



STUDY ONE

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Leaders note - you might want to finish this study by sharing in a simple communion of bread and juice to remind us of Jesus the Bread of Life. You could read John 6:35, 54-57 out loud as you eat and drink together.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

What are your top 2 favourite meals?

Share a time with your group when you were really really hungry - how did that hunger come to an end?

What is one thing you would like to be remembered for?

BACKGROUND TO OUR PASSAGE

Read Exodus 16:1-18. (You can keep reading to verse 36 if you are keen!)

Why were the Israelites grumbling?

They have short memories of the LORD's kindness to them in the Exodus! (See Exodus 12:31-14:31!) They have substituted thankfulness for God's provision with pride and coveting something else

What could the LORD have done in response to this grumbling - but what did He do?

How does this point to the character of our God?

God could have wiped them out for being so ungrateful! But instead, He graciously provides quail and bread from heaven to sustain them, to give them life in the desert. Our God is a God who graciously provides what we need, even in the face of our unworthiness and sinful pride. Praise be to our God!

What are the various ways that the Israelites responded to God's gracious provision?

Some were grateful and obeyed all of God's instructions to receive what he had provided, others were dissatisfied and wanted more, trying to store it away (v19-20), or gather some on the Sabbath (27-29)

THE PHYSICAL MIRACLE

Read John 6:1-15

What stands out to you in this account?

Get members to share their view of the miracle account

What is it that the crowds want from Jesus?

They want Jesus to satisfy their physical needs but performing more miracles like the ones he has already performed. They are focusing on the 'signs', not what the signs were pointing to (ie. Jesus and how he comes to satisfy all their deepest needs)

What is the significance of this miracle happening at the time of the Jewish Passover Festival? (Verse 4).

Jesus is about to fulfil the Passover by becoming the greater sacrifice of the first born son, and being the ultimate bread broken.

What is the significance of everyone having eaten their fill, and then there were leftovers?

(Note: 5000 men were there - these were likely heads of families, and so the crowd is probably more like 15-20 thousand).

The sign here is that Jesus can fulfil our needs beyond our hunger. The 12 baskets represent his provision for the 12 tribes of Israel, ie the full number of the people of God, whom the 12 disciples represent and whom will include Gentiles going forward.

JESUS' EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE – PART ONE

Read John 6:22-40

Why were the crowds looking for Jesus? (14-15, 26, 28)

They wanted to make him their military leader, their king, who could help overthrow the Romans and provide all they needed. They thought he could give them the definitive list of the things God wanted them to do to make sure they could earn their way to be right with Him.

How does Jesus challenge their perspective once they find him?

The bread they need is not an 'it' but a 'He', and the works that they ask for are not on a list, but in fact are just 1 - believing in the One whom God sent to bring salvation that was not earned but graciously given. As one author puts it: "Jesus hasn't come to bring manna that delays hunger and delays death, he himself is the bread that satisfies hunger and destroys death"

What is the comparison Jesus makes with Moses in these verses?

Moses provided bread from heaven, but Jesus is the true bread from heaven that brings eternal life

What is the comfort provided in verses 35-40?

All that the Father gives to Jesus will come to him, and he will never drive them away. He will not lose any one of them, but will raise them up on the last day. If Jesus has you, he will never let you go.

How can knowing these incredible promises make a difference to our lives right now?

Ask the group to share their perspective.

JESUS' EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE – PART TWO

Read John 6:41-59

Why do the Jews who had heard Jesus' explanation start grumbling? (And what does this remind you of?!)

They grumble because they can't believe that Jesus is who he says he is, that he is greater than Moses, and that he came down from heaven. 'Grumbling' is present in the account above in Exodus 16 - it is to be dissatisfied with the provision that God has given.

How are we prone to this sort of behaviour?

Ask the group to share how we can so easily complain in the face of our salvation in Jesus, and what that can look like in our lives.

What is the misunderstanding that is articulated in verse 52?

Misunderstanding is that Jesus was talking about cannibalism (this is what the Romans in the first century thought that Christians were doing when they gathered together, and one of the reasons they banned Christianity)

If Jesus is not being literal in verses 53-57, what does he mean?

To 'eat and drink Jesus' flesh and blood' is to so trust in him and his work done for us and his promises that we will let him be 'in us', like physical food and drink go 'in us' when we eat and drink them. Jesus dwells within us now by His Spirit given to us, as we also dwell ('abide') in him.

TAKING JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE WITH YOU

If someone asked you, 'What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the Bread of Life", what would you say?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



STUDY TWO

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

DISCUSSION STARTERS

What is the darkest place you have ever been?

Have you ever been 'kept in the dark' about some really important news or truth? How did you finally find out what was going on?

What struck you from last Sunday's sermon?

BACKGROUND TO OUR PASSAGE

Read Exodus 13:21-22.

How was God the light of his people in the Exodus?

God went ahead of his people as a pillar of fire during the night.

Read Isaiah 42:1-9

How was God going to provide 'a light for the Gentiles'?

He would send his Spirit-filled servant to be a light, to release captives from darkness. This servant would be God acting through a person. (See Luke 4:14-21 for this prophecy's fulfillment)

Read Isaiah 42:1-9

How was God going to provide 'a light for the Gentiles'?

He would send his Spirit-filled servant to be a light, to release captives from darkness. This servant would be God acting through a person. (See Luke 4:14-21 for this prophecy's fulfillment)

Read Zechariah 14:5b-7

What will happen when the LORD Himself comes on the final day?

When the LORD himself comes on the final day there will be no more darkness, only light (see Revelation 21:22-27 for this prophecy's complete fulfilment)

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Read John 1:1-13

List all the things said about Jesus being the light of the world.

Note: John 8 takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles, where there were four huge lamps lit in the temple's court of women, and where people celebrated through the night singing songs and carrying burning torches. In this context, Jesus speaks John 8:12.

Read John 8:12

Given all of the background above, what does Jesus mean when he declares, "I am the light of the world"? How does this metaphorical language convey a deeper spiritual truth?

Jesus is God with us to guide us through the darkness of uncertainty; He is the servant of the LORD to deliver us from the darkness of sin and depravity

In what ways does darkness symbolise sin, ignorance, or separation from God in the Bible? How does Jesus being the light counteract these aspects?

Hear the thoughts of the group.

What does it mean to follow Jesus according to John 8:12? How does following Jesus lead to a life free from spiritual darkness? (See also 1 John 5:5-7)

Jesus delivers us from the hold of darkness through our forgiveness of sin, and empowers us by His Spirit to say no to the darkness in our ongoing walk with God. The darkness is now no longer our natural domain, it is the land where we once lived and are urged not to revisit.

Reflect on the concept of light as a source of guidance and illumination. How does Jesus being the light of the world provide direction and clarity in our lives? (See Psalm 119:105)

Jesus leads us through this life by his Word and by His Spirit. We have clear direction - its towards Jesus - even though we may only see one step at a time, and can't necessarily see the pathway into the future.

Read John 9:1-41

How does Jesus demonstrate that He is the light of the world in his interaction with the blind man?

He opens blind eyes to see the world around him, and to see Him as his Saviour. The healing is an enacted parable of the spiritual truth that Jesus is the light of the world.

As this scene plays out, how do the Pharisees (who should have been the teachers of the light of God in the Scriptures) demonstrate that they are in the darkness?

They cannot see Jesus for who he truly is, even though they should know better with all of their learning from the Scriptures, and even though

TAKING JESUS THE LIGHT WITH YOU

Discuss in you group ways in which you can, individually and together,

- **walk in the light of Jesus, and**
- **shine His light into a dark world**

CLOSE IN PRAYER