

“Do you not yet understand?!” We had just been told the news: John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod Antipas. Jesus was crushed. He wanted to get away to be alone and grieve. So we got into a boat and crossed the sea. But the crowds followed us. Jesus had compassion on them and healed them. As the sun began to set we came to Jesus and told him to send the crowds away. But Jesus said to us, **“You give them something to eat.”** We were stunned. We told him, **“We only have five loaves of bread and two fish!”** He said, **“Bring the food to me.”** Then he told the crowds to sit down. Looking to his Father in heaven, he gave thanks and broke the bread into pieces. He gave the pieces to us to share with the crowd. Five thousand men ate and were satisfied. And there were even 12 baskets full of leftovers.

Jesus then sent us across the sea on our own so he could be alone to pray and grieve the loss of John. Our crossing was a struggle because the wind was opposing us. We were barely making any progress. During the last couple hours before sunrise, we saw a figure walking toward us on the water in the storm. We screamed, **“It’s a ghost!”** But then Jesus’s voice came to us, **“It is me. Do not be afraid.”** Then Peter said, **“Lord, if it is you, then command me to walk on the water.”** Jesus said, **“Come.”** Then Peter stepped out of the boat and began walking on the water to Jesus. We were in shock and complete disbelief. But then Peter stopped looking at Jesus and started looking at the wind and the waves around him. Fear weighed down and burdened Peter’s heart and he began to sink. He looked back at Jesus and cried out, **“Lord save me!”** Jesus reached out and pulled him out of the sea. Jesus said, **“You have so little faith, why did you look away?”**

Then we made it to the other side, to the foreign side of the Sea of Galilee. The authorities had followed us and they became upset when they saw us eating in this foreign land without doing ritual cleansing. They said to Jesus, **“Why do your disciples not follow the traditions of our leaders?!”** Then Jesus said to them, **“Why do you not follow the Creator’s commands?!”** Jesus said to the crowds, **“What defiles a person and makes them unclean is not what goes into the mouth—it is what comes out of the mouth.”** We said to Jesus, **“Explain this parable to us.”** He said to us, **“After all we have been through together, are you still so blind?! What goes into your mouth just passes through your body into the toilet. But what comes out of your mouth comes from your heart—evil thoughts of killing, sex, greed, and lies. This is what truly defiles a person!”**

We left there and headed to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, to the region of Tyre and Sidon. There was a Canaanite woman there—she was from the hated people Joshua had destroyed in the promised land. She cried out to Jesus, **“Have mercy on me Lord, my daughter is possessed by an evil spirit!”** Jesus would not say a word to her. We eventually got annoyed and said, **“Send her away! She will not shut up!”** Then Jesus turned to her and said, **“I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.”** But she fell down at his feet and said, **“Lord, help me!”** Jesus said, **“It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”** She said, **“Yes, Lord, you are right. But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Lord’s table!”** Jesus said, **“Your faith is incredible. Let it be done for you as you desire.”** That moment her daughter was healed. We headed back around the Sea of Galilee and crowds continued to follow us, listening to Jesus teach and being healed by him. A great crowd of mostly **foreigners** gathered around us. And seemingly inspired by the faith of the Canaanite woman, Jesus said, **“I have compassion on this crowd. They have been with me for three days and have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry.”** We said to Jesus, **“Where could we get enough bread to feed such a crowd?!”** Jesus said to us, **“How much bread do you have?”** We said, **“Seven loaves.”** He took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it into pieces. Then we shared it with the crowd. And all four thousand men ate and were satisfied. And there were even 7 baskets full of leftovers.

Then we headed back to the western side of the Sea of Galilee. The authorities came and asked Jesus for a sign from heaven to prove he was from the Creator. Jesus said, **“You know how to read the signs of the sky, but you do not know how to read the signs of the times. An evil generation asks for a sign.”** Then Jesus walked away from them. Jesus turned to us and said, **“Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the authorities.”** We had forgotten to bring any bread with us on this journey and we thought Jesus was telling us not to get bread from the authorities for their yeast was unclean. Jesus noticed our discussion among ourselves and said, **“You have so little faith! Why are you concerned about having no bread?! Do you not yet understand?! Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many baskets were leftover? Do you not remember the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many baskets were leftover? How do you not understand that I was not speaking about bread?! Watch out for the yeast of the authorities!”** We suddenly realized that Jesus was warning us about the teachings of the authorities, not literal yeast or bread.

The signs of the Kingdom of Heaven were happening all around us, but we were oblivious. We were so trained to be focused on **external, outward, material,** and **earthly** appearances that we were missing the **invisible, inward,** and **heavenly** realities right there among us. Jesus was teaching us about true **spiritual** bread and all we could think about were **physical** bread that would fill our stomachs. Our focus on our physical and external circumstances was blinding us and leading us astray. **“Do you not yet understand?!”** No we did **not** understand because our focus was in the wrong place. We had been influenced by the yeast and teachings of our culture which focused and fixated on the external. This led to our lives being dominated by fear and anxiety. But when we looked at Jesus and his Word, our lives were filled by faith and peace.

“Do you not yet understand?!” We don’t understand the truth of life because we look away from what **really** matters—we look at the troubles, the external problems instead of looking at Jesus. We are so concerned and fixated on our **physical** circumstances—physical bread—that we miss the invisible realities that underlie everything around us—**spiritual** bread. The only bread that really matters is the Creator’s Word. If we seek that bread, trusting in and daily feeding on the Creator’s Word, then we will have all we need—spiritually **and** materially. The bread of his Word goes to the heart and core of our whole existence, and there it transforms us and everything around us from the **inside-out**.

Watch out for the yeast and teachings of the authorities—watch out for the yeast and teachings of the Republicans and Democrats. Their focus is on the external and material—fear and anxiety permeate **everything** they do and say. They urge us to look at the problems, troubles, and obstacles of this world and their supposed solutions. But when our focus is all that is going on around us, we are lost and confused, blind and dumb, and we sink into the **abyss** of the world’s problems. But faith urges us to look **beyond** all that is going on around us and look at the Lord and him only. When we look at the Lord in faith, we find peace and will understand that all things are in his loving hands. **“Do you not yet understand?!”** Where you look, **where** you focus, **who** you look at is all that matters. Focus on your life and what is going on around you and you will **sink** into the abyss of fear. Focus on Christ and you will **walk on water**, above all the troubles of life. **Amen.**