

February 23, 2014

Lesson 20: Living Water

John 7:37-52

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." ' Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.



When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, 'This is really the prophet.' Others said, 'This is the Messiah.' But some asked, 'Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?' So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, 'Why did you not arrest him?' The police answered, 'Never has anyone spoken like this!' Then the Pharisees replied, 'Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.' Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?' They replied, 'Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.'

Living Water

John 7:37-52

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February 20, 2014

The Big Story Truth: Jesus is God made flesh. Jesus makes God visible and accessible to the world. Faith is perceiving this truth!

About This Scripture Passage: This scripture passage begins with making reference to the final day of a festival. The festival that is being referred to is the Festival of the Tabernacles. It was a festival celebrating the harvest and remembering God's provision during the wilderness journey. At the end of the celebration of the Festival of the Tabernacles was a particular ritual in which the priests would go to the pool of Siloam to draw water and would carry it through the Water Gate and then pour the water on the altar. All the while the people would be singing, playing instruments, dancing, and waving branches. It's just after this ritual is completed that Jesus declared, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink." By this point in the Gospel, it is clear to us as readers that Jesus is

God made flesh and that Jesus has the authority to interrupt these rituals to declare that God is doing a new thing. The response of those hearing Jesus though, is mixed. The religious leaders are convinced that they know the law and Jesus is not to be believed... but the reality is that Jesus coming into the world means that we can't reduce God to what we think should be. The ability to perceive Jesus as God is the living faith!



Making the Connection: This is another occasion where judging by appearances would lead a person to miss what God is doing all together. As the commentator Gail O'Day writes, "Jesus' coming into the world as the incarnate Word of God requires that one perceive reality differently. The Word became flesh (John 1:4). If one judges by appearances only, one risks stopping at the the flesh and never recognizing God, who is present and available in that flesh. Judgement based on appearances risks reducing Jesus to fit who or what we think he should be rather than allowing his fullness, incarnate Word, to work its way on our systems and structures of perception." This story of Jesus in the temple raises the question for us of how we know what God is doing. How do we recognize and name God's work around us? A key skill for our kids is to learn how to recognize God's work and movement in their own lives and in the world around them. That takes practice, and the work of the Spirit! But we can be helping our kids, prompting them to look for God's Spirit and God's work around them. Even what looks ordinary can be holy!

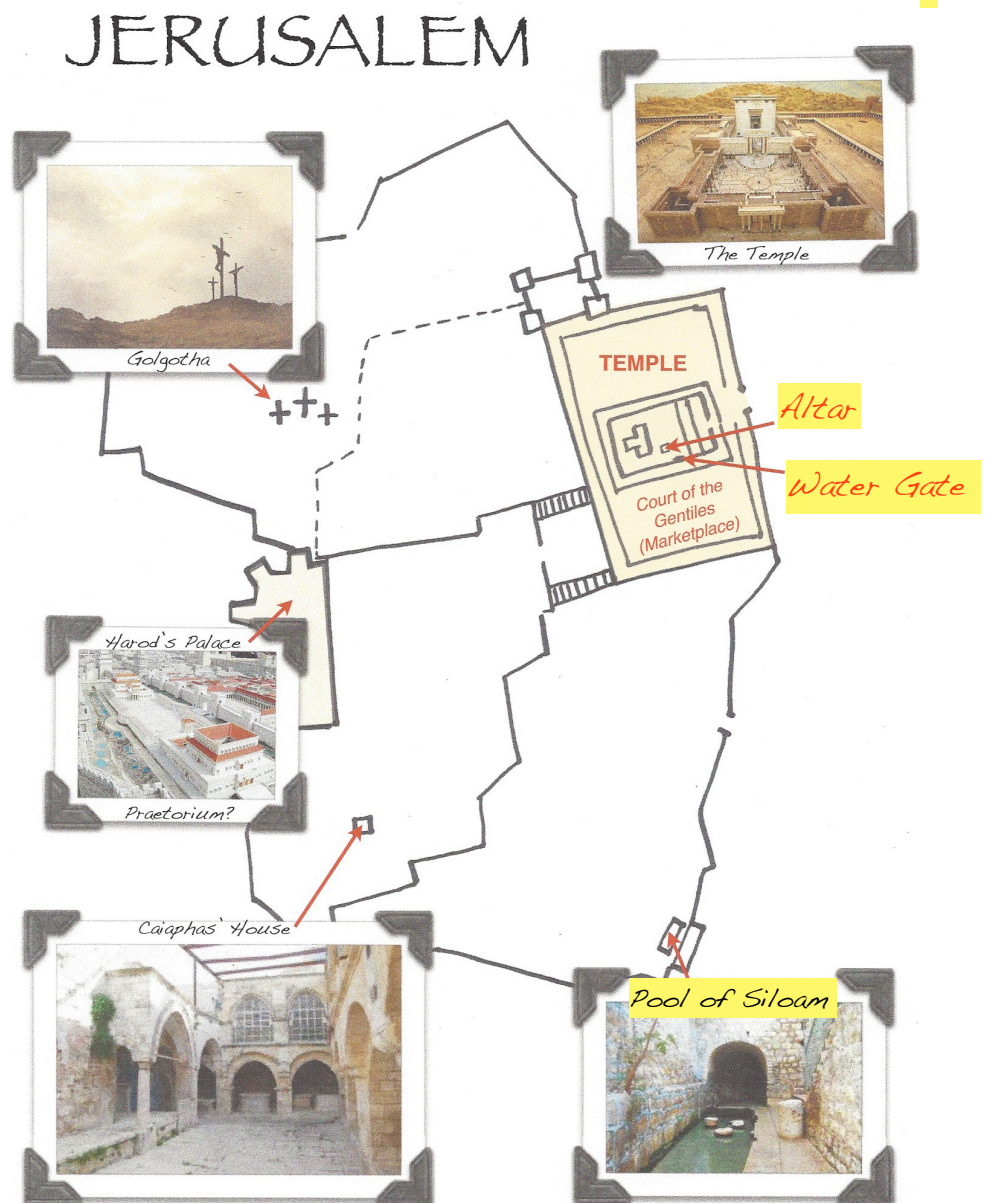
Where in the World Are We?

The Festival of the Tabernacles takes place at the temple in Jerusalem. The map of Jerusalem shown here highlights the location of the altar, the water gate, and the pool of Siloam.

For Your Reflection:

How do you experience God present in your daily life?

Where have you experienced the holy today?



Large Group Gathering & Lesson Plan

Welcome students and their families. Divide up into groups to spend five minutes doing their Faith 5 conversations. Afterward, dismiss the adults who need to leave.

Say: Today we are going to hear a story about Jesus that happened during a festival. Do you know what another name for a festival? A festival is something like a party or a holiday. The festival Jesus was at was being held in the temple. Part of the festival was when there would be a procession (kind of like a parade) where the priests would carry in water to the altar. This time things were different though. Jesus said the most important thing wasn't that water. The most important thing was a person- Jesus! Jesus came to show the people the joy of knowing the important things about God. Let's sing about the joy that Jesus brings!

Teach kids the song, "I've Got Peace Like a River."

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 songs as you have time for and then dismiss to classes.

Family Faith 5

February 20[☆], 2014[☆]

1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)
2. Read together this Bible Verse:

“Jesus said, let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.”
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 will provide all that you need!

Preschool

Materials Needed:

- Large Rubbermaid container
- Water pitcher
- Access to water
- Waterproof blocks (or other items that will deflect the flow of water)
- Plastic heart shaped bottles (the kind available from craft stores made for layered sand art projects)
- corn syrup
- metallic confetti
- glitter

Before the Children Arrive:

Place a large rubbermaid container and a pitcher of water on floor in an area the kids will gather around. Label heart shaped bottles with each child's name.

Experiencing the Story:

As kids gather, have them come and sit close to the big container. When they have all taken their seats, ask the kids if they like to play with (or in) water. What are some of their favorite water games? Say: **Today we are going to do an experiment with this water. Let me show you something. I'm going to lift up one end of this container and pour in some water. Watch what happens when I pour the water. It all goes down in one big stream, doesn't it?** (Actually do the motions as you are talking so that the kids can see what you mean.) **Now, I'm going to do that experiment again. But this time, we are going to put a few of these blocks in the container first. Who can help me put a few blocks in the container?** (Have each child help you place one block in the container. Placing blocks in a single layer with some space in between will make for more interesting water flow!) **Now let's try lifting this one end up a little and pouring in some water again. What happened differently this time?** (The water should go around the blocks in several different streams.)

Say: When Jesus talked to the people at the big festival party, he was teaching them something new. When you saw this experiment you learned that water can flow a different way when we put the block in the tub. Jesus was trying to teach the people a new thing that God was doing. God had sent

Jesus! Jesus called himself living water because he was the new gift God was giving the people so that they would have life forever. Jesus was even more important than the water used at the party!

Activity Options:

Hearts of Living Water-

Say: Today we are going to make something to remind us that Jesus' love is most important. Help kids make glittery water hearts by filling the heart shaped bottles $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full with corn syrup. Then add a small handful of metallic confetti and glitter. Top the bottle off with water. Carefully seal the bottle securely with some hot glue. Set aside until the glue cools completely.

Snack- Fruit-snack Gushers

Early Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School & High School

Materials Needed:

- Spark NRSV Bible
- Magic Eye Gallery Book(s)
- Prepared wooden pieces for Jesus plaques (see template instructions below)
- Wood glue
- Paper towels
- Paper, markers, and names of wood crafters for thank you notes

Before the Students Arrive:

In advance of this lesson, ask some wood crafters from your congregation if they would be willing to help make the pieces for your project today. The idea will be for kids to have the individual wood pieces to then glue onto a wooden plaque backing in the shape that makes the name “JESUS” like this plaque here. It would also be a good idea to ask any extra adults, parents or volunteers who are able to, to stay and help with today’s lesson. Write each student’s name on their wooden base before class begins. Before students enter the room, set the Magic Eye book (or individual pictures) out on the table.



Experiencing the Story:

As students enter the room, let them look at the Magic Eye pictures. If possible, have multiple copies of books or multiple pages so that more than one student can be looking at a book at a time. These are books where the pictures just look like a bunch of colored shapes all jumbled together until your eyes see in a new way, and then a three dimensional shape suddenly appears. Are they able to see the magic image hidden in the pictures?

Say: In today's story, Jesus was teaching the people to see in a way that they never had before. Jesus was showing the people that God was doing something new. Rituals weren't the most important thing anymore. Jesus was. Let's read the story in John's Gospel.

Read John 7:37-52.

Say: Jesus changes the way we see God's work in the world. Some people could see that in Jesus at the temple that day. Others couldn't and they were angry. They thought Jesus was being disrespectful of God.

Activity:

Say: Today we are going to make reminders that there's more to Jesus than we may see at first. Jesus wasn't being disrespectful of God. Jesus was showing the people a new work that God was doing. Jesus IS God!

Show kids a sample of the JESUS plaque. What do they see? Point out the letters. Have them find and trace each one with their fingers. Then, hand out the bases labeled with each child's name on the back. Help them lay out the wooden pieces on their own plaque board to make their own JESUS plaque. Trace around the pieces with a pencil to mark their position. Show the kids how to add wood glue to secure the pieces to the base. (For younger children, be sure to have one adult available to work with each child.)

When plaques are finished, set them aside to dry. Give children paper and markers/crayons to write thank you notes to those crafters who made the wood pieces for our craft today. (A nice touch would be to put their names on the board so that their notes can be personalized!)