

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family

Title: Entrustment

Lesson: John 6:24-35

²⁴ Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” ²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” ³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

In the summer of 2017, I was a student in the Master of Divinity Program in Korea and a youth pastor at a church. I strongly felt a calling to study and pastor in the United States, so I was preparing for that. At the time, I heard that cars in America were as essential as shoes and that you couldn't go anywhere without one.

Although I had a driver's license in Korea, I didn't drive because public transportation like buses and subways was very convenient, and owning a car in Seoul was more of a financial burden and a source of stress due to heavy traffic.

However, since I was preparing to study in the U.S., I felt the need to practice driving. In Korea, it is considered better not to receive driving lessons from close family members or partners for the sake of the relationship, as teaching and learning to drive can often lead to arguments. I had already taken a few lessons from my father but realized it wasn't beneficial for our relationship. So, I decided to pay a professional driving instructor for a few weeks of lessons.

I remember that the instructor was a middle-aged man. As soon as he got in the car, he turned on the radio to a Christian music channel. During our lessons, he asked me what I did for a living. I hesitantly replied, "I'm a seminary student and a youth pastor." He then told me he also attended church and mentioned that he played the Christian music station during lessons for evangelism purposes.

While driving, we shared various stories, and at one point, he confided in me about a concern regarding his faith. He was attending church but struggled with not feeling true faith. He asked me, "How can I have faith?" Friends, how would you answer if someone asked you, "How can I have faith?" If it's difficult to answer, let's think about it this way. You have faith. How did you come to have that faith? What is faith?

Everyone has worries and concerns in life, whether they share them with others or not. I, too, face worries from time to time. Recently, I felt troubled and went to a church sanctuary at night to pray to God. God reminded me of how He had protected and guided me all along.

Believe it or not, I was quite arrogant when I was in Korea. It was my home country, so I didn't face cultural difficulties, and Korean was my native language. Moreover, I was quite articulate and was good at conveying my thoughts and healthy, and I believed I could do everything on my own.

However, my arrogance disappeared when I came to the United States. Everything was new to me. When I paid at the market, the first crisis hit me. The cashier asked, 'Debit or Credit?' I had never heard this question in Korea, so I was confused. Fortunately, with the help of a friend who was with me, I managed to get through it. However, the second crisis soon followed. She asked, "Paper or plastic?" but I couldn't understand because she spoke too quickly. I asked her to repeat, and even though I knew the words "paper" and "plastic," I didn't understand what she was asking. In restaurants, when I ordered food at the counter, the staff asked, "For here or to go?" but I didn't get it because in Korea, we used the term "take out" instead of "to go." And, In Korea, people make full sentences like, "Are you going to eat here or take the food out?" When I ordered a "hot latte" in a coffee shop in the U.S., I often ended up with a chai latte instead. Seeing a five-year-old speak English more fluently than I did humbled me.

Living in the U.S., American culture, English, studying abroad, and newlywed life—all were new to me. In Korea, I thought I could predict and control everything, but in the U.S., nothing went as I expected. I felt like I was in the

middle of the ocean, moving with the direction of the wind. All I could do was pray to God and rely on Him. As a result, I experienced God's grace and guidance more strongly in the U.S. than in Korea.

Of course, just because God was with me didn't mean everything was easy. There were cultural and language barriers, financial difficulties, challenges from relationships, stress from numerous interviews, and even car accidents. I constantly prayed, asked, and relied on God. And God always helped and guided me in ways I couldn't have imagined.

While praying in the sanctuary, God reminded me of all my journeys in the U.S., and the grace and help I had already received were so overwhelming that I couldn't ask for more. I sat there, thanking God, and suddenly, I thought, "I always seek God when I have worries and needs, but when God seeks me and needs me, do I respond to His call?"

"When do you seek God? When do you pray to God?" Many people seek and pray to God when they feel a need or have something to ask for. Many people pray, "Lord, I need this. Please give it to me. If you give it to me, I will believe you are real."

Feeling a need can be a good invitation to experience God. However, many people forget God once their prayers are answered and only seek Him again when they need something else.

Friends, if we truly believe and accept God as our Lord, we should not merely say we believe with our lips or seek God only for our needs. We should continually ask what God's will is and participate in the work of God.

Jesus had already fed more than 5,000 people. When they were terrified in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus walked on water to reach them. When Jesus got into the boat, they felt peace, and the boat naturally reached their destination. They had already seen and experienced Jesus feeding them, walking on water, and calming the storm, yet they were still blinded by these miracles and did not realize who Jesus was.

So Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." This means that the disciples followed Jesus not because they believed He was the Son of God but because their hunger was satisfied.

Friends, why do we believe in God? Is it to fulfill our needs? Not at all. We believe in God because being with Him brings true peace and happiness to our lives. Only Jesus Christ, the bread of life, can give us this peace and happiness. Let's consider the time when the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee. John 6:18-21 says, "18 A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. 20 But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.' 21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading."

The one who walks on water is God. In a world full of pain, fear, confusion, and adversity, God comes to us. And it is God who calms our fears. When we believe and accept God as our Savior and invite Him into our boat, we can experience peace and happiness in our lives. Therefore, faith is not just about asking to fulfill needs but about trusting and entrusting our lives to God and participating in the work of God. Sometimes, the work of God can be different from what we expected. Sometimes, it may not be what we wanted. However, faith is trusting in the God who loves us and entrusting our lives entirely to Him, no matter which direction our lives may take. So, if someone asks me, 'How can I have faith?' or 'What is faith?' I would answer, 'Faith is entrusting my entire life to God.' I hope and pray that all of us believe and trust in God, entrust our lives to Him, and participate in the work of God. Amen.