

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time - B '2018
Jos.24.1-2,15-17,18///Eph.5.21-32///John 6.60-69

→with school starting this past week I was reminded of my 8th grade English teacher...she was known as the grammar expert of the school and I must still be under her influence even today....

→because it struck me this week that... “grammar...the parts of speech” can help us understand the ultimate issue present in today’s gospel

→especially for those who decided to “*return to their former way of life*” and those “*who chose to remain with the Lord*”.

→and the difference...[I believe] ultimately lies between two small little words... “**THAT**” and “**IN**”...one is a conjunction and the other a preposition

→those who rejected Jesus and returned to their former way of life...were people whose starting and ending points in Jesus were solely centered on the concepts he taught and the actions he performed.

→they accepted and believed:

--that God forgave...that we were to be the light of the world...that to be forgiven we must forgive...

→o.t.o.h for those who chose to remain with Jesus...they did so because they believed IN him

→they didn’t view faith as simply believing in a set of propositions but rather for them faith was actually believing IN the person Jesus

what does Peter say at the end of today’s passage

“Lord...to whom shall we go...we have come to believe IN you that you

are the Holy one of God”...even though what you say at times is difficult to understand and what you teach is difficult to accept....

PAUSE

...the disciples often struggled with what Jesus said and taught ...and even though they believed **IN** him....that didn't mean they didn't question his motives or understand his teachings...

→when Jesus declared that marriage was permanent ...they were shocked

→when he declared that the rich will have a very difficult time entering the kingdom of God...they were frustrated

→and ...when Jesus declared that the kingdom of God was for everyone...they were angry

→yet ultimately they put their trust **IN** Christ...they accepted what he taught, they embraced his message, and they adopted his ways...all because they believed **IN** him

→and this challenge of believing **IN** Jesus was not unique to those of long ago....it manifests itself in our own day and times...especially in light of the news of the past week...the ugly and sinful happenings and the struggle that many of us are experiencing in our faith, the church and in its ministers.

→and especially....as we are once again being asked to believe **IN** Jesus and his church....

PAUSE

→in reality....to put faith **IN** Jesus means that we **do not simply** believe in a list of propositions or simply follow a set of laws whether they be the 10 commandments, the greatest commandment or the laws of the Church...but rather

→to put our faith **IN** Jesus means that we trust him more than anyone or anything else in our lives

→to put our faith **IN** Jesus means that he becomes the center of our life and the source of our being...

→and to put our faith **IN** Jesus means to surrender our lives to his will and direction

PAUSE

→and the test of how much faith we have **IN** Jesus is based on how much we are willing to actually surrender in our lives

i.o.w. ---do we trust **IN** Jesus enough to be detached from our possessions and use them for the good of others?

→do we trust **IN** Jesus enough not to cheat but instead to be honest and accept the consequences and responsibilities of our actions even when it costs us?

→do we trust **IN** Jesus enough to seek to love our enemy and pray for our persecutors?

→and do we trust **IN** Jesus enough to believe that we are forgiven and live with that peace of mind?

PAUSE

→[you see]....to trust **IN** Jesus means making a continuous leap of faith...and to let go of everything that holds us back....

--to believe and trust **IN** Jesus is something that directs our words and deeds and actions towards each other...it takes over us and influences our lives totally and completely

→in reality it is not something we do or don't do...rather it is something we discover and grow into....

and the Eucharist we celebrate...the word we hear...the sacrifice we offer and the food and drink we receive...are given to us each week so that we may believe **IN** the Lord and each other

→I must tell you...I didn't like my 8th grade teacher all that much but in the end she was right on

→she drilled us on the parts of speech...telling us that...knowing the parts of speech would be help us for the rest of your lives....

→and she was right...because you see....there is a big difference between a conjunction and preposition...between the word **THAT**...and the word **IN**...

→there is a difference in knowing **THAT** Jesus is Christ and believing **IN** Jesus as Christ

→as you can see....knowing these parts of speech can be very helpful...in ways we can't even imagine.