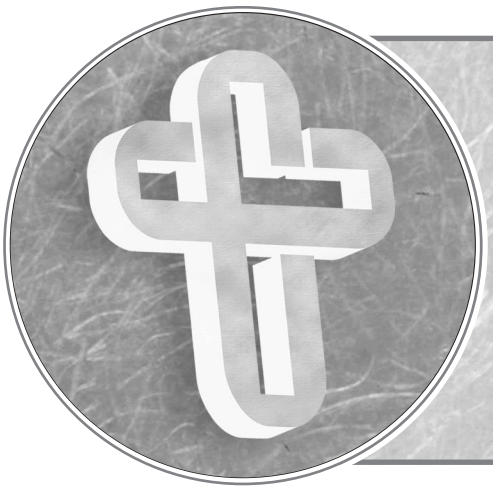


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JULY 26 2025

misunderstood

Scripture Story: John 6:22-42; Matthew 15:1, 2; Mark 7:1-23.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 41; 42.
Key Text: John 6:42.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

To say that Jesus was misunderstood is truly an understatement. The Bible record of His life during the formative years of childhood is largely silent. However, given how much people misread Him during the three short years of His public ministry, could His childhood have been any different?

In John 6 and Matthew 15 we get a glimpse of the Savior in hand-to-hand combat with Satan as He sought to unfold the deeper meaning of His life and ministry. Following the awesome feeding of the 5,000, crowds flocked to Him in search of more "bread." But when Jesus declared that He was the "Bread of Life," sent down from God to feed humanity's hungry soul, He was met with doubt and disdain. The people looked for a conquering king, a deliverer from Roman oppression. When Jesus didn't play along, they began to view Him with suspicion and disdain. In short, they were looking at Jesus through the eyes of their desires. If they had studied the Scriptures, they would have understood Jesus and His mission.

While the ordinary people struggled to comprehend Jesus and His mission, the Pharisees knew the Old Testament prophecies that validated Jesus' life and ministry, but they too couldn't "see" Jesus because of their desire for power and their refusal to repent.

The truth at the core of this week's lesson is this: When we look at Jesus through the prism of our selfish drives and ambitions, we are bound to misunderstand Him. This week, special emphasis must be placed on the need to come to Jesus with an open heart and mind, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the Christ to us. Once revealed, we must accept all of who Jesus is if we are to become all of whom God created us to be—children of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Learn that we have a unique opportunity to know and understand Jesus' life and ministry. *(Know)*
- Experience the joy and peace that comes from fully embracing the Savior. *(Feel)*
- Look for opportunities to share Jesus and His mission with those who do not know Him. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Son, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 4: "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He

suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

The objective of this activity is to get teens talking about some of the barriers to effective communication and understanding.

Make the point that we human beings are the sum of our experiences—both good and bad. Every piece of communication we engage in is colored by these experiences. This is largely why Jesus was misunderstood.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Several years ago a story from the war in Afghanistan captivated citizens of the United States of America. It was the story of Pat Tillman, a professional football player who left a lucrative NFL career, joined the U.S. military, and was deployed to Afghanistan.

While pursuing Taliban forces in a mountainous region in Afghanistan, Tillman's unit had been split in two and sent out to hunt them down, despite the objections of the platoon leader. The *Washington Post* newspaper later reported: "A mistaken decision to split his platoon over the objections of its leader, and negligent shooting by pumped-up young Rangers—some in their first firefight—who failed to identify their targets as they blasted their way out of a frightening ambush."

Tillman was heard screaming to his fellow soldiers, "Cease fire! Friendlies!" He repeated this phrase until he was fatally wounded. A miscommunication had cost Pat Tillman his life. Eager to use the Tillman story for propaganda purposes, the military initially reported the incident as a death at the hands of the enemy. Only later did several investigations get at the truth.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Misunderstandings happen every day in life. Someone says one thing and we think they mean another. Usually we laugh it off and try to communicate better the next time. But some misunderstandings are fraught with eternal consequences. Such is the case during wartime. Military planners spend countless hours and dollars to minimize loss of life due to miscommunication and misunderstanding. They understand that once the "fog of war" sets in, communication often breaks down and costs lives.

We, too, are caught in a war zone between God and Satan. It is absolutely imperative that we hear, understand, and accept Jesus. We cannot afford to allow anything to prevent us from clearly perceiving who Jesus is and what He did for us at Calvary!

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- In this week's Scripture story Jesus is desperately trying to get the people to see beyond their temporal need to the deeper need of their hearts. Explore what Jesus meant when He told His listeners: "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."
- Jesus told His hearers that the work of God is to "believe" in the one whom God had sent. This simple statement seems almost too simple, yet what Jesus is referring to here is much deeper than what appears on the surface. Belief in Jesus requires a radical change of life and submission of our will to the will of God. It requires a daily dying that is much more challenging than it first appears.
- Why were the people requesting miraculous signs and wonders before being willing to believe? Is this spirit still alive today? This point offers a good opportunity to discuss

how charismatic "miracle-working" leaders mislead large numbers of people and sometimes cause their death.

- It was obvious that the Jewish multitude was aware of God's provision for Israel during their sojourn in the wilderness. They knew that Moses had given the people bread, but couldn't see in that provision a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Bread of Life. Even today, the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and His work are essential to comprehending who He is.
- Pay special attention to the role of family in this passage—specifically, Jesus' family. Because people knew His parentage, or so they thought, they refused to believe. This is something that all followers of Christ will face. Once people know your background they tend to put you in a box.

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: John 3:18, 19; Mark 7:1-23; John 14; John 1:10-12.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. **The Place.** It is important to note that Jesus' discourse on the Bread of Life took place in the Jewish synagogue in Capernaum. This challenging message was not spoken on a hillside or in a busy thoroughfare. This adds special meaning to the significance of the message. The Bread spoken of by Jesus is not just His earthly life and ministry, but also the Bible, which is a manifestation of Christ (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 390). The synagogue was a place where God's Word was supposed to be taught and celebrated.
2. **The Turning Point.** The feeding of the 5,000 and the sermon on the Bread of Life in the synagogue at Capernaum signaled a major turning point in the ministry of Jesus. These two events formed the climax of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 419). Many followers had deserted Him following the sermon on the Bread of Life.
3. **Not for Show.** Why didn't Jesus perform miracles to prove that He was the Son of God? Ellen White notes: "Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 366). There are many things that humans can do for themselves, but do not do. Then, when we get in trouble we ask God to move earth and heaven to help us. God responds when human beings are at the end of their skill and wisdom, when they are genuinely in need of His help.

   The Jews and their leaders were constantly pushing Jesus to show them signs and wonders before they would believe. They had seen numerous proofs that Jesus was indeed from God, but they refused to believe in Him because of what doing so would require of them.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Extra! Extra!

One of the main lessons we take away from this week's lesson is that Jesus is the Bread of Life sent down from heaven. The Bread Jesus spoke about was a direct reference to the Word of God—which He is (John 1:1)—needed for life.

Most teens struggle to develop a devotional life with God because they don't know how to approach the Bible. (Where to begin reading and studying, etc.?) There are several great Bible reading plans available online. Some focus on a chronological reading of the Scriptures. Others focus on wisdom literature, such as Psalms and Proverbs, or the Gospels. There are many different types, but the important thing is to feed on God's Word.

Make copies of two or three different teen-friendly Bible reading plans and distribute them to your students as a way to extend the learning from this week's study into their lives at home. Then encourage them to eat the Bread of Life.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Bring a loaf of bread to class, one that has not been sliced. You'll also need a cutting board, a bread knife, and napkins. Ask a student to cut the bread into slices. Pass a slice of the bread to each student. Tell the students to take a bite of the bread and enjoy.

Ask the students the following questions:

1. What did you have to believe about the bread before you could eat it? (Answer: They had to believe that nothing was wrong with the bread, and that it was good for food!)
2. What had to be done to the loaf before it could be eaten? (Answer: They had to slice it or break it into edible chunks.)
3. How is Jesus like this loaf of bread? (Answer: We must believe in Him. We cannot digest His entire life at once. We partake of Him in bite-sized pieces, through His Word and the agency of the Holy Spirit.)

Close with prayer, asking God to feed us all this week through Christ.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

As followers of Jesus Christ today, we have everything we need to put our complete faith and trust in Christ. Jesus was misunderstood during His lifetime because people refused to let go of self—their wants, their wishes, their desires. The life of Jesus was the fix for their every need, and He remains so today. When we partake of Christ's life by feeding on God's Holy Word, we will cease to find fault with Him and His life will be manifested in ours.

One of the hidden truths that many who seek God overlook is this: Truth can be fully understood only when the heart of the seeker is open to obeying what God reveals. The Jews and their leaders did not want to obey Jesus, so they found fault with Him. As Christ reproduces His character in us, we will see Him ever more clearly and be equipped to lead others to Him.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 41; 42.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: John 6:22-42; Matthew 15:1, 2; Mark 7:1-23.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 41; 42.

misunderstood

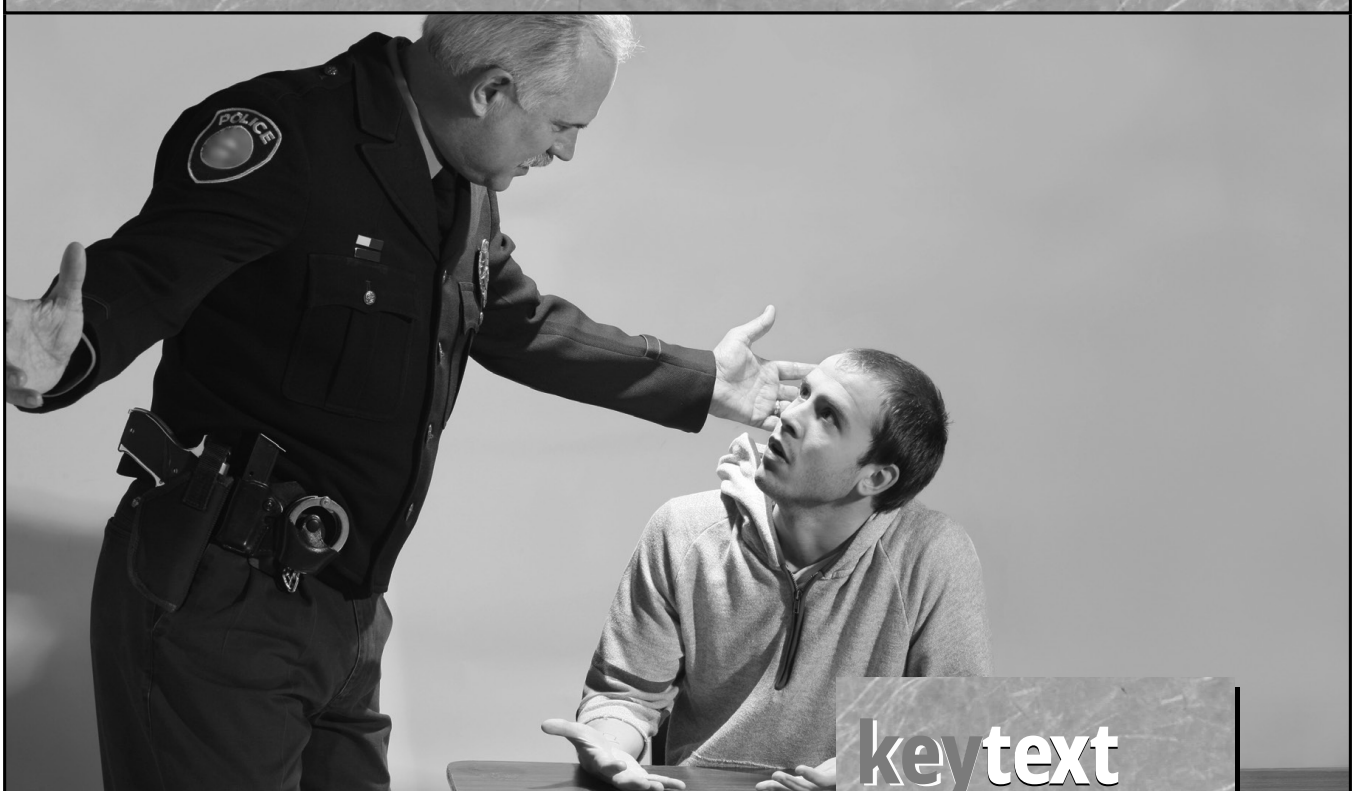


Photo by Colleen Cahill

keytext

"They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I came down from heaven"?' "

(John 6:42, NIV)

flashlight

"The giver of the manna was standing among them. It was Christ Himself who had led the Hebrews through the wilderness, and had daily fed them with the bread from heaven. That food was a type of the real bread from heaven. The life-giving Spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, is the true manna. Jesus said, 'The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' John 6:33, R. V.

"Still thinking that it was temporal food to which Jesus referred, some of His hearers exclaimed, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.' Jesus then spoke plainly: 'I am the bread of life' " (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 385, 386).

what do you think?

Think of a time you misunderstood a message or someone else misunderstood you. What happened as a result?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

did you know?

The ministry of Jesus got ever more dangerous once He began to reveal who He was—the Son of God, the Bread from heaven. As you'll learn this week, the scribes and Pharisees looked for every opportunity to destroy Him. About a year before Jesus' death their opposition became so fierce that He was forced to flee to a region called Phoenicia, a place where there were few Jews. Jesus and the disciples kept a low profile there, but their time was not wasted. Jesus used the time in Phoenicia to acquaint His disciples with the needs of unbelievers. You see the results of Jesus' efforts in the book of Acts!

INTO THE STORY

"The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

"When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?'

"Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.'

"Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'

"Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'

"So they asked him, 'What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."'

"Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.' . . .

"'Sir,' they said, 'always give us this bread.'

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.'

"At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son

of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I came down from heaven"?'"

(John 6:22-42, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Go through this week's Scripture story and put an *X* by parts of the story where there is potential for misunderstanding.

Who are the main characters in this drama? How are they reacting to Jesus? How is Jesus reacting to them?

_____

_____

_____

Underline the verses that signal a turning point in the conversation that Jesus is having with the crowd gathered around Him. What caused the people to get upset at Jesus?

_____

_____

_____

How did Jesus' family history add to the problem that the people were having with what Jesus was saying?

_____

_____

_____

What two lessons (there are more) can you take away from this biblical episode?

_____

_____

_____

What new insight about Jesus did you learn from this reading?

_____

_____

_____

_____

punch lines

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" **(Matthew 5:11, 12, NIV).**

"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble" **(Psalm 119:165, NIV).**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" **(Philippians 4:6, NIV).**

"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" **(2 Timothy 3:12, 13, NIV).**

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" **(John 14:26, NIV).**

further insight

"Seek not merely for material benefit. Let it not be the chief effort to provide for the life that now is, but seek for spiritual food, even that wisdom which will endure unto everlasting life."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 384

Sabbath

Read Matthew 13:34, 35.

What did you think of the *What Do You Think?* activity? Sort of crazy, isn't it? It's amazing how words can get twisted once they begin to travel from person to person. This was something that Jesus experienced on numerous occasions.

Why was Jesus so misunderstood by the multitudes in today's reading?

_____

_____

_____

Why do you think Jesus used parables instead of speaking plainly to the people?

_____

_____

_____

Would people have understood Jesus if He had tried to explain His entire mission? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read John 6:29.

After reading the *Into the Story* section, complete the *Out of the Story* exercise. Did you notice anything peculiar about the negative response of the people when Jesus declared that He was the Bread sent from heaven? Remember, this crowd had heard all about Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 just a day or two before. That's why they came to Him.

If they knew that Jesus had performed such an awesome miracle, why were they so offended when He said that He was sent from God?

_____

_____

_____

Weren't the miracles Jesus performed proof enough that He was not of this world? Why do people continue to doubt that Jesus was sent from God?

Monday

Read John 6:43-45.

This Sabbath's *Key Text* is essential to understanding why people back in Jesus' time, and even people today, have problems accepting the deity or divine nature of Jesus. These people knew who Jesus' mother and "father" were, or so they thought.

Read John 6:43, the verse that follows the *Key Text*. Why didn't Jesus take this opportunity to explain His mysterious birth and miraculous parentage?

Tuesday

Read Deuteronomy 8:3 and Jeremiah 15:16.

Feel the heat coming from this week's *Flashlight* quotation by Ellen G. White. Can't you see Jesus standing in the middle of a questioning crowd and declaring, "I am the bread of life"? That must have sent shock waves around the universe.

What statement does Moses make about the Word of God in Deuteronomy 8:3?

_____

_____

What did Jeremiah do once he found God's Word?

_____

_____

Jesus was the Word of God (John 1) made flesh, the Bread of life capable of removing all hunger. If the Jews had understood the Scriptures, they would have seen that Jesus was the living, breathing embodiment of the Word that captivated Moses and Jeremiah.

Wednesday

Read Psalm 119:165.

Read this week's *Punch Lines*. Choose one or more to commit to memory today.

Today's reading states: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (KJV).

How does one get to a spiritual point where nothing can offend them? Is this even possible? Explain.

_____

_____

Share one lesson you learned from this week's *Punch Lines* about how to handle spiritual trials.

_____

_____

Thursday

Read Matthew 15:8.

Jesus charged that the scribes and Pharisees "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matthew 15:8, NIV).

Is your heart close to God? List two things you need to do to improve your walk with God.

1. _____
2. _____

What's preventing you from doing those things? Why not whisper a prayer and ask God to change you right now?

Friday

Read Psalm 19:7-11.

Jesus urged His listeners to partake of Him, to eat His flesh and drink His blood. How does one do this? Is it possible?

When we study the life of Jesus in God's Word and ask the Holy Spirit to bring the life of Jesus into our lives, isn't this a form of eating His flesh and drinking His blood?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 41; 42.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.