

SESSION 18

JESUS SHOWED HIS GREAT POWER

The apostles saw what Jesus had done. Jesus had showed them his great power. They saw that Jesus had power over the wind and the sea. Only the Creator of the wind and the sea could have power over them. The men saw what Jesus had done and they were afraid because they saw how much power Jesus really had.

Then Mark wrote about what happened when their boat reached the other side of the lake. Jesus met a man there who had many, many evil spirits living in him. You can read in your Bible later about what happened. It is written in Mark 5:1-20. The evil spirits knew who Jesus really was. They called him “*Jesus, Son of the Most High God.*” And Jesus showed that he was much more powerful than Satan and his evil followers. Jesus healed the man and told the evil spirits to get out of him. He sent them into a group of 2000 pigs. Then the pigs ran into the lake and died. The people who lived there were very afraid of Jesus when they saw what he did. They wanted him to go away. The man who Jesus had freed from the evil spirits wanted to be with Jesus. But Jesus told him to go to tell his family what God had done for him.

Jesus went back over the Sea of Galilee. John wrote about what happened next.



JOHN 6:1-15

¹ After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. ² A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. ³ Then Jesus

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climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. ⁴ (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) ⁵ Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, “Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?”

⁶ He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip replied, “Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have enough money to feed them!”

⁸ Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up. ⁹ “There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?”

¹⁰ “Tell everyone to sit down,” Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.)

¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. ¹² After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, “Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.” ¹³ So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

¹⁴ When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, “Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!” ¹⁵ When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

Jesus saw that a huge crowd¹⁹⁹ of people was coming to see him. God’s story says that he went up on to a mountain with his *disciples*.²⁰⁰ Sometimes in the Bible, *disciples* means the twelve men Jesus had chosen. Sometimes it means other people who were following him around. It was just before the Jewish Passover festival. Remember that this was the time each year when the Jewish people remembered what God had done for them in Egypt? They remembered the time that God had saved them from death when they put blood around the doors of their houses. God had passed over the houses that had the blood on them. So each year, the Jewish people had a celebration²⁰¹ to remember the time God passed over them.

So Jesus and his disciples were sitting up on the mountain. Jesus saw a huge crowd of people coming. Philip was one of the disciples who was there with Jesus. Jesus asked Philip where they could buy food for all the people who were coming.

John wrote that Jesus already knew what was going to happen. He asked Philip about the food to *test him*. Jesus wanted the disciples to learn more about who he really is. He wanted them to know that they could ask him for help. He wanted to show them that he could take care of anything. But Philip did not remember that. He said that even a lot of money would not buy enough food for all

199. **crowd** - a very, very large group of people

200. **disciples** - the men who were close followers of Jesus

201. **celebration** - a time when people get together to remember something good that has happened

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the people. Then Andrew said there was a young boy with five small bread loaves²⁰² and two fish. But Andrew said that this little bit of food would not be enough to feed all of the people.

Jesus said that all the people should sit down on the grass. God's story says that there were about 5000 men there. But there were also women and children there. So it was a huge crowd of people.

Jesus thanked God his Father for the food they were going to eat. Then he took the bread loaves and *distributed them to the people*. Distributed means that he passed it out to people. Then he did the same thing with the fish. He gave people as much as they wanted to eat. After everyone had eaten all they could eat, there was still a lot of food left over. Jesus was only given a small amount of food, but he was able to keep giving out food until all the people had eaten. Jesus could do that because he is God - he could make more food where there was not enough food before.

The crowd were amazed by what Jesus had done. They said that Jesus must be God's Prophet. They wanted Jesus to be their king. Jesus knew why the people wanted him to be their king. He knew that most of the people only wanted him to give them food and to heal people who were sick. They did not want a real relationship with God. And they did not believe that Jesus had come to save them from their debt of sin before God. God had special work for Jesus to do. God had a plan and Jesus was a part of that plan. Jesus knew that being a king on earth was not part of God's plan. So he went away and climbed up a mountain by himself.

John wrote about what happened that night.



JOHN 6:16-21

¹⁶ That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. ¹⁷ But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. ¹⁸ Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. ¹⁹ They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, ²⁰ but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" ²¹ Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

After all the people had eaten, the disciples waited for Jesus on the shore. But it got dark and he still did not come. So the disciples got into a boat and went back across the lake to Capernaum. A big storm came up and *the sea grew very rough*.²⁰³ They rowed²⁰⁴ the boat for a long time to try to get across the lake.

Then they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He came near their boat and they were afraid. They were afraid because people can't walk on water, but Jesus was walking on the water. They could see how powerful he really was and they were afraid. But Jesus told them not to be afraid. They brought him in to the boat and then the boat came safely to the shore.

202. loaves - pieces of bread that are shaped and baked and then cut up for eating

203. rough - the sea had a lot of waves going up and down and from side to side

204. rowed - pushed the boat along with paddles or oars

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The next morning, the crowd from the day before came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. They asked him how he got there. They knew that he did not go in the boat with his disciples.



JOHN 6:22-35

²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. ²³

Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. ²⁵ They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷ But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.”

²⁸ They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

²⁹ Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? ³¹ After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. ³³ The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

³⁵ Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Jesus knew why the people were looking for him. He knew it was because they wanted him to make more food for them. They wanted to see him show his power. They asked him how they could do those things too. But Jesus did not send them away. He tried to help them to understand the truth. Jesus said that they should believe in the One that God had sent. He was talking about himself. He wanted them to know that he was the Son of God and that God had sent him.

The people said that they would believe him if he made them more food to eat. They said that Moses gave their ancestors bread from heaven. This was the bread called manna that God had given the Israelites in the wilderness. Jesus told them that it was God who gave the manna, not Moses. Then Jesus said that now God wanted to give them *the true bread from heaven*. He said that the true bread

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from heaven was *the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*. Jesus was talking about himself.

Jesus said “*I am the bread of life*.” He said that any person who believed in him would never be hungry or thirsty again.

When God first created people, they had a real and close relationship with him. When people are separated from God, they feel a need to be close to God. Even if they don’t understand it, people need God. He is the only one who can really take care of people and really love people. He is their Father and their Creator. When people are separated from God, it is like they are hungry and thirsty for God. If people do not eat or drink, they will be hungry and thirsty and then they will die. If people are separated from God, they will die too. So that is what Jesus was saying when he called himself the bread of life. He meant that if people believed in him they would not be hungry or thirsty for God again. He was the One that God had sent to bring life to the world.

Mark describes how one day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law came from Jerusalem to see Jesus.



MARK 7:1-7

¹ One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. ⁴ Similarly, they don’t eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, “Why don’t your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony.”

⁶ Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

‘These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’

The Pharisees and the scribes saw that some of his disciples did not wash their hands before eating their bread. The Pharisees and religious Jews had many laws about washing. They had very strict²⁰⁵ laws about washing their hands before eating any food. Mark explained these laws on washing.

So the Pharisees and religious experts from Jerusalem saw that the men who were following Jesus had disobeyed one of their Jewish laws. They asked Jesus why his disciples did not follow *our age-old tradition*. A tradition is something that people do because people have been doing that same thing

205. strict - a strong law that should not be broken or disobeyed

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for many years. The traditions that the Pharisees were talking about were laws that they had made up themselves. These were things that they made up and followed. They thought that if they did that, then God would be pleased with them.

Jesus called them *hypocrites*. ‘Hypocrites’ are people who say they will do something and then they don’t do it. The religious Jews were trying to make God happy with them by following many laws. But they did not really want to have a relationship with God. They did not understand who God really is. They did not believe all the things that God had said. They were acting like God was just an idol. So Jesus called them hypocrites. He spoke some of the words of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah wrote about people who say that they love God but don’t really mean it.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowd of people who were there.



MARK 7:14-23

¹⁴ Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand. ¹⁵ It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.”

¹⁷ Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. ¹⁸ “Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? ¹⁹ Food doesn’t go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer.” (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God’s eyes.)

²⁰ And then he added, “It is what comes from inside that defiles you. ²¹ For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.”

Jesus asked the crowd to come and listen to him. He talked about eating and drinking. He talked about that because the Jews had many laws about eating and drinking. They had many laws about what food they could eat, how they should cook it, who should cook it, and how they should eat it. Jesus said that food or drink could not make someone good or evil. He said that what goes into a person from outside could not defile²⁰⁶ them. Jesus said that it is *what comes from inside that defiles you*.

He meant that people are sinners because of what comes out of our hearts. Jesus was telling the religious Jews that they could not escape their sin. They tried to follow very strict laws about washing and eating and drinking. But following those laws could not change who they really were inside. They were born into the world of sin and death. Jesus said that people do evil things and think evil things all the time. And they do those evil things because of who they really are inside. Jesus was trying to get the religious Jews to see who they really were. They were trying to follow God’s laws

206. **defile** - to make something dirty or not acceptable to God

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and all their other laws. But Jesus said that this was not going to help them. They were evil inside. He wanted them to know that they were sinners and that they needed God to rescue them.

Luke recorded a story that Jesus had told. Jesus used stories when he was teaching people. In English, we call these stories ‘parables.’ A parable is a story that is told as an example of something. Jesus told this parable to some people who thought that they were righteous. These people thought that God would be happy with them because of the good things that they did. They thought that they were good and that everyone else was bad.



LUKE 18:9-14

⁹ Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰ “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! ¹² I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’

¹⁴ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Jesus told the parable about two men who went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed to God. He thanked God that he was not like other people. He said other people were sinners and that he was not. He saw the tax collector there, and he said to God that he was not like that tax collector who was a sinner. The tax collector stood a long way away. He was too ashamed to look up when he prayed to God. He was very, very sad because he knew that he was a sinner. He knew that he was separated from God because of his sin. He knew that only God could save him. So he asked God to save him.

At the end of his parable, Jesus said: *“I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God.”* Jesus was explaining what God thinks about these two different kinds of people. Both of the men in the story were sinners. All people have been born into the world of sin and death and all people disobey God’s perfect laws. So what was different about the two men in Jesus’ story?

Jesus said that the tax collector was justified,²⁰⁷ but that the Pharisee was not justified. The tax collector understood the truth about God. He knew that he could never follow God’s laws even if he really tried. He was very, very sad about his sin. He knew that he was separated from God because of it. So he asked God to help him. The tax collector had a real and true relationship with God. He knew who God really is and what God really thinks. He believed that all the things that God had said were true. So Jesus said that he was *justified* – that he did not have to pay for his sin with death, and that he was in a right relationship with God.

207. **justified** - to be put into a right relationship with God again because he has paid for your sin

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

The Pharisee was a man who tried very hard to follow all of the Jewish laws. So he did not believe that he was a sinner. He did not believe that he was separated from God by his sin. He did not come to God in the way that God told people to come. He did not have a real and true relationship with God. He thought that he could follow all of God's perfect laws. But that is impossible. Jesus said that the Pharisee was not justified. He did not believe the truth about God or about himself. So he could not have a relationship with God. He would have to pay for his sins.

?

1. Why was Jesus able to stop the big storm on the Sea of Galilee?
2. What did Jesus mean when he asked the men in the boat, "Do you still have no faith?"
3. What was Jesus trying to show Philip when he asked him about getting food for the huge crowd of people?
4. Why did Jesus say, "I am the bread of life"?
5. In the parable that Jesus told, he said that the Pharisee was not justified. What did he mean?
6. Why was the tax collector 'justified'?



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