

Life Groups: "Breaking Bread" (9-3-2017)

Introduction: We are preparing to launch Life Groups next week, so today we are going to use John 6 as a guide to small groups.

1) The weary need rest

Context: Jesus & his disciples have just received word that John the Baptist has been beheaded

Mark 6:31 (ESV)

And Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

Notes: Sometimes you just need a place to go with "your people" to get some rest! The road gets tired and weary, and we can become discouraged. And along the way, we need to retreat together and rest with Jesus.

(Our Home group in Spring Hill, during a low point in my life)

Life Group Principal #1: A place of rest for the weary

2) Feeding the multitude

John 6:5-6 (ESV)

(5) Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" (6) He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

Note: We need to eat, Jesus sees that need and wants to feed us, and he has a plan!

John 6:10-12 (ESV)

(10) Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. (11) Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. (12) And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost."

Note: In the midst of the miracle, don't miss the process. Jesus involves the disciples in his plan, they feed others, and there is plenty left for them too! Notice this is a physical need that is met.

(Story about Thanksgiving last year)

Life Group Principal #2: Serve together & Eat Together (in other words, learn the value of work & play)

3) Walking on water

John 6:18-19 (ESV)

(18) The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. (19) When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.

Note: Life can get unusually rough, and even take you by surprise. Sometimes the very thing that is actually Jesus walking towards you can look terrifying!!

John 6:20-21 (ESV)

(20) But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." (21) Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Note: We need reminders to not be afraid, to not row alone, and to invite Jesus in with gladness. And who knows He might even surprise you with a miracle!

It's sad to see how often people wait till they are in the midst of tragedy & difficulty and then look around for help.

Life Group Principal #3: When life is hard, you need people in your boat (especially ones who will invite Jesus into the boat too)

4) The Bread of Life

John 6:26-27 (ESV)

(26) Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. (27) Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

Note: The folks from the previous day have now followed Jesus to the other side of the sea, and they just want their belly's full again. Let's watch this story unfold . . .

The people begin a discussion with him about Moses (they are looking for manna from heaven) . . .

John 6:34-35, 41 (ESV)

(34) They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." (35) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst . . . (41) So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

Note: They only wanted Jesus on their terms, not His terms. They were missing the deeper food he offered . . .

John 6:53-55, 58 (ESV)

(53) So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (54) Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (55) For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink . . . (58) This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

Note: We need to feed on Jesus. We need to taste & see that the Lord is good. Feeding on God's Word together is an essential part of our life groups. Notice that while their desire is misplaced, their hunger for daily bread is not.

Our Life groups give us a place to digest the Word together. Discussing questions like: What does it mean? How does it apply to my life?

Life Group Principal #4: A place to feast on God's Word together. We can have all the food, fun, and even a shelter from the storm, but if we lack Jesus and the life found in His Words, then we are just a social gathering!

5) Spiritual Words - making sense of Jesus**John 6:60-61 (ESV)**

(60) When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" (61) But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"

Note: Jesus takes time to sit & wrestle with their questions. He will talk about the hard things. And he gives answers . . .

John 6:63 (ESV)

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Note: Notice he didn't just leave them hanging with that whole eat my flesh, and drink my blood thing. The people who will take the time to sit with him & wrestle through the hard things, will find answers!

John 6:64-66 (ESV)

(64) But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) (65) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." (66) After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

Note: Notice who all is invited – doubters, quitters, and betrayers (we have to learn to trust that some of the hardest people to “do life with” are good for us – and we are good for them).

You see: Who knows who really is going to bail out? Only Jesus! You would have thought Peter, or Matthew, or even James & John would, but not Judas – Jesus trusted him with the money he must be solid!

John 6:67-69 (ESV)

(67) So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" (68) Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, (69) and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Note: Life groups aren't perfect, and neither is life with Jesus, but where else are we gonna go? He has the words of eternal life, let's hang with others who believe that too!

(Story of wrestling – why do dads wrestle with their kids?)

Life Group Principal #5: A place to Wrestle & Grow**Conclusion: Life Group Principals . . .**

- 1) A place of rest for the weary
- 2) Serve together & Eat Together (in other words, learn the value of work & play)
- 3) When life is hard, you need people in your boat (especially ones who will invite Jesus into the boat too)
- 4) A place to feast on God's Word together. We can have all the food, fun, and even a shelter from the storm, but if we lack Jesus and the life found in His Words, then we are just a social gathering!
- 5) A place to Wrestle & Grow