

Notes for Small Group Bible Study WB 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024

*Pastor Paul began with what he called his pre-talk talk.*

*Ephesians 1:15-20*

*Apostle Paul planted a church in Ephesus and was passionate about their spiritual welfare. In this letter he begins by telling them how much and how often He lifts them to God, His purpose and His power. He expresses his deep passion for the church and how he longs for them to know Jesus better. How much time do we spend each day being passionate for the welfare of others and praying for them?*

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John 6:26-36

- What is your favourite bread?
- How do you react to the smell of freshly baked bread?

Bread is an important foodstuff. It meets our basic and essential need for energy. 99% of households buy bread of some kind. We get through 12 million loaves every day in the UK. It is thought that men are likely to eat more bread than women.

Bread is essential for life and is referred to significantly in scripture. In the Old Testament God tells Moses that He is I AM. In the New Testament Jesus calls Himself I AM referring to 7 different titles. Today we are looking at I AM the Bread of Life.

In Genesis 18:6 Abraham is visited by three strangers so he tells Sarah to quickly make some fresh bread to give them something to sustain them on their journey.

God sends Manna to the Hebrews, fresh every day as they wander through the desert.

In the Tabernacle and later in the Temple there was 'Shew Bread', otherwise known as The Bread of the Presence. It is referred to in Leviticus 24. This was bread that God instructed had to be placed in the Temple at the beginning of every week. It served as a special memorial portion acknowledging that God is the source of life sustaining them as they pass through the wilderness. It was also a

sign of thanks to God for saving them from slavery in Egypt. The Shew Bread was replenished each week after only the priests were allowed to eat it.

In 1 Samuel, when David was running away from Saul and was very hungry, we read that he went into the Temple and ate the Bread of the Presence.

In Jesus' time grain was stored for a long time and did not rot so even in hard times they always had grain to make bread.

Bread was vital and Jesus aligned Himself with the Temple Bread. Those He spoke to would have realised this reference.

- If Jesus was saying He was like the bread in the Temple, what do you think that meant to the ones listening to Him?
- When you pray the Lord's prayer what do you think of when you say 'Give us today our daily bread'?

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray He said 'Give us today our daily bread.' It was physical and spiritual sustenance that He was taking about.

How often do we feel full up after a meal but not satisfied? Bread does not just fill us it satisfies us too. Bread does the job.

Jesus turned bread and fish into enough food to feed 5,000 men as well as women and children and then went away into the hills. The people were searching for Him but he told them they were not looking for Him but they were wanting another miracle then another and another. They wanted Him to provide food so that they did not have to. They wanted Him to do things for them and in a miraculous way. They were not searching to get to know Him but to see what else He could do for them.

- How do you search for Jesus, and what do you expect to find at the end of your search?

When the Hebrews were in the desert the mana that came from heaven only lasted for a day at a time. Each new day required another provision of mana. But Jesus says that He sustains forever and if we don't 'eat the bread of life' spiritual death will follow. Jesus is to the soul what bread is to the body.

- What do you think 'eat the bread of life' means?

The bread in the temple is a sign pointing to God: the true Bread of Eternal Life coming down from heaven [like the mana in the desert] and giving each life

something everlasting and satisfying. In spite of this teaching the people craved for the daily filling from bread.

We need to spend time with Jesus to know Him but the people wanted Him to be like a 'sweet shop.... Pick and Mix]

The Bible is the story of people's attempts to know God and the story of God's desire to be known. It shows His intent to draw closer to His people.

Jesus revealed who God is. He wants us to know Him more. We can never have enough of God in our hearts. We need to be asking ourselves what more of Jesus do we want.

- What more of Jesus do you think we need in the church.