



**St. Brendan the Navigator Parish**  
**Small Faith Sharing Cell Group**  
**Teaching #54: Jesus: Present Tense**  
Shared by Fr. Bob Vaillancourt  
February 2021

In 2003, I suffered a stroke and was out of commission for two months. What a challenging ordeal, yet one that became pure gift for me.

While ill, I had lots of time to think, to ponder and to pray. I realized, with so much time in my hands, that I utilize most of my time to reflect on the many mistakes and sins, hurts and frustrations of my past, and/or I wonder with useless anxiety and fears about my future, completely forgetting about the “present” moment and what God is blessing me with at the very moment. One of the moments of truth that has surfaced within was to realize how I need to break away from the mind-patterns that keep me in bondage . . . bondage to the past, and bondage to the future.

That’s when I realized how I need to spend more time with the presence of ‘NOW’ and what ‘NOW’ can offer me, *and* what I can offer it. I realize a need for a radical inner transformation that is more linked to the message and proclamation of the Gospels of Jesus Christ... of Jesus Christ TODAY... right NOW!!!

Many Christians find themselves stuck in past regrets or future fears, but the name of God itself reminds readers that God wants them to live in the present. The more readers understand and apply God's "I AM" statements from the Old and New Testaments, the more they will realize God's peace and joy. Then they will be free to live, serve, and know God more richly in the present tense-which is just where He wants them to be, because that is where GOD IS!!! In the Present; In the "NOW!"

Did you ever realize that when Jesus speaks, that most of the time He speaks in the present tense?

For example:

- "Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: "I AM has sent me to you.""  
(Exodus 3:13-14)
- "I tell you this now, before it takes place, so that when it takes place you may believe that 'I AM.'" (Even God always lives in the now)  
(John 13:19) (present tense)
- "I AM' the way, the truth and the life!" (John 14:6) (present tense)
- "I AM" the light of the world!" (John 8:12) (present tense)
- "I AM" the vine, you 'ARE' the branches." (John 15:5) (present tense)

He refers to Himself always in the present tense!!! And when Jesus speaks about us, YOU and ME, he also speaks in the present tense!!!

For example:

- "You 'ARE' the light of the world... 'You are' the salt of the earth."  
(Mt. 5:13)
- "My Peace 'IS' My gift to you!" (John 14:27)

- “You ‘ARE’ my friends.” (John 15:14)

If Jesus continuously addresses me in the 'Present Tense' and I am stuck either living my life in the past or future, then am I grasping what He wants to give me 'now' and what He has planted deep within me? Can I hear Him yelling to me from His present moment into my past where I seem to be spending so much time? "HEY, BOB, I'M OVER HERE!!!" Am I truly aware of the wealth of graces that God has given me... inside of me...NOW...TODAY? Or do I choose to remain stuck in the past or future?

When someone goes to the doctor and says, "I hear a voice in my head," he or she will most likely be sent to a psychiatrist/psychologist. The fact is that, in a very similar way, almost everyone hears a voice or several voices in their head all the time: the fact that your mind is always going and you don't realize that you have the power to stop that. Do you realize when you are 'stuck' in the past?

The voice within comments, judges, compares, complains, likes, dislikes and so on. What you may be thinking of may not even have anything to do with what's going on at the present moment; yet something may have happened that revived a recent or distant past or imagining possible future situations.

Here it often imagines things going wrong and negative outcomes; this is called "worry" or "useless anxiety." Sometimes this soundtrack is accompanied by mental images. Even if the voice within is relevant to the situation at hand, it will interpret it in terms of the past... your past. Our minds have been conditioned to think certain ways and so often, we aren't even aware that our minds are doing that.

So you see and judge the present through the eyes of the past and get a totally distorted view of it. It is not uncommon for the voice to be a person's own worst enemy. Many people live with a tormentor in their head that continuously attacks and punishes them and drains them of vital energy. It is the cause of so much misery and unhappiness. Where is Jesus in all of this? The Good News is that you CAN free yourself from your mind and its control over you! This is the only true liberation. We need to realize the greater truths about who we are today and what God has made us TODAY which are so often contrary to what we have allowed the world to make of us. For example, we

may have heard so often growing up and even as adults that we are stupid, worth nothing, a waste! Is that the *truth* about us?

The real truth that we need to see “NOW” ...”TODAY”, is that God fiercely and profoundly loves us! That God does not make junk! The world may have told you that you are junk, but the truth of the matter is that YOU ARE NOT!!! Don’t let your mind control the truth! Know the truth! “Put on the mind of Christ!!!” (Phil. 2:5) This truth can only be found in the NOW, in the TODAY, in this MOMENT!

Realize deeply that the present moment is all you have. Make the NOW the primary focus of your life. The more you are focused on time—past and future—the more you miss the Now, the most precious thing there is. Our Precious God is ALWAYS found in the NOW... Present Tense!

I am reminded of a lake... even if the lake is rough on the surface because of wind, it is ALWAYS calm at the bottom of the lake. That’s where you’ll find the truth about yourself... that’s where you’ll find God! That’s where you’ll find your true self!

You are more than MIND! Deep within you lies the source of your BEING... always present... always a part of you... YOUR GOD!

### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. What word or phrase spoke to you the most?
2. Do you ever find yourself being controlled by those thoughts, those voices deep within you? How do you usually handle them?
3. What God-given truths about ME do I need to ponder more?
  - a. .... do I need to bring into my consciousness?
  - b. ... into my “NOW”?
  - c. ... do I need to allow into my mind and heart?

For example:        “I AM loved by God no matter what!”  
                              “I AM completely forgive by God for all!”  
                              “I AM made in the image and likeness of God!”

AND JESUS SAYS TO YOU: “I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, UNTIL THE END OF TIME!