



**January 21-22, 2023**

**Ice Breaker Questions** - 2 options based on today's text are listed below:

- Is there a particular time in which God provided for your physical needs (food, clothing, finances, shelter, safety)? If you are comfortable, share this story with your group!
- Is there a particular time in which you experienced a level of comfort from God's presence within a storm? The storm could be physical (like in today's text), or metaphorical (a time when life felt out of control and you felt tossed around by it!).

### **Understand Their Story**

In John 5:1-15, we read about Jesus performing a "sign" (healing an invalid), and then we studied Jesus' teaching on this sign in John 5:16-47. We find the same pattern in John 6. This week we'll see Jesus perform some 'signs', and next week we will hear him explain them. We'll look at the two sign stories below.

1. Sign #1 - read John 6:1-15
  - a. This story is told in all four gospels, but John draws more attention to specific information, and to Jesus' intentions and actions as he tells the story than the other gospel writers do<sup>1</sup>.
    - i. Where and when does this story take place?
      1. **By the Sea of Galilee, around Passover**
    - ii. What is the problem that Jesus solves in this story?
      1. **There is a large crowd approaching Jesus & the disciples, and there is nowhere for them to buy bread to eat.**
    - iii. What are all the things that John records Jesus saying, doing & thinking in this text? Do you have questions about any of these thoughts, words or actions?
      1. **Jesus' words: He asks Philip where they are to buy bread (v 5) / He has the disciples tell the people to sit down (v 10) / He gives thanks (v 11) He tells the disciples to gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost (v 12)**
      2. **Jesus' actions: He went up on the mountain (v 3). He took the loaves & fish & distributed them (v 11), he withdrew at the end of the story (v 15)**
      3. **Jesus' thoughts: John mentions that his question to Philip is a test (v 6), and that Jesus perceives the intentions of the crowd and withdraws (v 15).**
        - a. **People who are studying this account in other gospels (Matthew or Luke studies happening at Northview) may have some questions! In the other gospel accounts (see footnote below), the disciples initiate the discussion about feeding the people, the disciples distribute the bread & Jesus distributes the fish, he doesn't give any instructions about how or why to collect the leftovers, and there is no record of the crowd's desire to make**

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<sup>1</sup> Other accounts are found in Mark 6:30-52, Matthew 14:13-33 and Luke 9:10-17.

him king as a result of this event. So, we don't necessarily know why John adds these extra details, but it may be interesting to talk about the differences.

- iv. What do you think this 'sign' was intended to reveal about Jesus? How did the people in this story misunderstand the sign?
  - 1. Jesus is doing the work of God - providing food for people in the wilderness. The people wanted to make him king - this isn't his plan!

## 2. Sign #2 - John 6:16-21

- a. A version of this story is also told in Mark and in Matthew, and John again provides a different perspective.
  - i. What is the "problem" that Jesus 'solves' in this story?
    - 1. The disciples are alone (eg. without Jesus), rowing against a stiff wind.
    - 2. They are frightened when they see him walking on the sea.
  - ii. What are all the things that John records Jesus saying & doing in this text?
    - 1. "It is I; do not be afraid".
  - iii. What do you think this 'sign' was intended to reveal about Jesus?
    - 1. That Jesus has power over the sea and the wind.

## Connect to His Story.

- 3. The Feeding of the 5000 is a story which many people have heard, but often we don't understand how it connects to other parts of the Biblical story.
  - a. Read Exodus 16:1-12.
    - i. What was the situation of the people of Israel at this point? How does their situation parallel the people in John's gospel?
      - 1. They were in the wilderness & had no food! Like the people in John's gospel.
      - 2. They were a great crowd (much more than 5000 men + women & children - see Exodus 13:37-38 if you want to know how many!)
    - ii. For what purpose is God providing daily bread for his people according to Exodus 16:4 and 16:12? How do these purposes parallel what Jesus is doing in John 6:1-15?
      - 1. 16:4 - He is providing them with daily bread as a test. Jesus sets this event up as a test for his disciples.
      - 2. 16:12 - He is providing them with daily bread so that they will know that he is the LORD. Jesus is providing them with bread so that they will know he is God.
  - b. Skim Exodus 12, and then skim Exodus 14. What 2 events are highlighted in these texts?
    - 1. Exodus 12 records the first passover; Exodus 14 God sends a wind to part the Red Sea
    - ii. How do these events parallel the events of John 6:1-21?
      - 1. In John 6, John draws attention to the time of year (passover), the feeding miracle, and also Jesus' power over the sea. So the same 3 'types' of things occur in both texts.

## Apply to Our Story

- 4. In John 5:18, the Jews complained that "he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God." In today's text, we see him validating this claim. He is doing the work that God has done in the Old Testament: feeding his people and calming the seas!
  - a. While these 'signs' point to who he is, they also serve the purpose of deepening our trust in Jesus' power and his character: he cares about his peoples' physical needs and helps us navigate through literal and metaphorical storms! When the people see his power in John 6:15,

they want to use it for their purposes by making him King. As the Psalmists apply these stories, however, they use them to form songs of praise. As you apply this text, read Psalm 107:23-32 together. What can you praise our triune God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) for today?

## Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus cares about our physical needs and the storms we are experiencing.*
  - *Pray in Confession: Are you learning to trust God more as experience different 'wilderness' or storm experiences or not? In what ways / situations do you still struggle to trust him?*
  - *Pray in Supplication: Ask God to grow you faith and help you to not be afraid!*
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## God's work and our Work

### How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 6:1-21

As we mentioned above, Jesus' works reveal that he is the Son of God. He is able to do the things which only God can do! As ordinary people, we don't have the same power that Jesus did, or the same identity claim. Regardless, everything we do should still point to who we are as sons and daughters of Jesus. Our everyday work at home, in our neighbourhoods, our schools, or workplaces can reflect aspects of what we've learned in this story.

- In John 6:1-15, Jesus was able to multiply a small contribution (5 loaves and 2 fish) for his purposes. Think of one specific task that is in front of you which feels overwhelming or too big!
  - What contribution can you bring to this situation? (time, finances, ideas, prayer, etc).
  - What do you want to ask Jesus to do with what you can contribute?
- In John 6:1-15, Jesus demonstrated that he cared for people's physical needs. How can you reflect his heart, as you care for people's physical needs this week? Where has he placed you? What needs are around you?
- In John 6:16-21, Jesus demonstrated that he had power over the storm. How can you reflect on his power, as you or a friend or family member, faces some sort of storm? How can your actions, words or thoughts point yourself or others to Jesus?