

February 16, 2014

Lesson 19: Bread of Life



John 6:25-59

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give

us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." ' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Bread of Life

John 6:25-59

"I Am
the bread of life."

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The Big Story Truth: Jesus gives the miraculous gift of himself- his own flesh and blood- for the life of the world.

About This Scripture Passage: Just before this passage is the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Jesus miraculously fed all these people with just 5 loaves of bread and two fish. The crowds followed Jesus. Jesus confronts them about why they are searching for him. Are they really looking for him or just more bread? This sparks a whole conversation about bread and the kind of bread that Jesus provides. It's clear from Jesus' ministry that he can provide the kind of bread that we have for lunch.... but the gospel reveals that we have a much bigger need. We need Jesus. We need for Jesus to provide more than just another meal. We need Jesus to give us real and eternal life. Jesus uses the occasion of having fed the crowd with bread to reveal that what we really need is his flesh and blood. We

needed Jesus to become flesh and blood for us. And we needed Jesus to give up that flesh and blood for us. Our receiving the gift of life that God intends for us to have comes by means of the flesh and blood of Jesus. A free meal is great... just like manna in the wilderness was great. But what Jesus came to give is so much more!

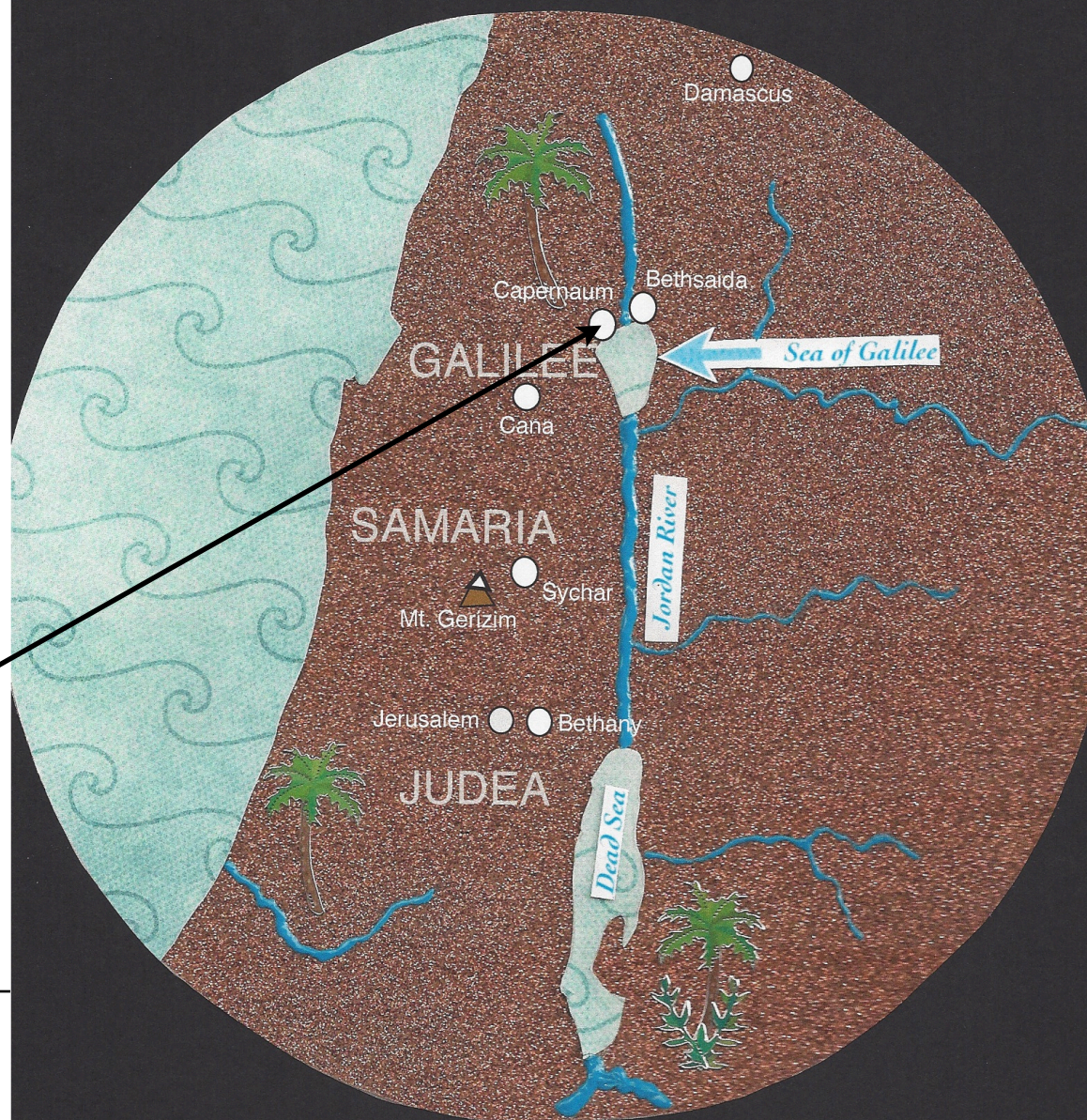


Making the Connection: Eating flesh? Drinking blood? It sounds like we are talking about the latest vampire movie! No, we're talking about Jesus and about the gift of life he offers. Kids know what it is like to be hungry. (Some kids may know painfully too well.) It's hard to think of ANYTHING being more important than having food. But Jesus is saying that there is. Being with God is even more important than food. It's important though to remember that Jesus didn't tell the crowds that until after he had fed them. God knows that we need lunch. That's why God provided the gift of manna for the Israelites wandering in the desert. It's why Jesus provided a big meal that fed a crowd of 5,000. But God also provides more. God makes a way for us to be with him forever. That's why Jesus is the best gift of all!

Where in the World Are We? Jesus is teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

For Your Reflection:

*What are you hungry for today?
Is it a physical hunger?
A spiritual hunger?
Both?*



Large Group Gathering

Welcome students and their families. Divide up into Faith 5 groups. After 5 minutes, dismiss adults who need to head out.

Then say: **Today I have a song to teach you that goes with one of the verses in our Bible story for today. It's a song about John 6:35! Let's learn it together.**

Teach the song "John 6:35, Jesus is the real thing!" (It's the verse sung to the tune of the Coca-Cola jingle). If the kids get it right away and feel comfortable, this would be a great one to sing in church this morning. Ask the kids if they are up for it!

Practice the Apostles' Creed, particularly focusing on the second article (the section about Jesus) and the meaning from Luther's Small Catechism pages 12-13.

Sing any other favorite songs that you have time for and then dismiss kids to their classes.

Family Faith 5

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1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)
2. Read together this Bible Verse:
“I Am the bread of life.”
3. Talk about how the Bible verse relates to your highs and lows.
4. Pray aloud for one another's highs and lows.
5. Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's heads and say these words: _____, Jesus, the gift of life is for you!

Preschool & Early Elementary

Materials Needed:

- Masking tape
- Spark Story Bible
- First Communion Cross Craft Kit from Oriental Trading Company (IN-48/9245)
- Strong magnets
- Foam hearts
- Permanent marker
- Goldfish and oyster crackers
- Copies of activity booklet (from Jumbo Bible Activity Book or other source)

Before Children Arrive:

Separate out the pieces of the foam craft that say “My First Communion.” Replace these hearts with your own foam hearts. Also take out the ribbon. The students can write their names on these hearts during the lesson.

Experiencing the Story:¹

After your class arrives, ask kids to stand and hold hands in a circle. Say: **Let’s play a game. Pretend you are an elastic band. First we are going to start very small.** Have kids stand shoulder to shoulder in the circle. **Now, stretch out as far as possible.** Pause while kids do this. Use strips of masking tape to mark off how far the group stretches. Ask the kids to go back to the small circle and again stand shoulder to shoulder. Say: **Now, let’s see if we can get our elastic band to stretch even farther! The catch is, you have to touch someone at all times.**

Brainstorm the ways that kids might make the circle stretch even farther. For example, they might touch fingertips or they could lay down and touch fingers to a neighbor’s toes. Continuing finding ways to stretch the elastic band. Move the masking tape to mark each stretch. After you have played several rounds, have kids sit down in a circle. (Be sure to leave the farthest elastic stretch still marked.)

¹ The opening activity comes from “The Humongous Book of Games for Children’s Ministry”

Say: There is a story in the Bible about how Jesus made a little bit stretch a long way. Let's read about it in our story Bible. Read "Jesus Feeds 5,000" (Spark Story Bible pages 426-431).

Say: It was an amazing miracle that Jesus could feed so many people. But next Jesus did something even more amazing. He said that he came to give the people an even BIGGER miracle! Jesus said that he would give the people his own flesh and blood. Even bigger, even better than that big meal is the promise that Jesus came to give us himself! Have kids stand up and see if they can beat even their best elastic stretch. **Jesus came to give himself! That's even BIGGER even MORE WONDERFUL than feeding 5,000 people!**

Activity Options:

John 6:35 Refrigerator Magnets- Help kids complete the Oriental Trading company cross. Instead of making it into a wall hanging though, add a magnet to the back of the cross. Have kids take the cross home and stick it on their refrigerator so that kids can remember that even though the gift of food is important and great, Jesus' gives us an even better gift! Himself!

Coloring and Activity Pages- Give students a packet of activity pages from your teacher's book or put together a packet of coloring pages from google searches online.

Snack- Serve goldfish and oyster crackers. Count out 5 oyster crackers for loaves of bread and 2 goldfish to start with. Then thank Jesus for his gifts that are so much bigger and give the kids more!

Upper Elementary Middle School & High School

Materials Needed:

- Homemade blood (mix of corn syrup, red and blue food coloring and water)
- Candy clay hand (powdered sugar, corn syrup, salt, margarine, vanilla)
- Bowl
- Paper and Markers

Before the Students Arrive:

Prepare the homemade blood according to the recipe below. Prepare a batch of candy clay and form it into the shape of a hand (and/or any other body parts you desire!) Put the candy body parts in a bowl filled with the blood mixture. Set this bowl in the middle of the table to welcome students when they enter the room! Be sure to remind your pastor before the service that your class will have the scavenger hunt prepared for the children's sermon.

Experiencing the Story:

Welcome students as they enter the room. Say: **Welcome! Come on in! I brought a snack for us today. Blood and flesh! Who wants some?** (Let the kids squirm a little... or dive right in!)

Say: **While you are eating (or not eating) the snack I brought, let's read together our story from the gospel of John. Read John 6:35-59.**

Say: **In the Old Testament, one of the rituals that God's people followed was not to touch or be near blood because it was thought to be "unclean" or not something that God would like. What do you think the people thought of Jesus suggesting that they should drink his blood and eat his flesh? They were totally disgusted and thought that Jesus was crazy! And do you think they liked it very well when Jesus talked about the miracle of having manna in the desert like it wasn't a very big deal? No! They thought Jesus was being disrespectful to God. But what they didn't understand is that Jesus is God and that what Jesus was saying is that God was about to do a new thing so big and so different from what had happened before!**

Just before this story that we read today, Jesus did a miraculous thing. He took 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and fed a great big crowd. Do you remember hearing that story before? How many people did Jesus feed? At least 5,000 people! So Jesus knew that we get hungry and need food to eat. Jesus provided that, just like God gave food to the people wandering in the desert when they needed food. But Jesus was saying that he came to give people something greater even than a free meal. Jesus came to give the people life. And it is Jesus' body and blood that will give the people life. Jesus dying on the cross gives us all life. That's the greatest gift of all!

Activity:

Say: Today our class has the opportunity to help the younger kids and the whole congregation during worship learn about how Jesus' body and blood is greater than any other gift. How many of you remember from school what a "greater than sign" looks like? Would you draw one on the board? It should look like this:



Have kids make a variety of sizes and colors of greater than signs on the paper you provide. Then have them hide these signs all over the sanctuary of the church. During the children's sermon, the children and the congregation will have a scavenger hunt to find all of the signs they have hidden!

Homemade Blood Recipe

Ingredients:

1 cup light corn syrup
10 drops red food coloring
1 drop blue food coloring
1 tbs. water

Directions:

Mix corn syrup and water in a small bowl until well blended. Add red and blue food coloring to the mixture and stir until well blended.

Candy Clay Recipe

Ingredients:

1 pound powdered sugar
1/3 cup corn syrup
1/2 tsp. salt
1/3 cup margarine (softened)
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together in a small bowl until blended. If the mixture is too sticky, add more powdered sugar.