



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

August 4, 2024

The Bread of Life, 1 of 4

Recap of sermon from August 4, 2024

Scripture: John 6:25-35

Title "When did this happen?"

There are times in our lives when we can't help but pause and ask, "How did we get here?" It is the metaphoric question that comes at times of triumph, crossroads, or even great suffering. A young woman pulls out of the driveway in the morning on her way to her senior year in high school. The parents remember her walking away with an oversized backpack and a bow in her hair on the way to kindergarten. They ask, "When did this happen?"

An Olympic athlete crosses the touches the wall first, and the first commercial break shows clips of her taking swimming lessons as a child. The whole world wonders, "How did she get here?" as the medal is hung around her neck after the break.

A middle-aged man sits on a bed covered in paper while wearing a blue paper gown and a doctor explains what these suddenly high numbers mean, and he wonders, "How did I get here?"

When Jesus finished feeding 5,000 people and walked across a lake, he found that there were crowds looking for him. This was an important moment of his ministry. The feeding of the multitudes (John 6:1-15) is the only miracle that is shared in all four gospels, and in Matthew and Mark it happens twice. It is an important moment in Jesus' ministry, and a pivotal story in the Gospel of John. Until now, most of Jesus' actions took place on a fairly small scale. The wedding of Cana (ch 2), a conversation with Nicodemus (ch 3), encountering the Samaritan woman at the well (ch. 5), and a handful of healings —these are all fairly small, or even private events.

With feeding 5,000 people Jesus has now become big news. This is an incredible moment in his ministry, one that people will remember more than any other single event in his life. After a day of searching, the found him and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

The question in our English Bibles sounds like a question about arrival time. They had been looking for him, and they were surprised it took so long to find him. This question however, is deeper than this. It is a question about the incarnation—about who Jesus is, where he came from, and what it all

means in their lives. It is a question that had been asked before. At the wedding in Cana, the headwaiter "didn't know where [the very good wine] came from" (2:9). Nicodemus asked, "how is it possible for an adult to be born?" (3:4). The woman at the well asked "where would you get this living water?" (4:11). The root of all of these questions is the same (and in Greek it is more obvious because the same verb is used).

The people asking Jesus, "When did you get here?" is an existential question. The same question that has been asked of him several times before. And it is the same question that the nostalgic parent, the Olympic champion, and troubled patient all asked. "How did we get here?"

It is a natural thing to wonder. It is difficult to simply accept such an incredible truth. The incarnation of God in the person of Jesus is an incredible experience. It is one met with confusion and wonder. As we move on in the discourse in John 6, we will find more questions and confusion as the people wonder about bread, but Jesus is talking about so much more than bread.

Quickly, the conversation seems to go on two tangents. The people want bread. They are going to need to eat again. And naturally but they tie this experience back to something they know—to Moses giving bread in the wilderness during the exodus. Yet Jesus redirects them—not to Moses, but to the source. He isn't interested in the nostalgia of the past. He isn't even talking about the feeding miracle that just occurred. He brings them back to the present and to the future.

He isn't interested about how and when we get to this point. He wants to remind them that right now—you can have eternal life. Right now you can have something meaningful. How we got here and what has come before is not as important as what is offered now. We can have something from heaven. We can have community, generosity, and abundance. We can have eternal life—not something that just lasts a long time, but something that transcends even our concept of time.

Eternal life is ours, not because of what has come before, and regardless of how we got here. The question that matters now is, do we eat? The bread is in our hands. We only have to eat.

Next Week: Bread of Life 2 of 4
"Isn't this Joseph's son?"