

For the **Last five Sundays** with the I am the Bread of Life series in John Chapter 6, we explored the truth of Jesus and his real presence to us. **Jesus is what he says he is, and does what he says he will do. He is a “doer of the Word and not just hears”. Jesus has welcomed the word and it has been planted deep in His soul.**

Now **he turn his attention back to us**, as we revert back to the Gospel of Mark. His challenge to the Pharisees among us, **is do you do what you say you will do and be who you say you are!**

For the fornicators among us are surely going to be disturbed by Jesus' words. So also the greedy and who do not share in their abundance. The same might be said for liars, adulterers, thieves, murders, the envious, the arrogant, and the obtuse who are in the room! WOW!

And I hear you say, **“this is what I hate about the Church, always trying to make us feel guilty”** ...Well, I got news for you the Church can't make you feel guilty. Only you can feel guilty when confronted about the truth of sin in your life (and in mine, by the way)!

And I can hear you say, **“But perhaps best tack is to scrap the ignore the Gospel today and talk about love or building project. It is not uncommon for us to block out those parts of the Gospel that offend us or make us uncomfortable.** After all that's what we accuse the Protestant of doing by ignoring John Chapter 6 and the fact that Jesus tells us He is True Food and True drink.

So instead, today we have to listen to the stuff of Jesus' words and squirm.

It is a funny (and I don't mean funny) thing to sit in the pew on Sundays when a whole list of sins and sinners is listed in the Gospels. Our shoulders shrink a bit in hope that we are not mentioned, or at least that the blows fall not too hard. Possibly we feel relieved that gambling, smoking and drinking are not mentioned today. Right!!!!

And some of us may sigh. It is those “others” that Jesus is talking about. That guy who has loads of money. I hope he heard the word “greed.” Or those fakes who think they are so good; I hope they get their fill of this Gospel. I know several people who could take a lesson from the word today, if they would just open up their ears.

The old Pharisees were experts in the law. Matters of right and wrong. Weighty concerns of judgment. They knew where people stood. But Jesus seemed to have more difficulty with the Pharisees than with any other group. They did not mind hearing about sin, mainly because it didn't apply to them. They were righteous. They honored their self-images and projections to the world. It was important that they look good on the outside, rather than looking good on the inside! And hence their focus on the rituals and traditions of their faith. Jesus quoted Isaiah to penetrate their defenses: “You teach as dogmas mere human precepts.”

For myself, this stings a bit. I cherish what has been handed down as tried and true by the church. But if I cherish tradition, must I also be vigilant that my heart is in the right place? Does Christ speak to me when he says: “You disregard God's commandment and cling to what is human tradition”? Does he address his church? Its scribes? Its leaders? “This people pays me lip-service but their heart is far from me. Empty is the reverence they give me because they teach as dogmas mere human precepts.”

The answer is yes, He speaks to me as a priest and as a leader, as one who tries to hand down the traditions of this great Church. But I also cherish the word and I am called to be a “Doer”, And so are you!

A secret consolation is this: if our hearts are stung by Jesus' challenge to the Pharisees, then our hearts can be healed.

A gifted and forceful woman once told me of a horrifying revelation. She realized at prayer that she was the Pharisee, she who judged others, she who did not trust God.

What a lovely moment. If you think you are a Pharisee, you most surely are not. If you think you are not, watch out.