

“WOW!”

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 & John 6:24-35

August 2, 2009

The English language is marvelous - don't you think. At times it is so intricate, allowing for great nuance - requiring to listener to be on their toes at all times in order to catch the true meaning of a word. You especially have to be alert to cultural changes that give new meaning to words that are familiar old friends. Some computer language provides good examples. Old familiar words take on new meaning A mouse is not a mouse at all. You can not taste a bite. A ram is neither an animal nor a truck. And when you log on there is no bark to fall off onto the carpet. Yet, it is not computer language that I was thinking about. All of that is just preliminary to the word that just kept running through my mind as I thought about these scriptures for today. The word for the day is “WOW!”

It is a great word An appropriate word. I imagine that if the event of last weeks gospel text with the feeding of the 5000 had been set in modern day American culture, I suspect that it would have been a word that would have been heard repeatedly as the crowd saw the miracle unfold. ‘WOW! That’s the most amazing thing I have ever seen! Wow!!’ {Invite congregational members to say it with meaning “WOW!”} Can you hear the joy and excitement The absolute incredible wonder and yet almost, disbelief that what they just saw and experienced could have actually happened. Say it as though you mean it - as though you were the crowd that ate of the loaves and the fish
WOW!!!!

It is an interesting word. Again - if Jesus had been living in North Dakota and been one of us today when He performed that miracle and then slipped away in the middle of the night Walked across the water to catch up with his friends bringing them safely to shore after they have struggled to get anywhere rowing their boat against the wind all night - - - if Jesus had been one of us when He got to shore after all of that and it was early morning, probably just before breakfast time, and now some of the people who had eaten the fish and bread meal now found Him again and they look at Jesus and said ‘Hey, why don’t you so some kind of miracle to show us if you are the Messiah.’ If that had be the story in this place in these days, I could imagine Jesus saying, ‘Wow!’ Not ‘Wow, isn’t this incredible - wow, isn’t this the most fantastic thing you have ever seen. But ‘WOW, what are you thinking - wow, aren’t you paying attention at all? Wow, are you serious. {Do people still use the word ‘wow’ in that way?} Can you say it that way??? {again try to get someone to really say it with that meaning.}

WOW!!! What are these people thinking?

I read cute little story about a pastor who was visiting with a woman who was a member of his congregation. Her husband was not particularly active in the church so that pastor was trying to learn a little about what the man's faith was like. At one point the pastor asked: "Do you know if your husband believes in life after death?" To which the woman gave out a soft grunt and said: "Him? He doesn't even believe in life after dinner!"

Sometime all we are really interested in is having our needs met. Get a good meal and we are happy for as long as it lasts - we don't have to really think much about anything beyond that. Fill me up and let me sit back with a good tooth pick and a foot rest and leave me to the work of digesting. Nothing more. But the meal wears off faster than I often imagine possible. And then it is time to go looking for something new - something more.

'Wow! Didn't you just see me feed 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish? That is not enough? And now you want more?' I find myself thinking about a great fast food restaurant in Seattle that I always loved going to. It was a place called Ivar's and it sold fish and fries in a basket. The fries were never that great but mostly people did not eat them any way. Ivar's was right on the waters of the Puget Sound next to the ferry terminal. Sea Gulls were everywhere and when you got your order of fish and fries, many people went out on a pier where there were benches to sit on - a beautiful place to watch the ferry traffic. And the Sea Gulls came - they came walking on the railing right up to where you were sitting or flying just over head - the really lazy one just floated in the water below And they would wait for someone - anyone to feed them French fries. It did not matter who you were - if you would feed them, they would follow you anywhere And they would stay with you as long as the feeding continued But not a moment longer. If you were not throwing fries, they went on to someone else.

Wow!!! What an incredible miracle but now they were hungry again - they forgot - now they wanted more - and not just another miracle but a better one - not just multiplying 5 loaves of bread do it like Moses ... let's see a little bread from heaven.

One author wrote: "Always people are hungering for something; always thirsty for something more; never are we at peace and satisfied." There is a Buddhist teaching that parallels what Jesus says about not just seeking after food that perishes - It teaches that 'the root of all evil is desire, the itch for possessing; which, like drinking salt water, does not quench the thirst'. There was an American Indian who is quoted as having said, "We don't understand the whites; they are always wanting something - always restless - always looking for something ... we just don't understand them."

WOW! They ate the bread - they saw the miracle - they just wanted more. So they went looking for Jesus. Why? What were they looking for? I think about this text and wonder - I wonder about them and I wonder about us? Do we see the hand of God at work in our world? Do we see the gifts of God - the miracles? Do we always want just a little more? Is it the miracle we want or is it God that we want? What will satisfy?

I think about all of the worshipers in all of the churches this Sunday morning. I think of all of those who will tune in on the radio or TV - not only those who are tuned in to our radio & tv broadcast but those who tune in to all of the religious broadcasts across our country. We come looking for something. But for what? Lively, up lifting music? A good sermon? A good fellowship? A miracle? Something better than last week? Or ahve you come looking for God?

Wow!!! Jesus fed the 5000. WOW! God provide us with daily bread. He has brought calm to the stormy lives of so many perhaps yours. He has brought so many safely to shore. He has become the bread of heaven - broken for you and given to you for the forgiveness of sin and the assurance of life eternal. WOW!!!

Have you come looking for Jesus not just the miracles but The bread of heaven - God among us? He is present among us ... a living word - in waters of baptism - in bread broken and wine poured - in and among His people. Do you believe in Life after dinner? Do you see the gifts of God?

AMEN