

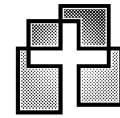
The Gospel of John



Notes From the Podium

These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help you incorporate the main message of the lesson into your lecture.

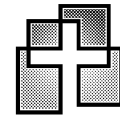
- I. First Approach: what is happening in the moment of the text?
 - a. (vv6:1-14) It is the feast of the Passover and the people are hungry.
 - i. Our Lord desires to feed the people and challenges the disciples as to how this might be possible. The disciples are confused as to how they might feed the people. Our Lord instructs them to make the people sit down.
 - ii. Note: all of this is being mediated through Our Lord's disciples. One gets the sense that He is teaching them what they will one day do in His name and in His person.
 - iii. Giving thanks to the Father, the loaves and the fish re multiplied.
 - iv. He instructs them to gather up the fragments.
 - v. The people declare Him to be the Prophet.
 - b. (vv6:15-21) The Lord walks on water.
 - i. The disciples were afraid, in the dark, out to sea floating on the water amidst the strong wind. *Vulnerable* is an understatement.
 - ii. Our Lord demonstrates Himself to be stronger than all the elements (darkness, isolation, nature, a roaring sea on which they set) and quells their fear as He says, "It is I; do not be afraid."
 - iii. They experience gladness in the Lord and Our Lord brings them safely to their destination.
- II. Second Approach: what is John's apparent pastoral point to the faithful reader?
 - a. (vv6:1-14) John is communicating that Jesus will miraculously feed His people. In this account the issue is quantity and Our Lord miraculously provides enough. In John's time and now the issues how does He feed His people in no less a real way? John's point is that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is an event whereby Jesus feeds His people defying the boundries not merely of quantity but of time and space.
 - i. Our Lord feeds His people. In order to better grasp the point John is weaving together one must keep in mind the passages that will follow: the bread of life discourse & the institution of the Holy Eucharist.
 - ii. The people, after seeing the signs, declare Him to be the Prophet – just as was the case with Moses after seeing the sign the people declared him to be a prophet as well. Jesus it the new Moses, feeding His people.



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- b. (vv6:15-21) John is communicating that Jesus is not a political answer to a political problem.
 - i. The people see Jesus as an answer to their problems in this life – a political solution.
 - ii. Jesus shows Himself to be the answer not to their temporal problems but to their eternal problems. This is demonstrated by the fact that Our Lord leads the disciples safely ashore. As the new Moses Our Lord will lead them into the new and eternal Promised Land of Heaven.
- III. Third Approach: How does our understanding of this passage deepen in light of the Old Testament?
 - a. (vv6:1-14) It seems John is telling us through the voice of the people what he wants the faithful reader to take from this account. Jesus is The Prophet – a prophet like Moses, yet greater than Moses. (Recall that John just finished recounting the words of Our Lord that Moses gave testimony to Jesus – Moses is at the service of Jesus.)
 - i. 5 Barley loaves – representing the five books of Moses.
 - 1. The hunger of the people calls to mind the need for people to be fed. Within the five Books of Moses (particularly Deut 8:3) we hear about hunger and being fed: “man does not live on bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.”
 - a. Calling to mind these five books, specifically this passage pertaining to hunger and being fed, we get the sense that Jesus feeds the people not simply with bread but by that which “proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.”
 - b. Recall the beginning of John’s Gospel, “the Word was made flesh.” Jesus Himself is *that which proceeds from the mouth of the LORD*.
 - c. We have here an allusion to Jesus feeding the people not only with bread but with the word of God, and the Word is Himself. (This allusion is confirmed later in this chapter when He says that you must eat His flesh if you are to have life within you.)
 - b. 12 Baskets with fragments from the five loaves – this number is a clear numerical reference to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.
 - i. It was these twelve tribes that Moses lead out of the bondage of slavery and idolatry toward the promised land.



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- ii. After the twelve tribes were established in the promised land they demanded a king. God allowed for Saul to be their first. However, after two more kings the kingdom divided (recall the origin of the Samaritans). Two tribes remained in the south known as Judah and the other ten went north and were called Israel. The north became even further fragmented. The twelve tribes at the time of Jesus could be described as ‘fragmented.’ One might also get the sense that the fragmented pieces of the barley loaves (in other words the *fragmented pieces of Moses*, since the loaves represent the Books of Moses) represent the fragmented state of the twelve tribes and that Jesus is the one who will gather the twelve tribes back together.
- c. (vv6:15-21))
 - i. The people want to make Him king. This line supports the allusion of the twelve baskets of fragments representing Our Lord gathering together the twelve tribes of Israel. The last time the twelve tribes were together they demanded a king and were gathered together as one in a national kingdom.
 - ii. We see miraculous power over water – like Moses, but this time Jesus wields the power in Himself whereas Moses was an instrument of God. Jesus is the new Moses.

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