

No One's Got What He's Got

Intro. When I was in elementary school and couldn't pronounce a word, I took my book to my mom and asked her how to pronounce it. She would usually say, "Sound it out." I would usually say, "It's too hard. I can't do it!" And she, "Yes, you can." She used to make me so mad. What she did was to teach me to push past "I can't." As a result, today I can usually figure out how to pronounce most words *if I work at it.*

I. For the past several weeks we have been reading from the gospel of John and his telling of the Lord's teaching about the Bread of Life. In the first part, the Lord used images from the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and how God gave them food from heaven, the manna that kept them alive. He then changed the imagery by talking about *himself* being the bread that came down from heaven and keeps people alive. The people had a hard time understanding the connection between the "old" food (the manna) and the "new" food (the Messiah). They got stuck

focusing on *physical* food rather than the more important *spiritual* food that gives **eternal life**. Many people said, "I can't do this. It's too hard." They walked away. Imagine the look on the Lord's face as he turned to his closest friends and asked if they were leaving too. Peter had some less impressive moments, but this was a *shining* moment. What a response: "To *whom* shall we go? *You* have the words of eternal life." The Lord must have smiled. And they moved on to the next place to spread the news of salvation in Christ. My vacation is over too. It's back to work. Many of us are back to our work and school. Another year of work projects, sports or music or dance practice. There will be groans of, "I can't do it. It's too hard" and thoughts of quitting. Some things we are able to quit; others we cannot. Just because stuff is hard is no reason to give up if it is really important. Some days having faith in *God* is hard. Having faith in *people* can be hard also. Some are turning away, not from God but church, because of losing trust. It makes me sad too. Believe me, I understand the response. *This is hard.*

Sadly, we have been here before. Many times over the centuries as a matter of fact. What keeps the church going is the power of God's Spirit working in and through good, saintly people. People like you and me.

Some of the disciples thought what Jesus asked them to do and believe was too hard and they quit. He asked the twelve apostles if they wanted to quit too. Peter spoke truth: you have what we need- eternal life. No one else can give us that. We're staying because we have come to believe you are the Holy One of God.

Concl. Multiple times in our lives we have faced difficult situations and thought, "I can't do this." Some of those times we had no choice but to forge ahead and do what we thought we could not do.

We have faced that question about our faith: "Do you want to leave also?" I have faced that question at difficult moments in my life and ministry. The initial answer might be, "No, I don't **want** to leave, but I **feel** that way." If we walk away, where do we go? Often today it is to nothing;

just "floating" as a friend of mine put it. It is difficult to walk away from something really important like friendships but sometimes we have to. The Lord offers us what no one else can – eternal life. That's hard to walk away from **if** we have come to believe he is the "Holy One of God." I continue coming back to Peter's answer, "To who shall I go?" *I believe in the Holy One of God and his presence in my life.* I pray that we keep reflecting on the question but, more importantly, on the answer.