

The Names of Jesus: Bread

Text: John 6:30-41

Warming Up

Questions:

1. Finish the sentence, "I am..." and explain your answer.
2. What word or phrase best describes who Jesus is to you?

Digging In

Read **John 6:25-35**.

This account of Jesus in conversation with his disciples comes after two remarkable events: the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on water.

Questions:

1. Why do you think the disciples are asking for another sign, after seeing him feed the 5000 and walk on water?
2. Why do you think Jesus answered their "what will you do?" question with a "this is who I am" answer? (As in, "I am the bread of life"?)

Read **John 6:30-41**.

Jesus speaks of himself as the Bread of Life in response to the disciples mentioning the sign of manna in the wilderness. As you read the account of God's gift of manna in the book of Exodus, pay attention to similarities and differences between manna and Jesus.

Read **Exodus 16:1-32**.

Questions:

1. How does manna help us understand who Jesus is in our own lives?
2. How does manna differ from who Jesus is in our own lives?

It was not enough for Jesus to *call* himself the Bread of Life, he was also intent on *demonstrating* it. He feeds 5000+ in Jewish territory, and then 4000+ in *Gentile* territory. Here is Jesus demonstrating who he is for as Bread. In between these two accounts in Matthew, we have the story of Jesus and the Canaanite woman.

Read **Matthew 15:21-28**.

Questions:

1. If people hadn't been called "Canaanites" for hundreds of years, why do you think Matthew calls the woman by that name?
2. Why do you think Jesus doesn't just heal the woman's daughter? Why all the back and forth?

The word translated "dogs" for us in Matthew 15 is the word *kunarion*, which more accurately means "little doggies" or "puppies". It was, in their culture as well as ours, an image meant to evoke sympathy

and joy. In Greek culture, stories about a new age when everyone was fed at a “last age” feast included the image of puppies eating the crumbs that fell from the overflowing table.

Questions:

1. *What does it tell you that Jesus uses images pulled from pagan stories to communicate hope to this woman?*
2. *In what way did this woman demonstrate faith?*

Sending Out

Jesus is attached to bread in multiple ways throughout the Gospels. He is born in Bethlehem, which means “house of bread”. The first temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is around bread. Bread is central to the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray. “Bread of Life” is the first name Jesus gives himself in the “I am” statements in John. And bread is the lasting image Jesus leaves with his disciples and with us.

Read **Luke 22:7-19**.

Questions:

1. *Why do you think bread is such an important image for Jesus to leave with us?*
2. *In what ways have you experienced Jesus as “the Bread of Life?”*

Closing

Take a moment in silence to come before God and ask the question, *“What word or phrase or idea or moment does God want me to remember from this morning and carry with me this week?”*

Close with prayer.