

Heroes
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It is sometimes said, “Never meet your heroes.” The thought is that it will only lead to disappointment. We can easily imagine a kid with the hat, the jersey, the sports card, and a sharpie waiting for that moment when he finally meets his favorite athlete, only to have that player ignore him or see this kid as an annoyance after a bad game. Sometimes, there are people in our lives that we build up in our mind as larger-than-life ... only to walk away thinking less of them when we come to know them more. We are reminded that they suffer from the same fatal flaws that we all do. Maybe you have had an experience like that. I know that I have.

But it would be a wrong to think that what happens in John 6 is a never-meet-your-heroes situation:

“After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:66–69).

Indeed, some people left disappointed when they heard Jesus’ words. But any disappointment in Jesus had to do with not letting go of false images of who they thought that He had to be. The issue was not thinking too much of Jesus but thinking too little of him. So it is with us, if we refuse to listen to His words and insist that He fit our personal ideas of Who we think He ought to be.

But truly meeting Jesus does not leave you thinking less of Him but more of Him. He is more than a great teacher. He is more than a miracle worker. He is more than an example. He is more than and other than just a human hero. Jesus is so much more. Peter, with that fledgling faith before Christ’s death and resurrection, knew that Jesus was more. Jesus has the words of eternal life and is “the Holy One of God.” Jesus is fully God and fully Man. Meeting Jesus is meeting your Lord and your God (John 20:28). He is your Savior. He shattered our false images of who we thought He ought to be by going to the cross, where all of our sin and the judgment that it has deserved was placed on Him. He alone is the One who suffered, bled, died, and rose for you to forgive you of your sins and to give you life eternal with Him forever.

Where do you meet Him? He comes to you where He promises to be found. He knows you by name and calls you His own. We find Him in the Holy Scriptures. His authority speaks forgiveness into your ears in the absolution (John 20:22). He unites Himself to you in Holy Baptism (Rom. 6:3–11). He gives you His very Body and Blood in His Holy Supper (Matt. 26:26–29)!

“Never meet your heroes” does not apply to Jesus. Meeting Him in the places where He promises to be found only leads you to praise Him all the more! He has the words of eternal life! Amen.