told him, Your mother and brothers are standing outside wanting to talk to you.

I don't know if this ever happened in your life. When my dad said, Sit down, I want to talk to you. I knew it wasn't going to be a real pleasant situation. And here's that scene in all of this. Who is my mother and who are my brothers? And pointing to his disciples, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does, the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. It's a unique statement that passes through the generations, our brothers and sisters. And it's vital in our spiritual relationship to understand all of that and then just continue with that thought in Mark Chapter three, verses 20 and 21. Jesus had been teaching crowds had been following him. And then it says in verse 20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this. They went to take charge of him For they said Brothers mother. For they said about Jesus. He is out of his mind.

Have you ever stopped to consider that this vital relationship that Jesus has with the Father, with the Holy Spirit, and with the disciples and his disciples are saying, I'm not so sure about this. And then His own family say, He's crazy. He's he's out of control. Which is unique because when you stop and think about the birth of Jesus and Mary experiencing all of these things and seeing all of these things, maybe they fell prey to what other people thought. If Jesus really was the Son of God, he'd get rid of all those negative people on the earth. Set up a wonderful kingdom on earth where everything will just be love, happy and joy and get rid of anyone we don't like. But that's not Jesus Jesus came to live, to teach, to die, to be raised for everyone, even those who didn't believe in him.

For example, Saul, who becomes the Apostle Paul. Saul who couldn't stand Christians. Who wanted to throw him in prison. And he did. He becomes one of the greatest teachers of all. And maybe you're here and you said, I can understand that. I just thought religion was hogwash. I just thought it was all nonsense. I just thought it was just kind of a cult kind of thing. Until one day Jesus broke into your heart and said, Here I am. I've known you before you were born. I'll always be with you. Checking our vital signs. What's your relationship like with Jesus, with the Holy Spirit? And then in John, chapter seven, verses one through five. This is also unique. Many of the disciples were deserting Jesus because they thought it was too much before. Just before I read John Chapter seven, I'm going to read something else I'm going to start in verse 60 of John Chapter six. And hearing these things about the disciples and Jesus who he was, they said, This is a hard teaching. Who can accept this? Because Jesus was talking about people eating his flesh and drinking His blood, which was very symbolic for that. One day we're going to have communion. His body represents this piece of

cracker that we take, that we just took that little sip of a juice that we just took. It represents his blood. This body and blood is a sacrifice for all aware that his disciples were grumbling about all of this, Jesus said to them, Does this offend you?

I think what he's also saying is this Do I offend you? Do I offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The spirit gives life. The flesh doesn't count for anything. The words I have spoken to, you are spirit, and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe for Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He still loved them. From this time on verse 66, many of this disciples turned back and no longer followed him. That's one of the saddest verses, I think, in the Bible. Being with Jesus through the good times and bad, and then deserting him. Have you ever had that experience? People who've loved you and they desert you, but have you also had that relationship with Jesus? You knew that when you were baptized you were on fire for Jesus. I'm going to feel this way for the rest of my life. This is just so amazing. And a month goes by and you go, What happened to that? What happened to that zeal? And so checking our vital signs are important. Checking in on relationships is important. And it's it's as simple as getting off by yourself and say, Jesus I want a closer relationship with you. He's not going to say no. It's coming to him, talking to him, pouring out. So in John, chapter seven, after this, Jesus went around in Galilee purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, You ought to leave here and go to Judea so that you're disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world for. Even his own brothers did not believe in him. His own brothers were saying, You ought to go over there knowing that if he went over there, he was going to be arrested and eventually he was going to be killed. It's this discipleship vital signs Matthew 13 talks about a parable where to the point where I think his disciples are finally getting tired of his parables and kind of rolling their eyes and just said, Tell us what you mean and I'll get on with it. But that wasn't that wasn't the way of of Jesus. So in Matthew chapter, 13 one to 17 is this very familiar yet remarkable story based on everything that I've said today. And I hope it's not too confusing I think this will make it clear that same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake, such large crowds gathered around them he got into a boat and sat in it while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying a farmer went out to sow his seed as he was scattering the seed. Some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil it sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up and the plants were scorched, they were withered because they had no root other seed fell among the thorns which grew up and and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil where it produced a crop, one hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let them hear. Checking in on the question How are you doing? In this parable, he asks each one of us, How are you doing with sowing the seed? How is the soil, spiritual soil in your life like and so?

In verse ten, the disciples came to him and asked, Why do you talk to people in parables? Y'know, just say what you mean. He replied, The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them. What people who want to know God and continually ask for His support and His understanding will get it. Those who don't, even though they might be somewhat religious, may never truly understand relationship, the vital ness. If there's such a word of that connection with people verse 11, the knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them because they didn't want it. Whoever has will be given more and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have even what he has will be taken away from him. He'll just fall off. This is why I speak to them in parables. Though seeing they don't see, though hearing they don't get it, they don't understand it. And in them is fulfilled the teaching of Isaiah you will ever be hearing. But you'll never understand you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this, people's heart has become calloused. They hardly hear with their ears and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears. Understand with their hearts

and turn, and I will heal them. That spiritual anxiety will pass and that spiritual calm will come into our life. Then he says, But blessed are your eyes, for they see and your ears because they hear.

For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people long, long to see what you see but don't see it. And to hear what you hear and don't hear it so just a very brief message today. I want to conclude in verses 18. Pardon me, Mark 3, 20 and 21. Then Jesus entered a house and again a crowd gathered that. So he and his disciples were not even able to eat. The reason I wanted to read that again is the people were clamoring Is this the Messiah? If He's the Messiah, we're not going to be stepped on anymore. We're going to rule the world we're going to be the kings, we're going to be the conquerors. We're the ones that are going to be there. And that's why I think Jesus told parables. No, no, no, no, no, no. They had an idea, and then they watched Jesus, and it was all about love. Joy peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and control. It's not a frenzy. It's this ongoing relationship with God and that God has with us. If we could ever really grasp just how much God loves us I think we would be soaring spiritually for a long time.

So I conclude today by the introduction how are things going in your relationships vital signs? How are things going with your relationship to this congregation? Are you happy to be part of it? What's lacking that? I can help fill it up? What part can I play that would be helpful. Not a confusing time. But our own relationship with God, our own relationship with Jesus, our own relationship with the Holy Spirit, our own relationship with all even in the world around us. And that's what happened when Jesus started preaching religious people would come and they'd look at him and follow him for a while and they go, I don't know. This seems to be on this kick about, you know, salvation and that's going to have to be death and it's going to be burial and it's going to be a resurrection. What? That's not what we thought. We thought we're going to be ruling the world no, no. God so loved the world unique that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have life and everlasting life. Eternal life a life that matters. A life that counts, a life that helps, a life that brings peace to our soul. And may God bless each one of us to live in that direction. Amen.

Closing

As we close out, I'd like to read a couple of blessings Isaiah. 41:10 fear not for I am with you be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand and I'm going to pray the last one. Number 6:24-26. The Lord bless you and keep you the Lord Make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

End Credits

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