

Jesus who feeds and frightens

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[0 : 00] Today's service is a little bit different from last week's. I would like to incorporate the children.! We don't have that many children here this morning. We've got the Rayfields and we've got Eden Rose. It's lovely to see you. Sorry? Is there someone at the back as well? I can't see them. Sorry?

Okay. She's in the creche. Okay. So this is an all-age service. So I'm going to ask some questions to the children as well and elicit some answers. If they don't know, adults, please jump in, put your hand up. It's more interactive today. But as you saw from the text and as Phil has given the title, Jesus who feeds and frightens, we see a kind of a contrast, don't we, of who Jesus is? And the two pictures kind of show that. So if you have your Bibles, please have them open. John 6, verses 1 to 21. So my questions are, how do you view Jesus? Do you see him as a guru? Just a guru?

A teacher? Do you see him just as a nice guy? A guy that, yeah, basically is nice. A harsh judge? Do you see Jesus as a harsh judge? Do you see him as just a man? Just a normal bloke? As a healer? How do you view Jesus this morning? And how do you treat him? Do you treat him with respect?

[1 : 40] Perhaps indifference? I don't care about him, really. Or perhaps with scorn? You mock him. But I think these are good questions for us to ask ourselves. How do we view Jesus Christ?

And how do we treat him? How do we see who he is? And hopefully in this talk, we'll see perhaps a different side of Jesus than perhaps we thought. So children, sign one, the Jesus who feeds.

Now, please look in your Bibles. We have this picture. I don't know if you can see it that well up the top there. So could you tell me, boys and girls, where is Jesus at this point in the text?

Yeah, Eden Rose. I forgot. Okay, which parts? There's a picture here to show you. Where is he? I think it's in verse 1. Yeah, it's in verse 1 there. Put your hands up. Yeah, Samuel? That's right. He's in the Lake of Galilee.

You see a picture here. The Sea of Galilee. That's right. And how does he get to Bethsaida? You see Bethsaida is right up here, if you can see it up there. How does Jesus get there, boys and girls?

[3 : 03] It might not say, actually, but it's implicit in the text. He goes to another part. How do you think he gets?

He's over here on this side and he gets to this side. How do you think he gets there? By helicopter? Yep. Yes, by boat. You can actually see little boats there. That's right.

This is normal. These boats would fit about 15 people. They've actually found one excavated around Bethsaida. So they know that, we know, it was a very big fishing area, the Lake of Galilee, at this time.

That's right. By boat. And there was also some other people in the story, boys and girls.

Not only Jesus there, but people followed him. Who followed him? Was it a small crowd? Was it a big crowd? Was it a medium-sized crowd?

[4 : 08] Bethany? Yeah, it was a great crowd of people followed him. Yeah, so don't think of a church picnic at Preston Park.

Okay. Think of lots of people in a football stadium, that sort of crowds. Yeah. It's perhaps even 10 or 12,000 people were there.

Okay. So imagine the scene. Lots and lots of people and the shore of Galilee. Now, how did they get to Jesus, I wonder? How do you think they got to Jesus?

Did they go by boat from the text? How do you think they got there? Because I don't think it says they got there by boat, did they? How do you think they got there, Isaac?

Well done. Yeah, by foot. And they probably would have seen Jesus. I don't know if it was from around here.

[5 : 17] And he would have gone in the boat all the way there. And they must have seen, wow, I can see him going to Bethsaida over there. Let's run around the headland and try to catch him there. Yeah. So you can imagine them running or walking rather fast around the headland, trying to meet Jesus.

That's right. Now, why were they following him, boys and girls? Why were they following him in the text? It's in verse 2. Bethany?

That's right. They saw the miraculous signs and they saw the healing. So they saw him as this healer. And because of his amazing miracles, as we've seen in John's Gospel, there were lots and lots of people.

That's right. Now, what does Jesus do when he gets on the other side, when he gets to Bethsaida, up here, which is a fishing town.

It's actually called Fishtown, Bethsaida. There's actually two Bethsaidas. And the commentators say he's probably from Bethsaida Julius. He went up there, upstream, they reckon. But it doesn't really matter.

[6 : 37] He was there in that area. You see the green area. Now, what does Jesus do when he gets there, boys and girls? Verse 3.

Yep, Isaac? Yeah, he goes to a mountainside or the hills. Now, we think they're probably around here. And they're now called the Golan Heights.

So he often does that, doesn't he, Jesus? And we know from other texts that he went to pray there. And he was with his disciples. You can imagine Jesus really, really tired, really exhausted, wasn't he?

All these people wanting him to heal them, perhaps to speak to them. And, wow, he goes up a mountain, probably, to get away from the crowds and to relax a little bit and speak to his disciples to teach them.

That's right. Now, what event is coming up, boys and girls, that we see in the text? What event around the corner is about to happen in verse 4?

[7 : 46] It's a really big event. Remembering God's rescue from Egypt.

Yeah? Thank you. Yeah, it was the Jewish Passover festival. So can you imagine the hustle and bustle? Because people would be going down to Jerusalem, I presume, to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

So lots of people would be milling around, trying to travel, and they would be going this way because they didn't want to go into Samaria.

Because Samaria, they were like the enemies of God's people, and they didn't want to be with them. They were the outcasts. Remember how Jesus went to Samaria and the women of the well? And the disciples were amazed that he was speaking to a Samaritan woman. So most probably there were people going around this way, trying to avoid Samaria, and going down into Jerusalem.

[8 : 49] So can you imagine people bumping into each other and people saying, look, Jesus is there. This is a guy who heals. Who heals. Quick, look at this guy. He's amazing. Can you imagine the crowds and the hustle and bustle around this lake?

That's right. The Passover is near. So, in terms of application, do we treat Jesus as a magic genie? The people there saw him as a healer, didn't they? They were very one-dimensional about Jesus. And we can be like that as well, can't we?

We just see that Jesus only gives us what we want. If he heals us, yeah, I'll love him. I'll follow him. And we just want from him.

We only come to him when we are sick, perhaps. When we are ill. When we're in trouble, we only call him. Do we treat Jesus like that? He only helps us when we need him.

[10 : 01] That's a wrong view, isn't it? To have of Jesus. Because he's much more than that. As we see. So, the Jesus who feeds.

So, what happens next? In the text, boys and girls. In verse 5. What does Jesus see when he gets to this place, Bethsaida?

And he's up a mountain. What does he see? What are the crowds doing? What does he see when he's coming to him? In verse 5.

Yep, Beth. Yeah, so they keep coming to him. Lots and lots of people coming to him. Oh, can you imagine how he's feeling? Humanly speaking.

Not another one. Not another gathering. You would think, wouldn't you? Oh, I want some peace and rest. The crowd comes towards Jesus. And, what is the problem, boys and girls, here in the text?

[11:02] There's a problem here. There are so many people. And there's a need. What's the need? There are too many people to feed, aren't they?

Yeah? There's too many people to feed. How many does it say in the text? In verse 10. Well, it says 5,000.

But we know that there were children and there were women as well. So, perhaps, as I said, even 10,000, 12,000. There are too many people to feed.

Now, he could have sent them home. In other Gospels, we see that the disciples say, Hey, Jesus, why don't you send them home? Back home to eat. But Jesus has compassion on them.

And he feeds them. Now, there are two disciples. And there's Philip, the realist, in verse 7.

[12:07] What does he think? Well, he thinks, wait a minute. There are 12,000 people here, perhaps. 10,000. And, wait a minute.

I calculate that someone could work just over half a year. One denarii is one day's wages, more or less. And still, these people would only get a meager morsel of food.

So, he thinks, well, practically, it's impossible, Jesus. It's impossible. And who else is there? There's Andrew, the optimist, in verse 9.

He is a bit better because he says, Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish.

But how far will they go among so many? So, he says, there's something here.

At least there's something, even though it's small and meager. So, he's a bit more optimistic. By the way, these barley loaves were quite normal in this time.

[13:07] The rich people, the affluent people, could have wheat. We treat wheat as a normal staple, don't we? We have wheat bread daily.

But that was the preserve for the rich. Normally, they would have this coarse barley bread that wasn't as nice as proper wheat bread.

So, it's not a big amount and it's not good quality. Can you imagine this boy with his packed lunchbox? Suddenly, he's the centre of attention.

And the fish as well. Don't think of big fish, boys and girls, adults. Big, huge trout or salmon that you might get. Think of very small, sardine-like food.

It doesn't really fill you up. Apparently, Sea of Galilee was teeming full of these small fish. Think of a tin of sardines. That'll help you. So, it's very meager.

[14:10] But he's optimistic. So, let's go on. What does he do? Well, he takes control, doesn't he?

He takes control of the situation. He tells them to sit down, the disciples. Make the people sit down. And he thanks the Father.

He takes the bread. And he has the loaves. And he gives thanks to God the Father for providing this food.

And he probably would have said a prayer that they would have said in those days to give thanks to the Father. And the food is multiplied, we see in verse 11. He distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.

He did the same with the fish. And John writes about it. It's very matter-of-fact, isn't it?

Unemotionally. He just does it. And in a sense, if Jesus is God, he can do that.

[15:21] There's no surprises. He's God. He can multiply it. No problem. But in one sense, it's like, wait a minute. How can he do that? Isn't that amazing?

Suddenly, all this fish and this food is multiplied. I'm sure the crowds are astounded. And there were lots of food left over, wasn't there?

There was 12 basketballs left over. So not only does he provide their needs, he gives them more than they need. And they store it in these vessels.

So the people are filled. They're satisfied. Jesus gives them food.

And what happens next? Well, they think he is the prophet. If you look in the text, they say, surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world.

[16:29] Where is this from? This is from Deuteronomy. Because Moses said, there will be one who will come. I think it's in Deuteronomy 15. Let me read it to you.

15 or 18. Someone can correct me. Yeah. Deuteronomy 18.

Verse 15. It says, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

So they see this Jesus as a fulfillment of this prophecy. That he is this prophet. And also, what do they see him as?

Boys and girls. In verse 15. What do they want to make him? They don't see him as a prophet, but also a? It begins with Kay. Isaac.

[17:28] Thank you. Yeah, a king. They want to make him as king. They see him as king and prophet, which is true. He's both prophet and king. But they want him there by force.

What does Jesus do? He withdraws again to a mountain by himself. So this is the Jesus who feeds. What does this sign mean to us? Well, surely it points to the creator God, doesn't it?

And in Genesis 1, verse 3, the third day of creation, we see God's saying.

Verse 11, actually. Let the land produce vegetation, sea bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to the various kinds.

[18:25] And it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed according to its kinds. And God saw that it was good.

So Jesus, the creator, was there at the beginning. And he spoke creation. And creation came into being. Imagine seeing the plants come up from the ground.

This very creator, he's here in the world. And he's multiplying. He speaks. And more fish, more bread come into being.

Isn't that amazing? The creator is here on earth. Who flung stars into space. Now gives bread to the needy. It all points to the creator, that Jesus is the creator God.

And it points us to the manna in the desert, doesn't it? Remember that story of Moses and God's people? How in the morning, was it?

[19:28] I always get this confused. In the morning, it was bread. Was it in the evening? It was quail? Was it the other way around? I can't remember. But I think in the morning, they picked up flakes of manna.

And in the evening, God gave them quail. And this was God's bountiful hand, isn't it? God multiplied. Even though the people complained and grumbled. God gave them, provided for them. And this points to this miracle, doesn't it? Of how God provides for his people. Even though they grumble. And it points to Jesus being God, doesn't it?

Only God has this power to multiply. To bring forth. To create. It points to God as the provider. He provides our very needs.

Our necessities. And it points to Jesus. Next week, we're going to look at this. I am the bread of life, he says. He is the true manna.

[20:32] He's pointing to himself. He comes into the world to feed us. To give his life for us. And we need to see that this sign points to him.

He is from the Father given to us. He is the true bread. He is the true bread. He is the true bread. So, I think for us, Jesus can use our gifts no matter how small they are.

Be encouraged. The boy and his picnic. You may feel very small. Insignificant. Perhaps you can do only so much. Perhaps if you're elderly, you think you're limited.

But God can use you. Be encouraged. I think it's good to pray. A good prayer to pray for us. I mean, Phil introduced this prayer, I think, some time ago.

That he would take our small resources as a church. Our loaves and fishes. And multiply that. I think it's a great prayer for us. We have limited resources.

[21:38] And I think for other churches as well. Let's pray this for Park Hill. And for Ebenezer Church. The church that grew from two. Just to encourage you. Always a good read.

The Evangelicals Now. Do recommend it. I subscribed to it last night. From two to more than 120 people in nine years.

No staff. No core group. No salary. No house. But two Bibles spark new church into life. A London church plant. Which began with a couple. Meeting in individuals.

In the first year. Before launching. As a living room Bible study. Is now planning to send its very first convert. To start a new church in West London. Another plant. Malcolm Riley and his wife.

Moved to London in 2013. With a desire to reach the next generation. From the city centre. They came with literally nothing. Having just left St. Ebbs Oxford.

[22 : 37] With no staff team. No core group. No salary. No vicarage. And no church building. But we had two Bibles. So they had a group of supporters.

Helping them. Including personal friends. And organisations. And after three years of exploring. Whether to join this network. They decided to go independent. And the church outgrew the living room.

In its second year. Moved to a coffee shop. In Covent Garden. In its third year. It outgrew the coffee shop. And it relocated to a theatre. In its fifth year. It moved to a congregational church building. In Leicester Square. And has now outgrown that building. And is currently seeking a new venue. Wow. Isn't that encouraging? That the Lord can use.

What we have. And isn't that for us? He's able to meet the need. However great. We think of the money raised for the church building. Dear Chris Fry.

[23 : 37] Was a great catalyst for that. And we praise the Lord for Chris. And how we bought the building. Future ministry. Isn't it great? We've got Daniel Shapala.

Coming next month. Answer to prayer. He is able to meet our needs. Do we give thanks for God's daily provision? Do we take it for granted?

Not just our daily food. But our accommodation. Our daily needs. The big and the small. And don't we see Jesus. As this selfless.

Compassionate one. Though he must have been so tired. Isn't he a great role model for us? It's a challenge for us. Isn't it? Perhaps we're tired. It's easy to give up.

Isn't it? Perhaps we're going into retirement. We're thinking. I just want to take life easily. But. There's no word for retirement guys. In the. In the Bible. And.

[24 : 32] Whoever we are. It's a role model for us. Isn't it? To keep on going. And. Obviously we need rest as well. But. Be encouraged. For.

From Christ. That. Of his selfless. Compassionate love. And. Aren't we so blessed. That he's. Met most of our needs here. We can testify this.

Can't we? That he provides for us daily. And. Not only that. But. Our cup overflows. As the picture says.

God is generous. He gives us more. He gives us. Not only a cake. He gives us a cake. With a cherry on the top. And. In many ways. Sometimes. Not always. But. He's so bountiful to us. Isn't he? Our cup overflows. And. The recession. We. We. We see the. The news. Perhaps the recession's coming. And. There's doom and gloom.

[25 : 28] But. Are we trusting. That the Lord will provide for us. Or are we. Looking in and ourselves. Getting depressed. Perhaps sad. Thinking. Oh no. What's going to happen.

Let's trust the Lord will provide for us. He does. Good. So. We're going to have a. A break now. Um. Um.

And we're going to sing. Um. At your feet we fall. Mighty risen Lord. As we come before your throne. To worship you.

Um. If I'm right Phil. This is. Kind of. As you said. Sort of. Um. Changing tact. Isn't it? Now it's looking at. Jesus as an awesome God. Yeah.

Okay. Boys and girls. You there. You awake. Yeah. Great. Okay. Some more questions. So. We go on.

[26 : 23] The next part. Of the text. Um. Jesus who frightens. Um. Verse. The second sign. Verse 16. To 21.

So please have that open. So. Boys and girls. What time of the day is it now? Wow. Yeah. Eden Rose. Three minutes past 12.

Eden Rose. I like your sense of humor. You are correct. In the text. I mean. In the text. Bethany. Evening time.

Thank you. Yeah. Verse 16. So it's evening time. So picture evening time. Everybody. It's getting darker. Yeah. It's evening time. What do you do at evening time?

Time to go back home. Back to bed. Yeah. Perhaps you're tired. Now. Boys and girls. What happens to the disciples?

[27 : 28] Now it's evening. Verse 17. What happens to the disciples?

Where do they go? What do they do? Yep. Bethany. That's right. They go into the boat.

Back across the lake. To Capernaum. Where they've come from. I think. I guess. They're going to go back. To their beds.

So. They set off. Across the lake. Now. Was Jesus. With them. Or without them. In the boat. Bethany.

He wasn't there. No. We don't read. Do we? That he was there. Yeah. Jesus had not joined them yet. In verse 17. And from other gospels.

[28 : 28] We see. That he goes to a mountainside. Goes up a mountain. And I think he. Prays. I might. Be wrong. But he goes away. He's probably really tired.

Yeah. So he goes off. He. He's not there. So Jesus is not with them. Okay. So it's getting really dark now.

Isn't it? From the text. Do we see that? It was dark. Dark. And.

What happens now. Boys and girls. On the lake of Galilee. Or the sea of Galilee. What happens?

Thank you Steve.

Let's have some sound effects. Yep. There's a storm. Yeah. So. We read. That. There was a strong wind blowing.

[29 : 27] And waters grew rough. Yeah. If you've been on a stormy. Lake or sea. Yeah. Yeah. I think Steve was an ex-mariner. In the merchant navy.

Was it? Yeah. Yeah. So Steve's probably experienced some rough waters. Yeah. Not very nice.

Are they? I mean. I get seasick. I won't tell you some horrible stories.

But there's one. When I went to Menorca. You can ask me later. There's a strong wind and a gale blow. So you can imagine the disciples. Ah.

Oh. Yeah. Yeah. So yeah. There's a gale. And the waters are rough. That's right. And how far are the disciples out to sea?

In the text. What does it say? In verse 19. Yep. Thank you. Yeah. So they're a long way out to sea.

[30 : 25] And they might even be approaching the other side of the lake. So they're a long way out in the middle of the sea. So this. Yeah. In a difficult situation.

What's going to happen? And what happens next? Next. They're. They're frightened.

Boys and girls. Or terrified. Why are they frightened? In verse 19. Well they're frightened because they see Jesus approaching them on the water.

Walking on the water. Wow. They're scared. Imagine someone walking on the water towards you.

That must have been frightening. And it's interesting. They're scared of Jesus. Not the storm. Jesus is more frightening than the waves.

[31 : 31] And what happens after that? Jesus calms their fears. What does he say? It is I. Don't be afraid. Verse 20. What comfort Jesus gives to the disciples.

And they reach the shore in safety. Immediately. It says. The boat reached the shore. God guides them home.

Well what does this sign mean? Well again. We see that he rules over creation. He walks over the storm. Psalm 29.

We read that didn't we at the start. It's prophetic. As we saw in Psalm 107. And. Josh Moody puts it really nicely. In his book here.

I read a little bit from here. He says. What is the most amazing about this description. Is how their fears were beginning to be rightly placed. They were not frightened of the strong winds.

[32 : 32] They were frightened of Jesus. We can imagine the scene as calmly. Without haste. Or worry. With consummate ease. And careful solemnity.

With grace of manner. And deliberate pace. Those unhurrying feet. Walk steadily. In the midst of strong winds. Miles out from the shore. On the water.

It would scare you half out of your mind. If you saw it. So. Jesus. Probably would have walked there serenely. Because he is the Lord of creation.

But the disciples were. Panicking. Panicking. So Jesus can be terrifying. He is mighty.

And awesome. We see that in Revelation. 19. 11 to 16. We see this as a warrior God. And we see this in Revelation 1. Let's read that. Let's read that.

[33 : 28] Let's read that. John's vision of Christ. Revelation 1. Verse 12.

I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. And among the lampstands was someone like a son of man. Dressed in a robe, reaching down to his feet.

With a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool. As white as snow. And his eyes were like blazing fire.

His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace. And his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand, he held seven stars.

And coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun, shining in all its brilliance. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

[34 : 30] And he placed his right hand on me and said, Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am the living one. I was dead.

And now look, I am alive forever and ever. Isn't that just like what we saw in this passage? A terrifying, awesome God. One that we should revere.

But yet, he says to John, Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am alive. We should revere him.

He is a holy God. Let's not come to him flippantly. Like a mate. And if we trust him, we do fear him, don't we?

Reverently. But we don't have to fear him in that sense that he's going to judge us. Because of Christ. We don't have to be afraid. We do not have any fear.

[35 : 40] Because he's with us. And he is there in the storms of life. We all go through them. He guides us to the shore on the other side.

Whether it be sickness, unemployment, accommodation needs, bereavement. You name it. He will guide us safely home. So, we have two very different pictures, don't we, of Jesus here.

The Jesus who feeds and the Jesus who frightens. So, in conclusion. If we have an understanding of Jesus as he presents himself in these miracle signs.

We will be closer at having a better perspective of who he is. Which will impact how we come to him in terms of our prayer, service and worship.

If we just treat him as someone who we come to to supply our needs. We will lose sight of our need to recognize him in his awesomeness.

[36 : 48] On the other hand, if we only fear him and keep him at a distance. We lose the privilege and blessing that come from daily walking with him.

So, may the Lord bless his word to us this morning. So, we're going to sing now our last song.

Guide me, O my great Redeemer.

Guide me, O my great Redeemer.