



Pentecost

20th Confirmation Class Lesson

Supplies Needed: Notebooks; Handout; one 8.5x11 piece of copy paper per student; TV with DVD player; Nooma: Tomato DVD by Rob Bell

OPENING Activity: Pseudo-Origami

TELL

- I am passing out to each of us a piece of copier paper
- Now that we all have a piece of paper, I'm going to give you instructions on how to fold this paper. I need you to follow the instructions as closely as possible.
- So first, I need everyone to close your eyes and keep them shut [this is so the students don't copy each other's folding techniques].
- Also, no talking. Just folding.
- Ready? Here we go.
- Fold your paper in half.
- Now fold it in half again.
- Rip off the top right hand corner.
- Now fold the paper in half one more time.
- And now, rip off the upper corner of your paper.
- You may open your eyes and compare your paper with fellow classmates.

ASK

- So, did we all get the same result? (most likely not)
- Why not? Didn't we all hear the same words? (the words were ambiguous)
- Do you think the results would have been different if our eyes had been open? How? Why?

TELL

- In one of the stories we're reading today, there is a pretty impressive attempt that's made to communicate with others.
- But no matter how impressive the attempt, there's still differing results.
- One thing that helps us to hear better is by asking God to help us to see and hear how God sees and hears.
- Let's do that now.

OPENING PRAYER

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK REVIEW

We were to think about what doubts we have about God? About Jesus? About the stories we've read and studied?

REVIEW

- Themes and concepts of the stories we've talked about recently in class:
 - Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane asking that God "remove this cup." God does not remove the cup. Therefore Jesus allows himself to be arrested by the Jewish authorities. Jesus is betrayed by Judas, abandoned by the disciples and denied by Peter. At this point in the story, Jesus' obedience to God's call is detrimental to his well-being.
 - Jesus is found not guilty by Pilate and by Herod, but he is beaten and mocked. However, due to fears of the crowd, Pilate sentences Jesus to death. We discussed two perspectives of why Jesus was crucified: 1. He died for our sins. 2. He died because of our sins.
 - Jesus is crucified. He is lifted up on the cross. We talked about how habits are formed by repetition. The more we repeat a habit, the harder it is to break the habit. Jesus challenges these habits by saying "Follow me."
 - Jesus is Resurrected. Jesus is resurrected because Jesus says yes to God's will, which includes surrendering to be crucified. Two perspectives we talked about regarding Resurrection: 1. Even in death, if we invite God in, then there is still hope and life. 2. Resurrection is a transition, a springboard for new things to come.

TELL

- We've been talking for the last 6 classes, now, about Jesus' last week of ministry.
- We're now going to watch a Nooma video called Tomato, where Rob Bell talks about crucifixion, resurrection, false selves and seeds.
- Some Nooma videos have Rob Bell just mostly talking to us with something easy to understand happening in the background. This is not one of those Noomas. Which is unfortunate, because what he's talking about is really good stuff, but is easily missed if you're more focused on figuring out what's happening.
- Because of this, I'm going to tell you what's happening so that you can focus more on what Bell's saying.
- There's a man with a pink umbrella. Bell talks about false selves in the video. The man with the pink umbrella is a representation of those false selves. He keeps telling people what to do, and often, they do it.
- Listen closely when Bell talks about seeds.

WATCH Nooma: Tomato

ASK

Rob Bell says "If we don't eat, then we don't live. And so this food, this dead food, gives us life. And actually, the more recently food has been living, the more life it gives us. Fresh food is better for us. This actually explains the nutritional deficiencies of a twinkie. A twinkie can't give life because it was never really living."

- When we talked about the Lord's Supper, do you remember what Jesus said the bread represented? (His body)
- Please excuse the grossness of the question: If Jesus is dead *and* resurrected, how fresh a food do think that is? (pretty fresh!)

Rob Bell says, "Our survival, our sustenance, our life, is dependent upon the death of another living thing."

- What dies so that we may live? (all sorts of plants and animals; going back to the Lord's Supper – Jesus too)
- Does this idea make you at all uncomfortable? Why/why not?

Rob Bell says, "If we want more tomatoes to make more salsa, we have to plant more tomato seeds. Generally, we bury things that are dead. But not a seed."

- Was Jesus buried?
- Have you ever thought of Jesus as a seed?
- If we do think of Jesus as a seed, what kind of plant do you think grows out of him? (Lots of strange answers can happen here. A good generic answer would be a "Jesus tree." My favorite answer from a student was, "A Jesus Watermelon?")
- And what kind of seeds would that plant then produce? (more Jesus [Watermelon] seeds)

TELL

- A thing to realize about seeds: When a seed turns into a plant, there is no more seed left.
- If you dig up an oak tree, there is no acorn still at the bottom of the tap root.
- Or, just like with a caterpillar turning into a butterfly – there's no caterpillar left.
- Crucifixion is the death of Jesus' seed-self.
 - When we follow Jesus, then we are led to the cross so that our seed-self will die too
 - Not in the same way as Jesus did (it won't be a physical death), but it will be a painful/hard/difficult thing to let our false selves/seed-selves die.
- But, then, because our seed-self died, in its place, we grow into the truth of who God has made us to be.
- This seems extreme, but it needs to be said: We can't be both the seed and the plant.
 - It just doesn't work that way.
- In a minute we're going to talk about the birth of the Jesus tree aka the Body of Christ or, the Church.
- But first...

SNACK

READ

Matthew 28 – The Great Commission

18 After his resurrection, Jesus appeared and said to the disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Luke 24 – Jesus’ Ascension

46 and Jesus said to the disciples, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." 50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Acts 2 Pentecost (from The Message – edited for clarity and length)

1 When the day of Pentecost came, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot along with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as Jesus’ brothers 2 were all together in one place and were constantly devoting themselves to prayer. 3 Then suddenly from the sky there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. The Holy Spirit was with them and spread among them like wild fire. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were spiritual Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound of the wind the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard the disciples speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking ignorant Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power in our own native language?"

12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

41 Others, however, by the end of the day, decided to join the disciples. 3000 joined that day.

TELL

First, two “fun facts”

1. Pentecost is Greek for 50. Meaning 50 days from the Last Supper. Tradition has it that Jesus ascended 40 days after his resurrection. This means there were probably about 7 days after the Ascension when the disciples stayed together and prayed. This isn’t all that important, but fun to know.

2. Pentecost is known as the birth of the Church. The Greek word that we use the word Church for is *ecclesia*, the Hebrew word is *kahal*. Both words simply mean “an assembly.”

ASK

- In verse 19 and 20 of the Matthew passage, what does Jesus tell the disciples to do (go and make disciples)?
- In verse 20, what do you think Jesus means when he says, “I am with you always”? (just like the dna of a seed is implanted into the plant that grows from it, so is Jesus implanted into the plant that he is giving birth to)

- In the Luke passage, verse 47, is Jesus telling the disciples to do something different than he does in the Matthew passage? (no, not really. In the Luke passage, Jesus is simply explaining what “make disciples” looks like)
- In the Luke passage, verse 49, what does Jesus tell the disciples to do first, before they proclaim what they’ve seen? (wait to be clothed by power on high)
- In the Acts passage, verse 1 & 2, are the disciples being obedient to Jesus’ command? (yes) How? (by gathering together and praying together)
- Up to this point, of the groups of people surrounding Jesus that we’ve talked about, there’s only one group represented. Which group is that? (the disciples)
- Crucifixion and Resurrection filter out the crowd and Pharisees and leave only the disciples. With just the disciples left, what then happens to the disciples in the Acts passage, verse 4? What do the disciples receive? (God’s Holy Spirit)
- With the power of the Holy Spirit, what are the disciples then able to do? (speak the language of everyone that is present)
- The word disciple means “student.” Are the disciples studying Jesus anymore? (No, not really)
- What are they doing instead? (teaching/witnessing)
- So, once the disciples are freed from the crowd-and-Pharisee tendencies (seed-selves) by going through the crucifixion and resurrection, then they are no longer students, but teachers. As teachers, they are being sent out. And that’s what the word, “apostle” means: Sent out.
- Who are the apostles sent out to? (the crowd and the Pharisees)
- And what is the response of the crowd and the Pharisees? (Some join, others sneer)
- Does this seem like a familiar pattern? (yes) Where have we seen it before? (in the Jesus stories)

TELL

- When we choose to follow Jesus, when we choose to be a disciple of Jesus, that means we are embarking on a journey of self-discovery that eventually leads to letting go of our false-selves (tendencies portrayed by the crowd and Pharisees).
- In place of the false-self, we grow into our true selves.
- Our true selves showcase God in ways that are amazing and exciting, just like Jesus’ ministry was.
- The story of Pentecost shows how the disciples turned apostles are living into their true selves.
- We’re not made to be disciples or apostles on our own.
- This is why the Church exists. Another way to think of the Church is as the Jesus tree.
- In our next class, we’ll talk more about the Church.

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

What do you think the Church is? What do you think the Church is supposed to do? Do you think the Church is doing what it is supposed to do? What do you think is your role in the church?

CLOSING PRAYER – ask for prayer requests and give time during prayer for students to pray.