

Insecurity Christmas Weekday Wednesday, January 9, 2019 **1 Jn 4:11-18; Mk 6:45-52** (God is always with us, even when it seems impossible.)

“In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has a do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love.”

That is from the First Letter of John. I think that you could dispute his statement that **fear** has to do with punishment: maybe, maybe not. **Surely it has to do with insecurity.** In the gospel reading today the disciples were afraid, they were even terrified, but not because of fearing punishment. They were frightened and terrified by their own insecurity. Jesus was, in a sense, surprised. “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” They thought it was—what? A ghost, it says.

Part of the reason why we are insecure is **we do not actually comprehend or feel or experience or intuit or know the presence of God.** This story in the gospel is about the presence of God, even when it seems impossible. So it seems impossible for someone to walk on the waves of the sea, but in that sense it is possible because God can do anything. So **God is always with us, even when it seems impossible**—a way of looking at this story.

The whole idea, and the children bring this up all the time; fourth-graders love to talk about Jesus’ walk on the water. For them of course it’s fun. But this is not really about fun. But it is also true that **the idea of levitation** is known. **It is not utterly unique to Jesus to be able to be lighter than air**, so to speak, although I don’t know of any cases where people actually have walked on water, but been lighter than air and lifted up. And so there are many stories of saints and even evil people who are able to levitate through some sort of power. But **this is really celebrating the**

presence of God and the power of love and trust to carry us through the waves and the turbulence of life.

Now it would seem, and people no doubt wanted, that Jesus' miraculous power to feed five thousand people to satiety would translate into being able to take care of every single problem, as it were filling every void. But that is not exactly the plan of God. **It is a plan of God to fill all hungers and to quench of thirsts, but in a sort of process which is building the kingdom of God in which we play a role.** So at the time the disciples were struggling on the waves of the lake, at that moment they were completely unaware of Christ, and were actually controlled by their own emotions. And it says—why? Because they did not understand the incident of the loaves; that's why they were afraid, **that's why they were terrified both of the waves and of the ghost, all this lacking understanding of the incident of the loaves.** On the contrary, their hearts were hardened.

Now when we hear the term “hardening of hearts,” we usually think of something rather deliberate and willful. I don't think this was deliberate and willful. It was a **failure to comprehend what God was doing in the feeding of the five thousand** because if they comprehended what God was doing in the feeding of the five thousand, **then they would realize that he must be with them now also in the boat with the waves tossing.** And when he came toward them, they would not have mistook him for something else, some specter, some horror, they wouldn't have. They just weren't there yet.

So we are often not there yet, but we have to get there. And these readings are given to us to help us to become more aware, to let go of all the various crutches that we use, **so that we can really let God enter in and be God for us,** to be the bread that feeds us, **to be the presence that accompanies us,** to be indeed our very soul in life, which is what God clearly desires.