

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 1st June 2008

Being Witnesses with Jesus – by the sea shore

John 6:1 -15



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

John assumed that his readers knew the basic facts about Jesus. Instead of focusing on facts he considered the profound meaning of what Jesus had said and done. The feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle, except Jesus resurrection that all 4 gospels record. It shows Jesus meeting the most basic human need. The apostle John in this passage brings us to the 4th of the signs or miracles that witness to who Jesus is.

Chapter 5:36, is preparing his readers for the miracle that is coming next in his narrative and which demonstrates the Father's approval of all that Jesus did. Look at Ch.5:45-47. This is important in the context of the feeding of the 5000 because many Jews believed that the Messiah would renew the miraculous manna that their ancestors had eaten under Moses. Through the story Jesus points to a better life changing meal – himself- as the bread of life.

This passage raises questions of **Anticipation** and **Expectancy**, together with **V.C.R – Vision, Conversation and Regeneration**

Ch.6:1: The crowd had seen the miraculous signs that he had done already in healing the sick so they followed him with **anticipation** and **expectancy**. John interjects that the Jewish Passover was approaching. The references to the mountain and the Passover remind us of how Moses fed people in the wilderness, just as Jesus does now.

Ch.6:5,6: cf. Jesus conversation with Philip. Philip's **expectancy** and **anticipation** have disappeared. Jesus only did this to test Philip, because Jesus knew already from the Father, what he was going to do. See ch.5:19

Andrew, also a witness, playing to his strengths of finding and bringing people to Jesus, brings a boy onto the scene. It was Philip who found Nathanael (1:45). Andrew speaks up (6:9). Andrew's **expectancy and anticipation** have also disappeared. Jesus then says grace, (6:11) he blesses both the bread and God for it. John says he gave thanks over the bread – *eucharistesas*. This is the word which gives us 'eucharist', which is interesting because in John there is no account of the institution of Holy Communion. In ch. 6 we find Jesus referring to Moses and to his father being the giver of the true bread and as the people long for this bread, Jesus says in v35: "*I am the bread of life...*", and in 6:51: *I am the living bread*.

How big is our **VISION** and what is our expectation? Jesus' vision was nothing less than global transformation. We need to have the eyes and ears of our spirits opened to a God who is mighty beyond compare and to ask him to **enlarge our vision**, and not to lose our **expectancy and anticipation** as Philip and Andrew seemed to do

The crowd, the boy together with Philip and Andrew, were all witnesses to the miracle and we may wonder at the **CONVERSATIONS** that may have flowed from this. Before Jesus was taken into heaven he said you will be my witnesses. A witness is someone who both sees and speaks. As his witnesses we are in need of **REGENERATION**. The crowd that witnessed the miracles Jesus performed must have been electrified by the awesomeness of God. Jesus said you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and in Paul's letter Eph. 1:3 we find that we have **every spiritual blessing in Christ**. We have all the riches in Christ at our disposal – we are spiritual millionaires!



Witness: questions to discuss

1. Suggestion: use Psalm 89: 1 -18 to lead you into a time of worship and prayer
2. What is your reaction when you hear about miracles being performed today? Should we still anticipate and believe for miracles to take place? (See: 1 Cor: 12 v 10)
3. Have we lost the power/desire to witness and can we tell the story of what God is doing in us?
4. Share together ways in which we can keep our vision alive. Are there practical ways in which we can help each other to do this in our small groups?
5. Discuss the principle lessons you have learnt so far, as we have journeyed through St John's gospel.