

A Life with God

One of my favorite games growing up was the game of life. Especially when I was younger. The box says it is for ages 8+ but really all you do is spin a spinner and move your little minivan around a game board. There are a few decisions to make if you are an advanced player, like buying stocks or changing careers, but overall it is just a game of chance. If you have played this game before you know that as you move around this board there are a number of stop signs on the board for major life experiences. And even though they don't always happen in real life, because it's a board game everyone gets very similar experiences. Choose a career stop, everyone gets a job right out of college, get married, everyone gets married, have kids everyone has kids, choose a different career, buy a house, all of these big life events your character in the game gets to experience.

That's not real life. Not everyone gets every one of those experience and even if you do get those experiences it's not as easy as, O just pick a card and get a career. Ok got a job check that off the list of things to do in my life don't have to worry about that, what's next? O get married, o here is a great wife, check that off that list. Don't have to think about relationships anymore. That's not how it works. Once you get a career, it takes a while to understand what it really takes to be great at it. Once you find your spouse it takes every day of your life to show love to that person. Once you have children then you start to really understand what it means to be a parent. Once something major happens in your life, many times it takes a while to fully comprehend what that event truly means to the way that your life is going to be shaped in the future. There is a difference between knowing facts, and knowing by experience.

A Life with God

Knows who our God is
Realizes what that means

Our lesson today is from Matthew 28:16-20. The 11 disciples, not twelve because Judas who betrayed Jesus was no longer with them, were told to meet Jesus in Galilee on a certain mountain. So they traveled to Galilee and went to that mountain. And our text then says, "When they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted."

The first half of that sentence we can understand they see Jesus. He kept the appointment that he had with them. They see their friend and teacher and Lord and Savior, and they worship him! Probably with some shouts of praise, maybe a hymn. Because they see their God they worship him.

The second half of that sentence is a little bit tougher. But some doubted. What in the world could they have doubted? I mean really. Isn't that an easy question for us to ask sitting here. Really disciples? What more can Jesus do for you to stop doubting him. You have seen him. You have touched him. You have had so many conversations with him where he has assured you of who he is. He has kept so many promises to you and here you are still doubting him? How could it be?

The greek word meaning to doubt it is used one other time in the New Testament. It is used when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. And Peter called out to the, "Lord if it is really you tell me to come out on the water." And Jesus says come. So Peter steps out of the boat and begins to walk to Jesus, on the water, and then there is a big wind and a big wave is coming and Peter cries out, "Lord Save ME!" And of course Jesus immediately saves him, but he says, O ye of little faith. Why did you doubt me."

Peter knew that walking on the water was not a normal thing. He knew that could only happen because God was there. He knew intellectually that this guy standing in front of him was

really God. But he doubted. He doubted the effect that Jesus would have on him. That he would really be able to keep him walking on that water though a really tough storm. So he doubted Jesus, and as he doubted the power that Jesus had, he no longer had the power to do what God had told him he could do, which was to walk on water. Something that he could not have done by himself.

See the first thing that we need to realize is who our God really is. This is Holy Trinity Sunday. A day of the church year when we get to ponder the awesomeness of our God, and the mystery of who he is. Our God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, But there is only one God. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, The Spirit is not the Father, But the Father is God, the Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God, but there is only one God. And maybe intellectually we can know those facts, even though our human reason can't fully comprehend them. We understand that our God is beyond understanding. That he is beyond the wisdom of this world. We know that he is super-human, meaning above what a man can be.

That's what our texts were about today. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Before there was the earth, there was God. Before the beginning there was God. God is eternal without a beginning. And it's not just the Father, but the spirit was also there hovering over the water, and John 1 says that Jesus was there too. Our God is beyond our understanding. Meaning; we cannot fully understand everything about our God.

But that does not mean we cannot understand anything about our God. We know what God the Father does, that he created the world. That the world was created to be good. That on the seventh day he rested from creating, but that doesn't mean he stopped caring for or preserving his creation each and every day.

We know what the Holy Spirit does, we talked a lot about him last week, but he creates and strengthens faith in our hearts. He speaks to us through Gods word to give us the miracle of faith that trusts in the promises that God has given to us.

And we know who Jesus is, that he lived a perfect life, suffered and died for our sins, and rose again, so that we could have a perfect relationship with God again. We can know these facts. But just having a relationship with God, because of the work of Jesus, through the miracle of faith by the Holy Spirit, it's not just a check mark on the achievements in life. It takes experience to know what that actually means for our every day life.

This is what the disciples are wrestling with. This is their doubt. This is what they are wavering on, how does this information, how does this huge life event effect me? What am I supposed to do with this information?

Jesus approached his disciples and he said, "All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me." Jesus wants to assure his disciples of the power that he has. Because he is about to ask them to do something amazing. "Therefore," because that is true. Because you know that I am in the son of God. Because you know that I am the savior of the world. Because you know that I am in control of this world and I used my power to take away all of the sins of the world through my death on the cross, "Go and make disciples of all nations.

This knowledge is not just for you, it is for the entire world. Tell people. Make disciples. Change hearts. Change lives. Just as I have changed your life. Change the eternal path of all nations of this earth. Change the world. That's what he tells the disciples to do.

If that is what someone asked you to do. Go and make disciples of all nations, the next question is how. Jesus says to Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit. And teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. Basically Jesus is saying leave that up to me. Trust in the promises that I have given to you. Mark them as a child of God at their baptism, wash away their sins, give them the promises that I have shared with you. And teach them to obey the commands I have given you because I gave you those out of love. Trust me. Trust my promises. Have faith in the promises that I have already made to you.

And you will be ok. You will be able to do things you never thought possible. Even more amazing than walking on water, you will be able to change someones life forever.

And if you are afraid, or you need more reassurance, he goes on to say, "Surely I am with you always until the very end of the age." I will always be there for you to help you. I will never let you down. I will help you to accomplish all of the things that I have asked you to do.

Being a Christian is not just a stop sign on the game of life. Like marriage, or children, or career it has a real impact on everything that we do. Knowing who our God is changes the way that we live our life. It changes how we see the world. We have the knowledge. We believe in a triune God. All of us sitting here we know who Jesus is. We know that he is our Savior. We know that he loves us. But just like those disciples we don't always realize what that means. We doubt. We hesitate. We don't fully know what to do with that information. We fail to understand the actual power that our God has given to us.

Realize what you can do by the power of God. Realize that you have a God who loves you so much that he sacrificed his one and only son to save you. Realize you have a God who suffered and died on the cross to take away your sins. Realize that you have a God who works tirelessly to reassure you or the promises that he has given you through his word. And realize that makes a difference not just in our life, but it is going to have an effect on everyone who hears it. Because God is powerful. And God has given you power.

Real life is not like the game of life. The game is just random chance. Your life is not. God has a plan for you. The game flies through milestones in a matter of minutes without taking the time to appreciate them. You don't have to. The game of life's goal is to try and get more money than anyone else and hopefully retire at millionaire estates. Your goal grow closer to God every single day, and to help all you meet grow closer to him too. That's what we do with the knowledge that we have been given. That's how we worship our God. That's what ends doubt. Trust in our triune God through a closer relationship to him. Amen