**SUNDAY 8/22/21**

**SERMON**

**JOHN 6:56-69**

Oliver Cromwell's Secretary was dispatched to the continent

          on some important business.

He stayed one night at a seaport town.

The room he shared with his servant was large and comfortable,

          but the Secretary tossed and turned on his bed unable to sleep.

However, his servant sleeping in the other bed, slept soundly.

Finally, the Secretary awakened the man.

His servant asked how it was that his master could not rest.

The Secretary answered: "I am so afraid something will go wrong

          with our business at the Embassy."

“Master," said the valet, "may I ask a question or two?”

"Of course," the Secretary replied.

The valet asked, "Did God rule the world before we were born?"

“Most assuredly He did.”

“And will he rule it after we are dead?”

“Certainly he will.”

“Then master, why not let him rule the present also?”

The Secretary's faith was stirred.

Peace was the result.

And in a few minutes both the Secretary, and his servant were sound asleep.

Often we simply need to trust God,

          and believe God knows what he is doing,

          and has an answer, and a plan,

          even if we do not know what it is,

          or understand it completely.

While Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum

He taught about how those who ate the bread of life would live forever.

The disciples admitted this teaching was difficult.

Many of His followers turned back and no longer went about with Him.

Jesus asked the twelve: "Do you also wish to go away?"

Peter's answer revealed he had carefully thought about it:

          "Lord, to whom can we go?

          You have the words of eternal life.

          We have come to believe, and know,

          that you are the Holy One of God."

Yet, it was a teaching hard to understand, and believe.

Jesus taught many difficult teachings:

          Love your neighbor as yourself.

          Forgive your enemies who hurt you.

          Forgive yourself.

Living God's way is not always easy.

Often we have doubts and questions.

Yet we can trust God knows what He is doing.

In a cellar in Cologne, Germany after World War II,

          these words were found scratched on the wall of a prison camp:

         I Believe

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining:

I believe in love, even when I feel it not.

I believe in God, even when He is silent.

We can trust and follow God, even when we do not understand what he is doing.

Don't be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated.

We can't cross a chasm in two small jumps.

We need to take the giant step.

The closest followers of Jesus took a great leap of faith.

They followed Him until their death.

And they spread the Gospel message throughout the world.

Doubt sees the obstacles.          Faith sees the way.

Doubt sees the darkest night.   Faith sees the day.

Doubt dreads to take a step.     Faith soars on high

Doubt questions: "Who believes?"   Faith answers: "I".

We have all faced many problems and difficulties in life.

But with God's help we have continued to follow and obey Him.

Even when we have doubts, Jesus is with us.

He doesn’t point a condemning finger at us when we come to Him

          confused, and doubtful.

He extends his hand, and leads us in the right direction.

It is easy for a candle to burn brightly when there is no wind or rain.

But when adversity comes – high winds, or pouring rain –

          the candle's light can easily be put out.

We are often like that candle.

In good circumstances, we let our light shine.

But when things get tough,

          problems crash into our lives,

           trials and temptations bombard us,

          our light can become very dim.

Jesus doesn't get angry at our questions and doubts.

He knows it is the way we learn, and grow closer to Him.

He never forgets us.

He loves us with a never ending love.

AMEN