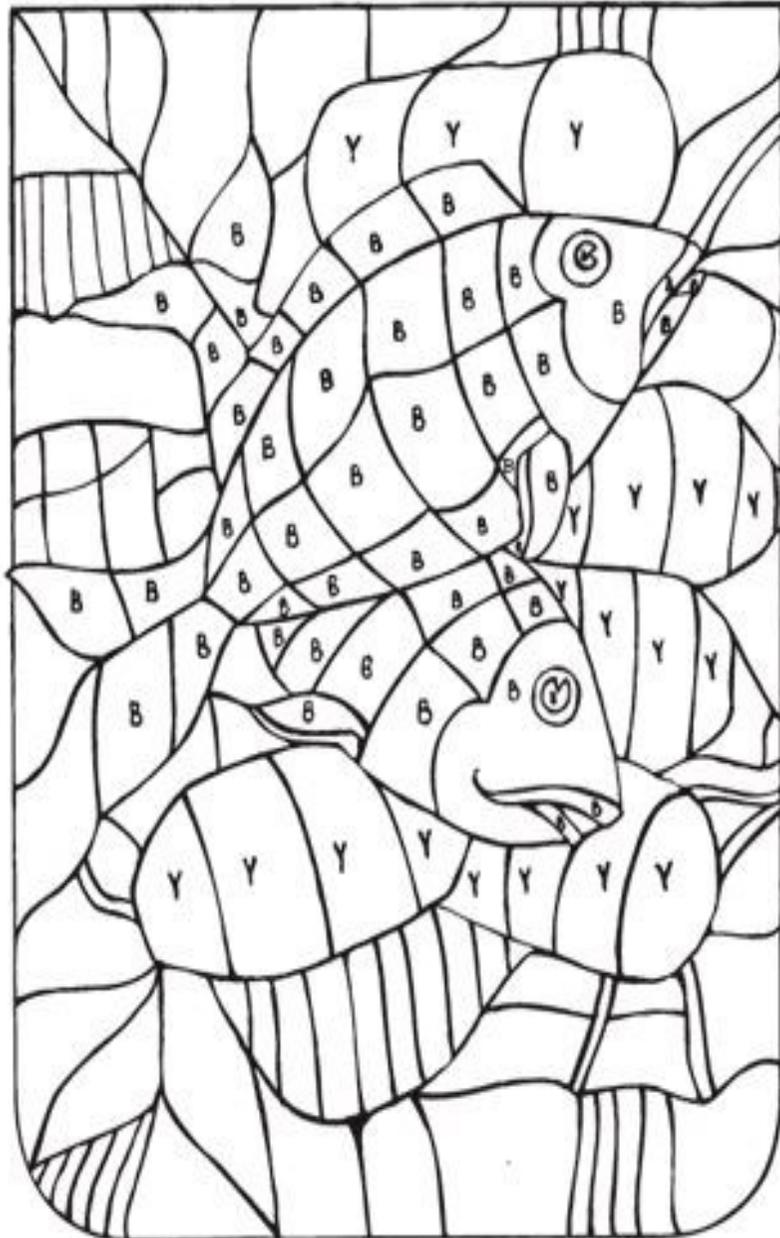


What's for Lunch?

Read the story of the boy who gave his lunch away that's found in John 6. Then make a picture of that lunch by coloring the Y spaces yellow and the B spaces brown. You may color the leftover spaces with your favorite color.



9th Sunday of Trinity
Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and
faithful,
for your glory's sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2 Samuel 11:1-15

OT page 293

Ephesians 3:14 - 21

NT page 190

John 6:1 - 21

NT page 94

(NIV used in sermon preparation).

The Spirit of God has obviously been at work at Immanuel over the past months ~ and we give thanks for all that is being accomplished. Much that has been experienced has been challenging and I am sure that the challenges will continue. As we are challenged and honour God we will continue to receive blessing and as we prayed in the Collect we should expect that God will revive His church in our day!

Issues that we are facing have crept up on us over time and we need to be alert so that does not happen to us again! We need to learn from God's Word and, together, prayerfully continue to respond to it. God wants us to know His Love, receive it and share it with others. We do that through knowing Jesus and making Him known. That happens with each of us growing in faith as we recognise God with us..

So what does today's Word have for us as individuals and as a church this morning?

Certainly there are clear warning signs that we can be distracted from God's work very easily and then things can, and do, go awry!

We can be tied to routine! Note that Samuel tells us "In the spring at the time when kings go off to war...." but we can also move away or change elements of routine! In the Spring of this particular account the king's men and whole Israelite army went out under the command of Joab but King David remained behind. This

account suggests that if we change routine then there should be a reason for doing so! Why? Because David, home alone, not only became distracted but was also led to covet his distraction ~ the wife of another man! He did not just think about her beauty but sought her out and took what was not his and she became pregnant. A series of events then unfolded in a way that David calculated would occur because of the way his servants showed loyalty and behaved towards Him as King.

It is important that you and I do not just rely on the readings we hear at Sunday worship! If we do that then we do not get the full picture! Further reading in this instance tells us that David planned and calculated to be rid of her husband and make her his own wife!

There is a difference between being calculating and having a strategy i.e. for ministry. What David did was to benefit him (he put himself first) and not to honour God.

All David's actions are sadly common to human nature and confusing to all who end up in anyway involved ~ but take note ~ at the end of the account we are told that David's actions "*displeased the Lord*" (v.27b).

Now take a look at the passage from Ephesians (NT page 190). Spend a few minutes reading through.

Paul talks of kneeling before the Father ~ why does he do this?

See what Paul prays ~ he prays that as God's children we will be

1. Strengthened with power through His Holy Spirit in our inner being,
2. rooted and established in love, and
3. together, with all the Lord's holy people to grasp how wide, and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.
4. To know this love that surpasses knowledge ~
5. to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
6. to know that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. Always this is to bring glory to Jesus and the church!

Can anyone share how they experience the greatness of God?

What are the things that bring you closer to God or make it difficult to recognise He is with you?

How can we help each other to walk more closely with God and share His Love?

These are questions to regularly hold in prayer to check our growth and health in relationship with God.

Finally we look at our Gospel today ~ (NT page 94)

1. What attitudes and concerns does Jesus show for the people who had followed Him?
2. How does Jesus test His disciples?
3. How do the disciples respond. ~ Which response would you make?
4. Who shows their practical, human nature and who shows trust in the light of the apparently impossible?

Jesus responds to both the people and His disciples and they all witness a miracle of a display of God's love. So how might you have responded? The crowd began to respond to the realisation that Jesus could be a prophet ~ and a particularly special one ~ promised throughout their scripture.

We are told that Jesus withdrew to be by himself ~ He was aware that there were plans to take Him by force and the people's realisation of who he might be would antagonise the authorities. If Jesus needed to withdraw and be refreshed then it is certainly something we need to do as His disciples today ~ to give time to our relationship with the Father.

We are told that the disciples went down to the shore that evening and got into a boat ~ heading across the lake for Capernaum. A strong wind welled up and the waters became very rough. They had rowed about half way across the lake when they saw Jesus approaching ~ walking on the water! They were naturally afraid of this apparition but Jesus reassured them and once they had calmed down and let Jesus into the boat they reached the shore and there destination. That tells us something!

Have you ever been frightened or bemused by God's power? How have you dealt with your experience?

We are part of God's church today ~ we have to be prepared, expecting God to work in us and through us enabling us to share His love in this place and He will revive His church, here, today! Amen.