

Children's Talk: Samosa Sunday 23/3/14

Teaching Point: God Cares and Provides for His Children

Scripture: Ruth 1

Visual Aids:

Different Types of Bread: White Bread, Pitta, Flat Bread, Naan; Chapatti etc.

Can anyone name these different breads?

Which type of bread do you normally eat?

People from different backgrounds and in different countries eat different types of bread - in Pakistan & India people often eat Chapattis, whilst in the Middle East they will eat flat breads. (If you have more examples . . .)

Imagine living in a place whose name means "House of Bread." You would think there would always be bread there! And normally there was - but the Bible tells us of a time when there was no bread in the "House of Bread!" Bethlehem was the place known as The House of Bread and there was a famine there. (Do you know what a famine is?)

I don't know how long the famine had been going on for, but finally one man decided he had to take his wife and his two sons away. They needed to eat, if they stayed in Bethlehem he was sure they would die of starvation. They set off on their long journey East in the hope that they would find a new life and food in the land of Moab.

We really don't know very much about the man at all - except that he died while in Moab! His widow was left with her two sons, alone in a foreign land. The two boys were an age to get married and so they did, one married a girl called Ruth and the other a girl called Orpah. But this was a problem God had clearly told His people they were not to marry people from other nations who did not worship Him. God loves us and He knows what is best for us, that is why He tells us the things we can do and the things we can't. He knows that when we disobey Him, it is harmful for us.

We know that Naomi (the mother), and her two sons and their wives seemed to do fine for about 10 years, but then oh dear the two sons died!

Naomi was very upset, but she was also angry with God! He had allowed the famine, He had allowed her husband to die and now her two sons died as well. She felt so alone, a widow in a foreign land, so she finally she decided to leave Moab and go home - she wanted to go back to Bethlehem, she had heard that the famine was over and there was now food.

She wasn't alone! Ruth and Orpah both started out on the journey with her - they were prepared to leave their families and their homes to go and live in the House of Bread with Naomi. But Naomi would have none of it! She told them they ought to go home and find new husbands in Moab.

Orpah decided to do just that, but Ruth said "No way! I'm going with you, your people will be my people and your God my God!" Naomi could not persuade Ruth to turn back at all, and so reluctantly allowed her to come with her.

When Naomi arrived back in Bethlehem - can you remember what it means? Yes House of Bread, people were shocked to see her! They could hardly recognise her and by now Naomi was so bitter at all that she had suffered that I can imagine her spitting out the words; "Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara - for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me!"

Was it really God who had dealt bitterly with her? Or was it their own mistakes? Sometimes when things go wrong in our lives we want to blame God - but the Bible tells us that God is good and He doesn't deal bitterly with people.

Naomi was so bitter that she didn't even see the gift that God had given her in Ruth, for she went on to say "I went away full, but I've come back empty!" She meant she had gone to Moab with a husband and two sons, but had come back a widow with no sons. No one could persuade her that things were not as she saw them.

God had not dealt bitterly with Naomi, even in the bad choices she and her husband had made, God was still lovingly looking after her. He brought Naomi and Ruth back to Bethlehem (House of) just at the beginning of the barley harvest - there would be bread that year! He had a plan for Ruth - she had been an outsider, but God welcomed her in His family, and even more, she married one of Naomi's relatives and she became the great grandmother of King David and even better her name is mentioned in Jesus' family tree!

God does care and provide for you, even if you can't see it, He is looking after you. Perhaps you are not worried about having no food - maybe you are, just as Ruth learned to trust in God, I hope you will too.