

John 6

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see some visitors with us as well and you're especially welcome.

And if you're able to stay behind at the end of the service, there's tea and coffee and it'd be good to get a chance to meet with you and to enjoy fellowship together. Some intimations which have been on the screen before the service began and you'll also find them on the wise sheet.

The first is to say that the evening service will be at 6pm tonight. That will be an English service and it'll be conducted by myself, God willing. I go on holiday tomorrow. The girls are away already and I'll be away for a week and a day.

And during that time, the Reverend Rory Morrison, who you know and love, will be providing pastoral cover if there's any need for the services of a minister.

If you do need a minister, please speak to one of the elders first and they'll put you in touch with Rory. And Rory will be taking the services both morning and evening next Sunday as well.

[1 : 1 2] And so you can look forward to that. In the course of the week, things as usual, Ladies Bible Study, First Fruit Fellowship, Road to Recovery and the Prayer Meeting are all in the usual places at the usual times.

And just a note for the Sunday, the 16th of April, that's two weeks today, Easter Sunday, and the morning service will be a family service, so please take note of that.

The Island Study Conference I mentioned to you over the last few weeks, and I have leaflets which you'll see just in a few minutes' time, and I'll make available at the end of the service.

But it's scheduled for the weekend of the 21st to the 23rd, and the speakers will be the Reverend James McKeever, who was with us at communion last communion season, and also the Reverend Hector Morrison from Highland Theological College.

Calum Ian from back, and Dina will be the kind of hosts for the weekend, and we'll speak about mission, having just returned from Africa.

[2 : 2 1] And there'll be leaflets. The services will be in the hotel as usual over the course of the weekend, but on Sunday they've decided this year that they're going to meet in the community centre here.

The faith mission, tent mission, the next peer meeting, 24th of April. Again, that's just the date for your diary, and these, I think, are all the intimations.

So we'll begin, and we will worship God and sing to his praise from Psalm 46. Psalm 46, and the words will be on the screen, and we'll sing from verses 1 to verse 7.

God is our refuge and our strength, and strength is our present aid. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Down to the end of verse 7 of Psalm 46, and we'll stand to sing.

God is our refuge and our strength, and strength is our present aid.

- [3 : 35] Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid.
 Though hell's a place, the sea's becast, Though waters go remain, and cover me, We give
 it over the hills, by sweating seas to shake.
 A river is to stream to land, the city of our God.
 The holy place with the Lord, most high of His favor.
 God in the midst of our dust dwell, nothing shall our remove.
- [5 : 21] The Lord to us, our helper will not die, death be true.
 The peace and grace shall not just be. The kingdom's movement where the Lord, O God,
 that in His voice, the earth may tell for the year.
 The Lord of hosts upon our side doth constantly remain.
 The Lord of hosts upon our refuge. Our safety to maintain.
 Amen. Amen. Lord God, we thank you for the words that we have sung in that psalm. And
 we thank you for that last verse that we sang.
- [7 : 00] The Lord of hosts upon our side doth constantly remain. The God of Jacob's, our refuge,
 our safety to maintain. Father, we thank you for the Lord of hosts upon our side.
 And we thank you for the Lord of hosts upon our side of our side of our God. And we
 thank you for that name that we so often remember. That name Emmanuel, God with us.
 And Lord, we thank you for the assurance that we have of the fact that you are with us
 when we look to Jesus and see all that was done to enable us to come as we do this
 morning in worship.
 We help us today. God comes up northlism. We know. There may be a help that we live
 on, that we do this morning. And we free. The Lord, we thank you that Christ came into
 this world to seek and to save sinners.
 And we thank you that he went to the cross to make an end of our sin. The Lord came into
 this world to share and build their sin. Thank you that he endured. In fact, we thank you
 that he waged war with the death.
- [8 : 28] that we so fear in our natural state. And Lord, we thank you that Jesus overcame. And on
 this day, this Lord's day, we thank you that we remember that our Savior, he died but he
 rose again.
 On the first day of the week as we gather today, we remember that Jesus lives and he is
 victorious and he has done everything to make it possible for us to be saved and to be
 safe in time and for eternity.
 And so Lord, we pray that you would help us to look to him. We pray that you would help
 us to put our faith in Christ. And we pray that we would know the same experience and
 assurance and sentiment that the psalmist was able to write of, that God is our refuge and
 our strength.
 He is our ever-present helper. He is the one who is constantly with us by our side. So
 draw near to us, Lord, we pray.
 Enable us to know that you are God and that you are with us. And we pray for those who
 need your special help this morning. We think of those who are struggling.
- [9 : 49] We are conscious of those who will be grieving today. With the passing of Annie, Lord, we
 remember our family. We remember our friends.
 We remember many in this village who will feel her loss. And we pray, Lord, for your
 comfort and for your strength and for your help over these days as the community will
 meet to read your word and to pray and to seek your help.

We pray that all who gather will know that you are the God of all comfort. And, Lord, we pray that you would be with those who grieve.

We pray that you would be with those who struggle. Lord, we know that we are a weak people and we struggle with many different things. There are many battles that we are engaged in.

And, Lord, we pray for your help for all those who feel the weight of that at present. We think of those who struggle with addictions of different kinds. And we bring them to you, Lord, and ask that you would break the chains that bind them.

[10 : 57] We pray for those who are struggling with their health at this stage. Some in hospital. Some who are housebound. Some who may be present but even be anxious about the way ahead.

And, Lord, we commit them to you and pray that they may know the friend that they have in Christ. That they may not be anxious about anything but be prayerful about all things as we bring them to you in prayer.

We ask, Lord, that you would be with those who may be anxious about the details of life whether it's finances, whether it's family dynamics, whether it's the workplace.

You're the God who is involved in every aspect of our lives. And we thank you that there is no prayer that is too small that you will dismiss but you are the God who cares for us.

And so we pray for those who have cares that are weighing them down. That even for this hour that you would enable them to look above the cares and to look to the one who cares for them.

[12 : 04] We pray that you would continue with us now in this service. We pray that we would be still and know that you are God. We pray that you would meet with us and we pray that you would meet with all who meet as we do in this place at this time.

We think especially of those who meet in fear and in great risk because of the persecution that they are so often faced with.

And we pray for brothers and sisters around the world and ask, Lord, that where your people are persecuted that you would be specially present and specially blessing them and sustaining them through difficult times.

We thank you that so often in the reality of fierce suffering your church grows at a pace. And so we commit those that we have not met but those that we are bound eternally together with we pray for them.

We ask now, Lord, that you would go before us that you would take away our sin that you would clear our minds of all that would distract us and, Lord, that you would empty us of ourselves and fill us with the Holy Spirit that we may earnestly seek and look to Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith and the one in whose name we pray.

[13 : 27] Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? There's not so many of you today. I was thinking my aftershave was bad this morning when the first few rows were absent.

Good. How's everyone today? Good. John Rory, you're surrounded. Absolutely surrounded.

It seems like I have misery today but it'll get better over time, over the years. This morning I've got a bag and in the bag I've got some things to show you and the question I want you to be thinking about as I put all these things on the table is what do all these things have in common?

You know what I mean when I say that? What do all these things have in common? What do all these things have that is kind of the same that we need to do? Think again.

The first thing is A letter. A letter. The second thing is the emoji game.

[14 : 43] Whatever that might be in a box. The third thing is a packet of crisps. The fourth thing is a CD.

The fifth thing is a bottle of tomato ketchup. The sixth thing is a double-decker.

Seventh thing is a banana. The eighth thing is a DVD. The ninth thing is a packet of jelly.

The tenth thing is a three-pack of polos. The eleventh thing is a bottle of juice. The twelfth thing is a can of tuna.

The thirteenth thing is a Bible. There's your puzzle. There is your puzzle.

[15 : 56] So, think carefully. What do all these things have in common? John Roddy, what's your guess? They're all food.

They're all food. Well, there you go. Enjoy crunching on that CD. Don't know what you're, don't know what you eat. You eat DVDs and CDs. Some of these things are definitely food, yeah?

But not all these things are food. So, it's not that. First of all, what do you have, Ailey? God made them. God made them, yes.

All of them. That's very true. But it's another answer I'm looking for, actually. What do all these things have in common? They're not all food, but God did make them. Quite tricky, isn't it?

What do you think, Bear? Any guesses? No? Caitlin? No? Emma?

[16 : 53] Emma? Not sure? Lily? Any guesses? Where did you see these?

Yeah. Okay. We text all these clever clogs, is there? Yes. Go on then. What do all these things have in common?

You have to open them to enjoy them. Come to that answer last. What do all these things have in common? Mr. Clever Clogs and your friends.

It's a very lefty team. They all cost something. They all cost something, yeah, but the right answer was the one I just got, yeah. You have to open all these things before you enjoy them.

The packet of jelly, you have to open it and do the stuff before it turns into the jelly. The tomato ketchup, you have to open it. Squeeze it before it makes your chips tasty.

[18 : 02] The emoji game, you might think that looks like a good game, but there'll be no fun having until you open it and start to do the game. The packet of crisps, a can of tuna, double-decker, all these things, the banana, you have to open them before you can put them in their mouth and they do you any good.

The bottle of juice, you have to open it and put it in your mouth before you can enjoy it and before it can do you good. And the most important thing is the Bible.

And everybody here, put up your hand here if you don't have a Bible. There'll be no one in this place that doesn't have a Bible or at least have a Bible or two in their houses.

But we have to open the Bible if it's going to do our hearts and our souls any good because as we open the Bible, this is where we see God, this is where we meet Jesus, this is where we understand our own hearts, this is where we hear the good news about Jesus, this is where we get food for our souls because remember Jesus said man and woman and boy and girl, they don't live by bread alone or crisps alone or polos alone or double-deckers alone but by every word it comes from the mouth of God.

So, boys and girls, men and ladies, let's be thankful for the Bibles that we have but let's remember to be every day opening our Bibles and asking that God will feed our souls, give us food for our souls, give us the living water that Jesus can give to us because this is where we meet him and this is where we receive that.

[20 : 00] We'll pray for a moment and then we might have a clip to look at. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this day and we thank you for all the things that you have given us.

We thank you for everything on that table that we see and we thank you for that table that we see and we thank you for the floor that we stand on and the chairs that we sit on and the world that we live in and the people that we are.

We know that you are the God who made everything just as Ailey reminded us. And Lord, we thank you that we can know you and you love us. We thank you that you have given us food for our bodies.

We thank you that you have given us food and living water for our souls that we receive when we come and we open the Bible and we ask that you will meet with us. And so we pray that you would forgive us for the days that we're lazy.

Forgive us for how sometimes we don't get excited about opening the Bible. And help us, we pray, every day to remember that when we open your word, you meet with us and you speak to us.

[21 : 11] And we pray that you would meet with us today and speak to us today as we take this time together. And we pray all these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

As we come to you to receive the food of your holy word. Amen. O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Take your truth on in deep in us, shape and passion us in your life.

that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our peace of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and forgive us all your purposes for your glory.

[22 : 32] Just for good obedience holy reverence to humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

cause our rain to rise, cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority.

Works of power that can never fail let their truth prevail over unbelead.

speak, O Lord, and renew our minds help us grasp the heights of your plans for us to sun change from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity and by grace we'll stand on your promises and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

[23 : 59] Speak, O Lord, till your church is built and the end is filled with your glory.

We're going to read God's word right from John chapter 6 chapter 6 John chapter 6 and we read from verse 1 Sometime after this Jesus crossed to the far shore of the sea of Galilee that is the sea of Tiberias and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs that he performed on the sea.

Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples the Jewish Passover feast was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming towards him he said to Philip where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?

He asked this only to test him for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite.

Another of his disciples Andrew, Simon Peter's brother spoke up here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two fish but how far will they go among so many?

[25 : 17] Jesus said make the people sit down. There was plenty of grass in that place and the men sat down about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.

He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat he said to his disciples gather the pieces that are left over let nothing be wasted.

So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did they began to say surely this is the prophet who has come into the world.

Jesus knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force withdrew again to a mountain by himself. When evening came his disciples went down to the lake where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum.

By now it was dark and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed three or three and a half miles they saw Jesus approaching the boat walking on the water and they were terrified but he said to them it is I don't be afraid.

[26 : 37] Then they were willing to take him into the boat and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realised 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 realised 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 I tell you the truth you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs 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. On him God the Father has placed a seal of approval. Then they asked him what must we do to do the work God requires?

Jesus answered the work of God is this to believe in the one he has sent. So they asked him what miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe you?

[27 : 54] What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert as it is written and he gave him bread from heaven to eat. Jesus said to them I tell you the truth 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 for the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

So they said from now on give us this bread. Then Jesus declared I am the bread of life he who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty but as I told you you have seen me and still you do not believe all that 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 that he has given me but raise them up at the last day so my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day at this the Jews 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 say I come down from heaven stop grumbling among yourselves

Jesus answered no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day it is written the prophets they will all be taught by God everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me no one has seen the Father except the one who is from God only he has seen the Father I tell you the truth he who believes has eternal life everlasting life I am the bread of life your forefathers ate the man in the desert yet they died but here is the bread that comes down from heaven which a man may eat and not die I am the living bread that came down from heaven if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever this bread is my flesh which I give for the life of the world then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves how can this man give us this flesh to eat Jesus said to them I tell you the truth unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood you have no life in you whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day for my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him just as the living father sent me and I live because of the father so the one who feeds on me will live because of me this is the bread that came down from heaven your forefathers ate manna and died but he who feeds on this bread will live forever he said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum on hearing it many of his disciples said this is a hard teaching who can accept it aware that his disciples were grumbling about this

Jesus said to them does this offend you what if you see the son of man ascend to where he was before the spirit gives life the flesh transfer nothing the words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life yet there are some of you who do not believe for Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him he went on to say this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the father has enabled him from this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him you do not want to leave too do you Jesus asked the twelve Simon Peter answered him Lord to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life we believe and know that you are the holy one of God then Jesus replied have I not chosen you the twelve yet one of you is a devil he meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot who though one of the twelve was later to betray him

Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us Callum is now going to lead us in prayer guarantee blockchain war but two to five, and one, as they deal with the beat, one is able to hold the Lord ■iva of ■■■■osals and will ■■■■ of them.

[32 : 52] Father, the evil of God, the■■ of God. Father, we have his critical religious needs thing I thought could cum orát standards an attack.

Are you ok now? I cannot think of them oh but the people that they need.

Not útlítate. Babylon Gaggan Who's going to need for children whose retainer be operated at hand?

Can you■? Who are you? Basically, what I have said about people ■■ our own are in a double estrogen because we With Murs ■ Why did you turn here at ■■ to say we still stop the rain and I see this bridge between cars and smaller and streets as well because it's not the designated What the■■ show's return is by us all of us.

1. What everything can be. What everything can be said to us and.

[35 : 16] What what all of us have to say about us... ■ās pub... friends I tell that there's a question as that we are figuring out that I am Papapa.

So podcast come from papa Cos. father none no I sing again in Psalm 46, two verses at the end of Psalm and Galilee.

Be still and know that I am God among the heathen I will be exalted, I am earth will be exalted high. Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side. The God of Jacob our refuge forever will abide.

These two verses in Galilee to God's grace. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[37 : 38] We are already out of heaven. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[40 : 14] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And Lord we pray for those of our congregation who are away in different churches worshipping at this time.

And we ask Lord that you would bless them and bless the fellowships that they join together with at this time. Be at work Lord throughout the whole world we pray as we know that you are.

[41 : 46] And open your word to us now as we pray that you would open our hearts to your word. In Jesus name we ask. Amen. John chapter 6 if you could open that chapter please.

A huge part of our lives today is the internet. Whether we're on computers or whether we're on tablets or phones or whatever we can barely survive these days if we're not connected to the internet.

And the internet is absolutely full of people who are very publicly and often very vociferously reacting to the world that's around them.

So when something happens in world affairs or in politics something like you mentioned the word independence and independence debate. Or if you hear about Brexit and article 50 and these kind of significant events.

You know when you log on to Facebook or Twitter or one of these apps that there is going to be just an avalanche of reaction.

[42 : 54] And there always is. Those who sat down last night and watched match of the day. Didn't get a chance to last night. But there is an element of the programme where we actually get to sit and we watch the match.

And then after the match it seems to me that there is as much time devoted to the pundits reacting to the match as we actually see the match being played itself.

A few minutes ago we watched that clip on the screen. And we see these Chinese Christians. And they have Bibles in their hands for the first time ever. And what just I think touches us and strikes us and humbles us is their reaction.

And today I'd like us to think about the three reactions that we can observe to Christ. In John chapter 6 or John chapter 5 spilling over into John chapter 6.

Just to give you a reminder of where we were two weeks ago we were in John chapter 5. And John chapter 5 is a passage where Jesus really begins to make clear who he truly is.

[44 : 13] As John's Gospel develops there's signs and there's testimonies and there's lots of notable testimonies and events which are recorded for us.

And they're all pointing to the identity of Christ. And in John chapter 5 Jesus really for the first time very plainly and clearly comes in the public scene.

In the gathered crowds he comes to that point where he begins to tell them who he truly is. And he makes clear to the Jews who are gathered, the religious Jews and the crowds that he wasn't just another prophet.

He wasn't just one in a long line of teachers. He wasn't a gifted philosopher. He didn't come to be a social revolutionary. But he was God. He was God the Son.

He was God the Judge. And he was God the Savior. That's where we left off two weeks ago. And as we look at John 5 and into John 6 we see the developing reactions to Jesus' declaration about his identity.

[45 : 29] There's three reactions I want to look at. The first is the reaction of the religious Jews. And it's a flat out rejection. The second reaction is the reaction of the crowds.

It's more positive than a rejection. There is an interest. There is, I think what we could say, a fleeting infatuation with Jesus.

And the third reaction is the reaction of the disciples. And it's the reaction of faith. We see a growing faith. And so these are the three reactions I'd like us to look at.

First of all, we see the reaction of the Jews, the Pharisees. And it's just outright rejection. Now again, let's remember the story so far going through John's Gospel.

The commentators had agreed on the fact that the religious Jews were those who were very, very closely watching Jesus. And some of the commentators are of the belief that the religious Jews were watching Jesus so closely because they had an interest in him.

[46 : 32] And they had an interest perhaps in enticing him to join their ranks. Nicodemus in John chapter 3. Remember, he comes to Jesus by night.

And he speaks as one of the top Pharisees on behalf of the Pharisees. He says in John chapter 3, We, we, we know.

We know you are a teacher who has come from God. And so they were impressed by him in the first instance.

He spoke with such authority. No one could contest that. He does such amazing things. And the evidences of these amazing, miraculous things was all around him.

And that drew the Jews to Jesus. But when he begins to challenge their traditions as he was now, and when his teaching was turning in on them, and beginning to expose what was wrong in their hearts, when the authority of Jesus was beginning to tower over the Pharisees and the religious elites, that's when they objected.

[47 : 59] See, John, or Jesus in John chapter 5, is making clear very openly that he was not equal with the religious Jews.

He was not equal with the Pharisees. No, he was equal with God. Chapter 5, verse 18.

Jesus makes, they deduce from what Jesus is saying, and they deduce correctly, that Jesus was making himself equal with God.

And if he was equal with God, he was an authority. over them. And so the Pharisees had a decision to make.

They could either bow, and submit to Christ, and begin to follow him. Or they could reject him, and stand against him, and seek to silence him, and seek to remove him from their lives, which up until this point had been pretty comfortable, in the religious aristocracy.

[49 : 13] And what they went for, in their reaction, was the latter. They rejected Jesus. Chapter 5, verse 16, makes clear, they persecuted him.

They tried to silence him. Chapter 5, verse 18, says they tried hard to kill him. And then, when we step over into chapter 6, and if we scan down that long chapter, from verses 41 to 59, we have no time to go into it, but we see, and we hear, more negative reaction, against Jesus.

They rejected him, because of the authority, that he claimed was his own. And the rejection becomes, more and more determined, as time goes on.

And that was then. First reaction, their reaction, was rejection of Christ. What's your reaction, today? You know, still for some, this authority of Christ, is a huge stumbling block.

If Jesus would just settle, for a lower place, in their lives, there are some, who might consider, embracing him. If Jesus would just settle, for a lower place, amongst other religious leaders, then they might be, more ready to accept him.

[50 : 45] If Jesus would just, lower his, authority level, a bit more, so he's not towering over them, they might be willing, to take him on, in a kind of, consultancy basis, into their lives, as one of their, life advisors.

But see, Jesus doesn't do that. Jesus is not, equal with us. Jesus will not, subcontract, with us.

He will not act, as a life consultant. He's not equal with us. He is an authority, over us. He is Lord.

He is King. He is the name, above all names, including our own. And so, as you and I, see his authority, and hear, him speak, with authority, we will do, one of two things.

This morning, everyone who's gathered here, is doing one of two things, in response, to the authority of Christ. We will either, recognize that authority, and take him, to be our Lord, and submit to him, and give him, that rightful place, as number one, as King, over our lives, or we will seek, to silence him.

[52 : 11] And we may continue, to sit in services, but, we will, increasingly close our Bibles, because we don't like, what we hear. And we may sit through sermons, and we will, for a large measure, close our ears, because we don't like, what we hear.

We battle against him. We resist, his, encroaching, on our lives. Ultimately, those in that position, will seek to, remove him, from life, and from experience.

Like the Pharisees, actually, were here. So the first reaction, we see to Jesus, is rejection. A refusal to buy, a refusal to, take him in, as King, of their lives.

The second reaction, we see here, is that of the crowds. And, it's an infatuation, is what I would say. And we see, from the beginning, in chapter 6, and at verse 2, that there was, a great, crowd of people, who were following Jesus.

And we could go back, and track through, the last few chapters, and see, that on various occasions, there was a great, crowd of people, who were following Jesus. And on our first, reflection, we think, well that's a great thing.

[53 : 35] It's a good thing, to have all these crowds, following Jesus. And it certainly, looks good on the surface, but remember, Jesus could see the heart. And he knew, that all was not as good, as it seemed.

So, why were the crowds, following Christ? Well the crowds, were following Christ, because of what he did do for them.

Not because of, who he was, in himself. They knew by now, looking back over these chapters, that Jesus could heal the sick. They knew by now, that Jesus could take, natural water, and, and in an instant, turn it into wine.

They recognized, this was, someone who could do amazing things. Jesus was just about, to demonstrate, to the gathered crowds, that he could take fresh air.

and turn it into bread and fish. So the, gathered crowds of Jews, were thinking, this is someone, that we want to see more of.

[54 : 48] This Jesus, is a fascinating character. This Jesus, is an impressive character. This is someone, that we could use. This is someone, who has supernatural power.

Think about, all the miracles, and the healings. This is someone, who has, supernatural courage. Think about, what he did in the temple. Fearless of the Jews, those in power, over the tables, go out, all the livestock, goes from the area.

The prophets, the coins, are flying. Jesus didn't, didn't fear them. And he saw, such supernatural, courage in Christ, as well as, supernatural power.

And, this was someone, that they saw, as a potential king. This is someone, that they thought, could potentially, overthrow, these dominant Romans, and give them, their land back.

That seemed, to be the way, of their thinking. It says in verse 15, that they intended, to come, and make, Jesus king, by force.

[56 : 03] And so, verse 15, makes clear to us, that Jesus, withdrew from them. Because, although there was, a guy of crowd, he knew the heart, of the crowd.

He knew the motivation, of the crowd. And still, Jesus knows our hearts. And still, if we, follow him, only for the things, that we can get, from him.

And not because, of who he is, in himself. He withdraws, from us. Now, it's true, as we look back, over some of these, miracles, and we think about, some of those, who came to Christ.

It's true, that sometimes, it's a healing touch. Think about, the father, and the son. sometimes, sometimes, it's a gracious, provision. Sometimes, it's a supernatural, sign.

Sometimes, it's something, amazing, that kickstarts, you and I, into following Christ. But if we continue, to follow Jesus, simply, for the things, that we can, keep on getting, from him.

[57 : 24] It's no reason, to follow, he withdraws, from us. He is Lord, he is king, he is God. He's worthy, of our worship.

He's not simply, one that we go to, saying, give me more. I want more stuff. I want more power. See, when Jesus, re-emerges, before the crowd, look at verses 22, through to verse, 59 again.

We just haven't got, the time to go into it. But what he does, in that section, is he challenges, the way of, their thinking. Jesus makes clear, to them, he didn't, he didn't come, to entertain, he didn't leave, heaven, to come to earth, just simply, to be interesting.

He didn't come, to be a supernatural, doctor, for their temporal, bodies. He didn't come, to be a, a heavenly, vending machine.

He could have his, buttons pushed, and just, keep pumping out, all the things, that they were after. Jesus makes clear, that he came, to be the bread, of life.

[58 : 43] And in that day, bread was not, one of a myriad, of foods, that you could pick, and choose, in a buffet. Bread was, that food, that symbolized, life in itself.

Jesus was making, clear to them, he came to be, the very one, who could sustain, and he would sustain, their lives. And because of, what he said, many of the crowd, and many who, even claimed to be, his disciples, verse 66, they turned back, and they withdrew, from Jesus.

When, they saw the authority, that was, over them. When they saw, that Jesus, perspective, was not simply, the here and now, but it was eternal.

It's too much. That wasn't their interest. So they stopped following. And in that location, I think we, we need to note, that Jesus, looks for more, than passing interest.

There are seasons, in our lives, when we, are well aware, of how much we need, the strength, the comfort, the peace, the joy, the touch of Christ.

[60 : 07] And we come to, for that. But when we receive that, and we get steady again, we walk away. That seemed to be, the position of the crowd.

And Jesus, looks for more than that. He looks for our worship. Because he's God the son. So the reaction, of the religious Jews, was flat out rejection.

A rebellion, against his authority. The reaction of the crowds, was a fleeting interest. But only really, a selfish interest, for what they could get, from him.

Rather than, who he was in himself. And the reaction, of the disciples, which is a developing reaction, is the reaction, of faith. What we see, in the disciples, is faith.

Now remember, if, in Matthew 17, if we could go there, we're not going to go there, just now, but in Matthew 17, Jesus teaches, that if you and I, have faith, even if it's, faith as small, as the smallest seed, the mustard seed, we can move mountains.

[61 : 23] And he might equally, have said, if you have faith, like a mustard seed, you can feed thousands. And as we look at, the disciples here, those who are following, Christ, for who he was, not for, simply what you could get, from him, we see faith, at work in them.

And it's not, huge, robust, developed, mature faith, it's mustard seed, faith, actually. But we see it. Four evidences, of faith, that we note, in the disciples.

The first, is that they have, a desire, and a determination, to be with, Christ, they sit down, verse three, with, with Jesus. Jesus went up, on a mountainside, and sat down, with his disciples.

And so we have, this picture, away from the crowds, away from the activity, the isolation, of this mountainside, Jesus there, and his disciples, sitting around him, sitting with him.

And that was the, first, primary calling, of the disciples. They were called, Mark chapter three, verse 14, we so often go to, they were called, to be with him.

[62 : 54] And so here we see, in this chapter, the disciples, away from the crowds, away from the world, and with him. And that's an evidence, of faith.

It's a simple one. Don't miss it. When God, is beginning, to give us faith, when faith, is building, in our lives, we desire, to be, with Jesus.

We don't have to be, dragged into the door. We don't lament, the duty, of coming to church, or the prayer meeting, or the duty, of having family worship, or the duty, of having to sit down, with our Bibles.

When faith is at work, when faith is developing, we desire, and we determine, to come away, from the world, and to sit, with Jesus.

And speak with him, in prayer. And listen to him, with our Bibles open.

[64 : 08] How do we know, these Chinese Christians, actually, had faith? I think we know, these Chinese Christians, had faith, because we see it, in the intensity, of their desire, to be with, Jesus, in his word.

Do we have, that desire? Can that, faith, be seen in us, as it was seen, in the disciples? They sat with him.

The second thing, second evidence, of faith here, that we see, in the disciples, is they take the tests, that Jesus sets. Now tests, are set for, for progress.

Some of the students, are back with us, at this point in time, it's good to see them. They're probably not, back for a holiday. They're back, because they're aware, that in a few weeks time, there are tests, they have to sit.

There are tests, there are for their progress, from year one, to year two. If we, are 16 years old, or 17 years old, and we want to move, from the passenger seat, of the car, to the driver's seat, of the car, what do you do?

[65 : 27] Well you have to, take the test, you have to get the theory, and you have to take, the practical test. And these, disciples, they're very, immature disciples, at this stage, they were followers, of Christ, yes, but they, they had their L plates on.

And so, Jesus sets a test. And in chapter 5, verse 18, and all the verses, surrounding it, Jesus has revealed, to the crowds, and to the disciples, that he was, equal with God.

He reveals, to the disciples, that he, knows the father, and that he is the son. That was the theory. He's given them the theory.

He gave it them, with great emphasis. And now he sets, a practical test. And Philip is the first one, who's in line, under test conditions. And Philip, in verse 5, of chapter 6, he looks up, and when he looked up, and saw a great crowd, coming towards him, Jesus looked up, and saw a great crowd, coming towards him, he said to Philip, where shall we buy bread, for these people to eat?

He asked him this, only to test him. For he had in mind, what he was going to do. Now think this one through, if you're one, who's still not convinced, about the identity of Christ.

[66 : 48] If Jesus is simply, a rabbi, even the most accomplished, of rabbis, there's nothing he can do here. If Jesus is simply, a teacher, he has no power, to deal with the needs, of the crowds, that are gathering around him.

But if he's equal with God, he's God the son, he can do whatever he wants. Because God is the one, who can create.

Because John chapter 1, verse 3, reminds us that, through him, the word, Jesus, all things were made. He really told us that, a few minutes ago. In John chapter 2, water is made into wine.

So, how about fresh air, being made into food? Or how about a packed lunch, for one, being made into a feast, for 5,000 men, and their families?

Will Philip think that way, under test conditions? Well, seemingly, Philip hasn't got to that, kind of position, in this thinking yet. Philip's got his calculator out, and Philip's, saying in verse 7, eight months wages.

[68 : 02] Jesus would not be enough, to buy a bite, for each of these people. It's the wrong answer, Philip. You have the theory, but you haven't applied it, to practice yet.

He fails, on the first question. He fails, but he's not fired, because Jesus is very patient, with his disciples. And then along comes Andrew, next in line, to take the test, and he's got a little boy, with him.

And he says in verse 9, here's a boy, with five small barley loaves, and two small fish, but how far, will they go, among so many? It's a great question, Andrew.

How far, will they go, among so many? You're on the right track, Andrew, and so the lesson, proceeds. As Andrew, seems to be, thinking, with mustard seed faith, what can be done?

I think, before we progress, at this point, let's be encouraged, if we are Christians, to view, our lives, and our circumstances, with eyes of faith.

[69 : 09] You know, sometimes, Jesus takes us, into scenarios, like this. Sometimes, Jesus takes us, into utterly impossible, scenarios, where all the odds, are stacked against us.

And it's as if, he stands back, and he says, what now? What are you going to do? And sometimes, these are tests, that he sets for us.

And we know, how this works, with children. A loving parent, will sometimes, stand back, and watch their child, making an absolute, hash of things.

Because that's the way, they learn. It's part of their maturing. Sometimes, Jesus, because he loves us, and wants to see us, grow, in faith, and not get stuck, as baby Christians.

He sets a test. And I wonder, could we apply this, on a big scale, today, in this country?

[70 : 19] Are we, as disciples, of Christ, in the UK, are we living, under test conditions? Because today, the church, seems so limited, and so fragile, and so fractured.

So weak, compared to yesterday. And we look at ourselves, and we look at the resources, we have, and the task seems impossible.

And we look at the lost crowds, these thousands, and millions of people, who have no interest, in Christ, and the task, looks impossible. Because we are so few.

And then we look at the authorities, and we see how aggressive, and how hostile, they are towards Christians, and the gospel. And the task, seems impossible. But when we look to Christ, anything is possible.

But do you believe that? These disciples, we see faith in them. They sit down with Jesus.

[71 : 34] They take the test, that Jesus sets. The third thing, is they obey Jesus, even when it's risky. Even when they risk, looking like fools, for being Christ.

Jesus, in verse 10, said, have the people, sit down. There was plenty of grass, in that place, and the men sat down, about 5,000 of them. Now, you have to think, from the perspective, of a disciple here.

Try and think yourself, into this situation. Feeding of the 5,000, is familiar. We know the story. Try and think yourself, into the middle of this story, in the shoes of the disciples, for a minute.

Think about how uncomfortable, it must have felt for them, once they took these 5,000 men, and their families, and sat them down, as the anticipation, for food, was rising.

I've never worked, in a cafe, as a waiter, I'm just too clumsy for it, but many of you have. And you know, that once you take, Joe Bloggs, and sit him down, at this table, and he's had the menu, and he's made his decision, he expects to eat.

[72 : 54] And he, and his family, may sit for 10 minutes, with growing impatience, but once they've been shown, at their table, and they sit down, they expect to eat. And if you're a waiter, and you've taken this family, to their tables, and you've sat them down, and you know, there is no food, in the cupboards, and there is no chef, in the kitchen, you're going to expect trouble.

So put yourself, in the shoes, of these disciples. They take the 15,000, lightly sized crowd, to their tables, they have them sit down, the whole while, they know there's no food.

And they have no money. And even if they had money, they didn't have a brownie shop, around the corner. So there was no place, to go for supplies. Had Jesus told them, what the plan was, no, you told them nothing.

He just told the disciples, have the people sit down. So can you imagine, the disciples, in their thought process, looking to Jesus, and saying, what are you doing?

I know these people. You know, where is this coming from? There's going to be a riot, on our hands here, if we're not careful. And we're going to look like, absolute clowns.

[74 : 14] have them sit down, says Jesus. And so the disciples obeyed. They had the crowd sit down.

And when everyone, was quiet, and when there was order, and when it was possible, for Jesus to speak, and be heard, Jesus, God the Son, he speaks to his Father, he gives thanks, and a packed lunch for one, is multiplied, into a hearty, feast, for probably 15,000.

Don't you think, that the faith, of the disciples, must have grown, through that stressful, experience. Maybe from mustard, seed faith, to acorn, seed faith.

But the principle, is a helpful one, for us to know. As we sit, with Jesus, and as we live, sometimes through, difficult, circumstances, even, impossible situations, and yet, watch what Christ does, when we obey him.

Our faith is strength. You see, faith in the disciples, that's the reaction. They sit with Jesus, they take the test, that Jesus sets, they obey Jesus, even when it's risky.

[75 : 44] And finally, we're finished. They see Jesus, even in the storm. It's quite a day, for these poor disciples.

Talk about an intensive course, in faith. They go from, land, and all the stress, of that situation, they've just, come through, and they head down, to the lake, and they're, no longer in the boat.

There's no sooner, than the boat, and the weather, gets heavy, and a storm, clips up. And yet, the point to note, because we have no time, to look into this, the point to note is, that in the eye, of the storm, they see Christ.

And in the eye, and the ferocity, of the storm, they hear, Jesus, and they learn, that even, in the ferocity, of the storm, they can trust, Jesus.

They come to know, that he is their refuge, and he is their, strength. But they needed, a storm, to actually realize that.

[76 : 56] Why did Jesus, allow the storm? Is it because, he didn't love them? Was it because, he wanted to, scare them? No, he allowed the storm, because he did love them.

And he wanted them, to know, that they were, safe with him. In the storm. He wanted them, to trust him.

And these words, that Jesus spoke, in the eye, of the storm, I'm sure, must have come, with such, reassurance, back to them, time, and time, again. The waves, are crashing in, the wind is howling, and in the middle of it, they hear, it is I.

Do not be afraid. The perspective, I want us to close with. Life, is full of storms. Some of you, are going through, storms at present.

But often, these storms, are the places, where we learn, so much more, of the love, that Jesus has, for us. And how much, we can trust them, and how safe, we are, with them.

[78 : 12] So when things, get rough, don't ever think, that Jesus, has abandoned you. Look for him, in the storm. Take him in, verse 21, with you, in the storm.

Keep your faith in him. Why? Because he is God. And he can be trusted. Three responses.

Religious Jews, rejection. Crowds, passing interest, infatuation, only after, what they could get. Disciples. Faith.

Difficult. Maybe faith. But faith. As they, trusted him, and they followed him.

Which, reaction, is yours? Yes.