

In his book "The Jesus I Never Knew" Philip Yancy writes, "*Jesus was a human being, a Jew in Galilee with a name and a family, a person who was in a way just like everyone else. Yet, in another way, he was something different than anyone who had ever lived on earth before.*" Many today have never met the "different" Jesus, the one that doesn't fit in their preconceived box! The Jesus that turns over tables and chases people OUT of the temple makes no sense to them. The Jesus that sends the crowds AWAY instead of calling them to follow Him flies in the face of everything they have heard about Him. The real Jesus is much more complex than we ever imagined. Today we start a new series titled: Jesus Stuff: Looking at the Jesus that doesn't fit in your SS box!

John 6:1-71 "What Are You Here For...Benefits or Blessings?"

In this extended chapter there are 4 different times when Jesus steps outside the "box" that we try to put Him in. Every time he does or says something that challenges the preconceptions of the people following Him then...and us! The piece that holds everything together is a question...A Tough Question: Why are you following Me? *Are You Here For To Bless and Honor and Praise God...Or Here for what Benefits For YOU!*

1. In Feeding Of 5000: He "Tests" Philip.

Vs 6

- Story: Huge crowd: 5000 men plus women and children
- Asks Philip: Where we going to buy enough bread to feed these people?
- Philip freaks out! 9 months wages not enough...NO WAY we can do this:
- Bible says Jesus did this in order to "Test" Philip!

Vs 6: Test: Lit" *To evaluate something...to examine, to test the quality of: to see if it is what it claims to be!*

Philip: Do you REALLY trust me...when I ask you to do something that is CLEARLY outside your ability!

Illus: Back when I poured concrete for towers: Had to take a sample...send it off to "Test" it!

VIDEO:

Jesus does that for you and I just like He did for Philip! He calls us to something that is totally beyond our ability! Just like Philip, we freak out: Jesus I could never!

>Lead a small group

>Teach Students or Children

>Serve with the homeless

>Give regularly

>Commit to a ministry team

>Read bible every day!

Listen: Of course you can't in your own strength! And Jesus Knows that! He is testing you...But now how you think His isn't testing your ABILITY...HE is testing your AVAILABILITY!
He isn't testing your COMPETENCE...He is testing your COMMITMENT!
He isn't testing your SPIRITUAL STRENGTH...He is testing your SPIRITUAL DEPENDENCE!

You see this over and over in the Scripture: *God called Moses: I can't: Elijah: I can't: Gideon: I can't: Peter: I can't!* Every single one of them went on to do amazing things...As they submitted themselves to and trusted God!

Paul said it clearly: "*Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant...*" 2Cor 3:5-6

Q: Is Jesus "testing" you today? Do you hear Him calling you to something that you KNOW you can't do? GOOD! Perfect! You are exactly where He wants you to be. He ALREADY knows what He is going to do to help you. Like Philip, you just have to listen to the call...do what HE tells you to do...When they had the 5000 sit: NO GUARENTEE!

IF JESUS is calling you, He is not asking you today if you are ABLE...He's Asking if you are AVAILABLE!

As we build the new ministry God has for RTBC going forward, we are going to need YOU to do what you never could! In the next year you are going to hear many different opportunities...when they come...Ask: AVAILABLE?

2. When Jesus Walked On Water He Confused and Frightened The Disciples!

Vs 19

- Mt tells us that after the Feeding of 5000 Jesus INSISTED the disciples get in boat and go other side
- While they were in the boat without Jesus, gets dark, wind starts to blow, 3 to 4 miles out...see GHOST!
- Vs 19: Frightened: Lit = *terrified: They weren't just a little scared...they were freaking OUT*
- Got to Land, Imagine with me what they were thinking: WHY? Jesus WHY did you make us do this!
- We didn't want to be here in the first place...you MADE us...we almost died because of you!
- What the heck was that stunt of sneaking up on us in the storm? Wind, Waves, Dark not enough?
-

Have you ever had that happen to you? When you have been obedient to what Jesus told you to do, you 'Got in boat' And EVERYTHING fell apart! You were WHERE HE told you to go, doing WHAT He told you to do...and it's a disaster! When that happens to us, Just like the disciples that day, we get confused. We don't understand, Questioning:

Isaiah 55:8-9 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

What does God do that to us? Why does He intentionally put us in places that frighten us, cause us to doubt, even bring fear into our lives? Is he like me as a kid with the magnifying glass and the ants...amused by chasing them? NO God is STRENGTHENING your faith...making you stronger...preparing you for bigger and better service and ministry! He is TEACHING you to trust Him, to lean into Him, to know that He is with you even in the worst of situations. He said the same thing to them that He said to all the men and women of the bible: Most often repeated promise:

DON'T BE AFRAID...I AM WITH YOU!

Are you confused and afraid this morning because you are in place you don't understand? Has God allowed something to come into your life that frightens you, and confuses you, something that causes you to be afraid? It's OK, just like with the disciples in the boat, Gideon in the winepress, Moses in Desert, Elijah in the Cave...God's there! He has allowed it for a reason: He is teaching you to trust Him...in the good times and the bad, understand...and don't

Isa 43:2 Fear not...When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

3. When Jesus Taught The Crowd And Pharisees He Challenged Their Motives.

Vs 26

- Crowd followed Jesus to other side of sea and found him there with his disciples
- When they asked Him how he got there...(really, why did you leave us) Jesus challenged them
- Vs 26: You aren't here to honor God, Bless God, Praise God, Not here to be my disciple: **FREE BREAD!!**
- No, No they said, tell us what we have to do! So He tells them: Believe: "Analogy: Eat Flesh/Drink Blood!"
- Vs 60: Many of them DISCIPLES...said...This is too hard..."Turned and followed Him no more!"

John does a little play on words here: Hard saying: *Bread is old and crusty...too hard to eat!*

This is the heart of the entire chapter: Why are you here? Some of you are just here for the free lunch! Straight up challenges them to their faces! Knowing what was in their heart, He calls them out. He challenges their motives, reveals that they aren't there for Him, for the Father...They are there for what they can get out of it! This is the best show in town! Free lunch, a little crossing of swords with the Jewish leaders...maybe catch a miracle!

What about YOU? Have you ever examined YOUR motives for following Jesus? Over the years I have watched as Jesus allows does to people what he did to the crowd that day. He reveals their motives. HE allows a tough time or a difficult situation or a painful event to take place, and He does that to see: Are you just here For the BLESSINGS? Are Illus: THAT is the story of Job! First book:

- Satan accuses Job before God: He is only in it for what He can get! Job 1:6-12
- God removes His hand of protection...
- Job loses everything! Wealth, children, health, friends, even wife questions him
- Yet Job steadfastly refuses to compromise his character! Refuses to bend...never breaks

Job 13:15 *"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;"*

What about YOU? Why do you follow Jesus? Following Him for the Benefits? When they disappear...Will You? Or like Job...are you His disciple...REGARDLESS of the Benefits? Do you follow Him to Bless, Honor, Praise: Deserves It!

4. Jesus Intentionally Offended The Disciples (Crowd) To Show Who Really Believed In Him.

Vs 61

- Vs 61: Does this offend: Lit = *to scandalize, to offend, to cause to stumble or displease*
- He then says: vs 64 "Some of you don't believe!"
- Vs 66: Many of them followed him no more! They left!

Then Jesus does the most amazing thing! He turns to the disciples and He asks: What about YOU! Question for us too Are you going to follow Jesus when HE Stretches You? When He Confuses/Frightens You? Reveal Motives? Is YOUR FAITH REAL? Will you say like Peter...I don't have ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO!

CONCL: This Jesus is not the SS Jesus. He is offending his followers, calling out their motives, Stretching and Confusing But HE does it for a reason: He is filtering out the crowd. Revealing there for the free lunch...The benefits...Because He knows, When He has a COMMITTED disciple: Willing to follow when it hurts, not clear, painful: Tool for Kingdom! Jesus Stuff...the REAL Jesus Stuff...Is not for the faint of Heart, Halfway committed, Sunny Day Crowd: DISCIPLES