

## Meet Jesus and Be Fed

### Luke 9:10-22

I'm Andy, one of the members of the staff team here  
If this is your first time here, we want to welcome you to church  
We're really pleased that you're here today.

One of the things we say often at this church is **All of Life, All for Jesus**  
Now we know that everyone is trying to live the best version of life  
But we believe that the best life anyone can ever live  
Is one that is lived with Jesus at the centre of it  
Christianity is not a set of rules  
But it's a relationship with the most important person in the world - Jesus

We believe that he is the source of lasting love, peace, purpose and hope  
And that's why we want to share him with others  
Thank you for the opportunity to do that today  
And so over three Sundays,  
If you've never met Jesus before  
we want to help you to meet him  
Through recorded stories of people from our church like Vincent  
But also from the Bible that you've just heard read  
Jesus has changed our lives for the better,  
and we believe he can do the same for you  
These three Sundays are like an entrée at a restaurant  
You get a taste but we would love also to invite you to try more

The best way to learn about Jesus is straight from the bible  
On the table in the foyer is a gospel of Luke,  
One of the books from the Bible about Jesus  
And you are welcome to take a copy of Luke and read it  
If you would prefer a complete bible  
We would be more than happy to give you one

I want also to invite you to our Christianity Explored course starting in October  
This is an opportunity to explore Christianity over seven sessions with others  
You don't need any background knowledge to attend  
Just an open mind  
We meet Jesus as we read a gospel from the bible together  
We welcome your questions  
There's good food  
And you might make some new friends along the way  
And everyone who attends has a wonderful time

During our Meet Jesus events we're going to be looking at bible passages  
from Luke's account of Jesus  
Where Jesus is always eating with people  
And teaching things about what God's kingdom is like  
And people have these life changing encounters with Jesus over a meal  
And that's not surprising is it?

Eating together usually means sharing food and laughter and celebration  
Some of our most memorable and life changing moments take place at a meal.  
But sharing a meal can also be confronting  
Think of a couple breaking up over an awkward dinner  
Or the shared grief of a wake after a funeral  
And that's what we're going to see when Jesus eats with people  
It's both confronting and comforting  
He will say the most outrageous things  
And yet he will do the most wonderful things  
Life changing things  
Things that will touch your heart  
Change your mind  
And maybe even transform your life

So we would love for you to keep coming over the next two Sundays  
And also to our Meet Jesus Women's event  
We hope that you will meet Jesus over a meal with him.

Before I give my talk  
If it helps you, there are full transcripts of the talk available to download from our website  
Or from the table in the foyer

I'm going to do something we do before every bible talk on a Sunday  
We pray and ask God to help us  
And I'm going to pray that God might show us who Jesus is  
And whether that might be meeting him for the first time  
Or getting to know him even better if you've known him all your life

Today we're going to look at an event in Jesus' life  
That is recorded in every account of his life in the bible  
And I'm going to unpack this passage in three parts

**The King who welcomes**

**The King who feeds**

**And The King who suffers**

**Firstly the King who welcomes**

Verse 10

<sup>10</sup> When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus all that they had done. He took them along and withdrew privately to a town called Bethsaida.

Jesus had just sent his 12 apostles or disciples on ministry trips  
Each of them travelled in a different part of Israel and taught people about God's kingdom  
and also performed miracles  
And now they had returned home  
Presumably tired but excited to share their stories with Jesus and with each other  
So Jesus' original plan is to take them for a prayer retreat  
And maybe a bit of rest and refreshment

Bethsaida was a good location for this  
A fertile fishing village located on the shores of Lake Galilee  
Remote enough for Jesus and his followers to get some privacy for their retreat

But in a moment this little fishing village is about to get swamped by an enormous crowd

Verse <sup>11</sup> When the crowds found out, they followed him. He welcomed them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

Jesus's early ministry had earned him a celebrity status  
People came to him from all around Lake Galilee  
We're told in verse 14, five thousand men  
So including women and children it was probably many more than this  
Maybe 10,000 - 15,000 in total.

Now the first thing I want you to notice is that Jesus welcomes them in verse 11  
Remember that Jesus' original agenda was to take his apostles on a private retreat  
But seeing the needy crowd  
Jesus is willing to change his plans in order to respond to their need  
He welcomes them – thousands of them  
He gives himself to meeting their needs by teaching them and healing them.

In the same account of this event in Mark's gospel it says  
When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had *compassion* on them  
Because they were like sheep without a shepherd

King Jesus is compassionate  
He's not welcoming the elite of Jewish Society  
He's not welcoming important Roman officials  
He's welcoming the masses to himself  
He's welcoming the broken  
The sick, the poor, the hungry  
He's not welcoming the self-righteous  
He's welcoming lost sinners  
And you see this about Jesus right throughout the gospels  
Jesus welcomes people

When I was studying at Bible College,  
My fellow student Sam  
Served as a missionary in Japan for a number of years  
And he was once ministering to homeless people and talking to them about Jesus  
And he came across a man who had been on streets for some time  
And after a conversation with him, it was clear that this man was a follower of Jesus  
And Sam asked him, do you belong to a church  
And the man said, "I can't be part of a church, because I don't own a tie"  
I mean how devastating is that  
Somewhere along the way,  
Someone claiming to be Christian told him he wasn't welcome to Jesus  
Because he didn't look neat and clean enough  
That is not the Jesus of the bible  
The Jesus of the bible welcomes anyone to come to him  
In whatever state you find yourself in  
Broken, messy, lost, desperate, ashamed, lustful, selfish, greedy, lonely,  
Jesus welcomes you not when you can get your act together,  
He welcomes you know

Right now  
Just as you are

## **Here's our second point** **The King who feeds**

Verse 12

<sup>12</sup> Late in the day, the Twelve approached and said to him, "Send the crowd away, so that they can go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find food and lodging, because we are in a deserted place here."

<sup>13</sup> "You give them something to eat," he told them.

If you put yourself in the shoes of the twelve apostles  
You can imagine how tired they must have been after their ministry trips  
They were ready for some down time  
And then just when you're feeling at your limit  
Jesus goes and welcomes thousands of people  
After a long and busy day organizing this massive crowd to see Jesus  
They rightly say to Jesus "send them away"  
It's very pragmatic, the people need to find food and shelter before it gets dark  
And then Jesus says the last thing you want to hear "You give them something to eat"  
"You're crazy Jesus! There is no way we can feed this crowd"

Verse 14

"We have no more than five loaves and two fish," they said, "unless we go and buy food for all these people." <sup>14</sup> (For about five thousand men were there.)

It's an awful feeling when you don't have enough food for your guests  
My uncle died last month and I had the responsibility of organizing and leading his funeral  
And my aunty said that she wanted a lot of food at the wake  
Because my uncle would have wanted people to enjoy eating and talking together  
And so I asked the caterer to provide enough food for more than a hundred people  
A few days out from the funeral I asked for more food  
because it looked like a hundred and fifty people were coming  
And on the day, two hundred people came  
And as it turns out, we needed more food.  
There were a few random sandwiches left but people could have eaten more  
I left feeling disappointed that I didn't cater enough  
I struggled to feed 200 people, imagine feeding 10,000 people

In John's account we're told the disciples found a boy with five loaves and two fish  
This is a packed lunch for two people at best  
The only realistic option that the disciples can come up with is to go and buy food  
We're told in John's account that it would take 200 denarii to buy enough food  
That was about 8 month's salary for an average worker  
Calculated into modern terms  
for a full-time *minimum* wage worker in Australia  
8 month's pay is \$38,000

Al draw a realistic picture of Jesus and his disciples  
surrounded by 10,000 people in Bethsaida

This is an overwhelming problem  
And I think this is what Jesus wanted to do  
He wanted to overwhelm the disciples  
And teach them something about himself  
“There is nothing you can do to feed their hunger”  
But where the disciples are lacking,  
Jesus is more than enough

Verse 15

Then he told his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” <sup>15</sup> They did what he said, and had them all sit down. <sup>16</sup> Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke them. He kept giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup> Everyone ate and was filled. They picked up twelve baskets of leftover pieces.

Jesus takes the boy’s packed lunch  
And then he presents it to God for blessing  
Jesus doesn’t need money to feed the masses  
He knows that God can feed them  
The maker of the universe  
Can make this meagre meal into a massive feast  
I wonder what the disciples thought when they saw this miracle  
As they distributed the food  
As they saw the two fish and five loaves multiply and multiply  
Feeding not just the 10,000  
In fact everyone was so full, there were leftovers  
Generous leftovers – twelve baskets full  
It’s a beautiful scene – 10,000 souls fed by the teaching of Jesus  
And then 10,000 stomachs fed by the bread of Jesus  
Satisfied and serene as they sat on the lush green plains of Bethsaida  
Overlooking the sea of Galilee  
Welcomed and fed by their King

The best time in Melbourne is a warm Summer evening  
Picnic dinner on the lawns of the Myer Music Bowl getting ready for a free concert  
Highly recommend it if you’ve never done it  
There’s in nothing better than eating and enjoying together  
Sitting on the grass in peace and satisfaction  
And you know the trouble is  
Moments like those,  
As sweet as they are  
They don’t last for long do they?  
So often when I’m somewhere like that  
I can’t help but think about the people who aren’t there

25 people shared reflections of my uncle at his funeral  
I led the service and I didn’t know how to say no to anyone  
So the service was long - two hours  
My uncle was well loved and is well missed  
As far as funerals go it was quite encouraging  
But the most disappointing thing at the funeral - my uncle wasn’t with us  
He wasn’t there to enjoy the food

To talk to the people who spoke so well of him  
He wasn't there to hold my aunty one last time

My uncle spent his last Christmas at my house  
And because he had oesophageal cancer  
It was so painful for him to swallow anything in his last few years  
It was hard to watch him eat these tiny spoonfuls of food  
The simple joy of eating became an ordeal

Do you long for more than this life?  
Are you hungry for a peace, a joy that is not fleeting?  
But could last forever?  
Where you will not lose the ones you love.  
What if Jesus could bring about more than we ever imagined?

We are so hungry aren't we?  
Hungry for meaning  
Hungry for love  
Hungry for security  
Hungry for approval  
And so often the way we feed ourselves leaves us wanting more  
But what if Jesus could feed you?  
What if he could satisfy the deepest hunger that you have no answer for

After feeding the crowd with bread,  
Jesus offered them much more  
This is what John recorded

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. <sup>27</sup> Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal of approval on him."

Jesus then went on to say this:  
I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry.  
What if Jesus could meet your deepest hunger?  
What if he could give real hope in suffering?  
What if he could give you peace amidst your worries?  
What if he could lift the burden of guilt and shame?  
What if he could free you from seeking the approval of others?  
And what if he had an answer for death itself?  
It has been a huge blessing to know Vincent  
Twice a week I see him at the gym and we both go to the gym  
Because we love food and we don't want to change our diets  
I remember that night when Vincent knocked on our door  
And we fed him  
He kept coming back so we fed him some more  
But in reality, Jesus fed him  
Jesus fed him much more than he could ever have imagined  
And it transformed Vincent's life  
And maybe Jesus could feed you too?

This brings us to our last point  
Jesus is the King who suffers

Verse 18

<sup>18</sup> While he was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

<sup>19</sup> They answered, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, that one of the ancient prophets has come back."

Jesus is finally away from the crowds and on retreat with his disciples  
And Jesus wants to know how the disciples made sense of the miracle of the feeding  
The crowd think that Jesus could be one of the great prophets of God  
But Jesus presses the disciples to express their own opinion  
Do *they* know his true identity?

Verse 20

<sup>20</sup> "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

It's a remarkable confession by Peter  
Jesus is not just a messenger from God  
He's not just an impressive man  
Jesus is God's anointed or chosen King  
That's what the Hebrew word - Messiah means – God's chosen King  
The Greek word Christ - means the same thing  
Jesus Christ is God's chosen King

The term Messiah would have evoked the images  
that many people would think today of the term - King  
Power, status, wealth, honour  
And for the people of Jesus' day - military might  
You can easily imagine that when the crowds saw Jesus using miraculous power  
Healing and feeding people and teaching with authority  
They saw in Jesus, political and military power  
This picnic by lake Galilee was fast becoming the army of revolution

This is what John records after the feeding miracle

<sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This truly is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

<sup>15</sup> Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

It's interesting what the crowds concluded about Jesus after the feeding miracle  
They saw in him the power to rule  
And for the Jewish people under Roman occupation  
They saw in Jesus someone more powerful than the Romans  
And so they had no problem forcing him to be King.  
It's interesting how they treated Jesus  
The one who welcomed and fed them  
Who loved them according to their need  
And now they were willing to use him against his will to further their own cause

But Jesus didn't want any of that  
But Jesus is a different king  
This is what Jesus says to the disciples in verse 21

<sup>21</sup> But he strictly warned and instructed them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup> saying, "It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day."

I want you to notice that Jesus doesn't deny he's God's King  
In fact Jesus embraces it  
But he used another term from the bible to describe himself - Son of Man  
And this title is also that of God's chosen King  
But the difference is what God's King came to do  
The Son of Man doesn't come with a sword and a crown  
He comes suffering on a cross  
In fact Jesus said it is *necessary* for him to suffer?  
Why?

Jesus explained what he was to do on the cross  
This is Mark Chapter 10  
For even the Son of Man did not come to be served  
But to serve and give his life as a ransom for many

Let me unpack this verse.  
Jesus is saying that as God's King  
He has a right to be served  
But He gives up that right in order to serve us  
He suffered and died for us as a ransom,  
A payment in our place  
He has to die to save our lives.

Earlier I said that the ways we try to satisfy our hunger  
Leaves us wanting more.  
But it's worse than that, the ways we try to feed ourselves  
Often leaves a trail of destruction  
We feed our ambition by using others to get ahead  
We feed our lust by objectifying others  
We feed our anger by hurting those we're meant to love  
We feed our pride by saying we rely on ourselves when so many have helped us  
We feed our greed by valuing possessions more than people  
The bible calls this sin  
And sin is not just destructive for our relationships with others  
Sin destroys our relationship with God  
We live in His world  
We enjoy His gifts  
Life works when we live in thankfulness and trust in him  
And the trouble with sin is that when we say no to God for long enough  
He gives us what we want – death  
Separation from God forever  
The Bible says a life of sin, results in death  
God withdraws every good thing that we enjoy



This is what happens when we try to feed ourselves without Him

But God's love for us means that He doesn't want us to die in sin  
And so He sends His King to feed us  
Jesus dies our death for our sin  
And He lavishes on us eternal life  
He forgives our sin if we would just trust him

This is why Jesus insists to the disciples that he *must* suffer  
He *must* suffers for us.  
This is how the bread of life gives eternal life to those who comes to Him  
He suffers and dies in our place.  
The feeding miracle points to a greater miracle  
Jesus dying on the cross for you and for me

But it is an invitation from Jesus  
He doesn't force himself on us  
If we come to him, he will feed us.  
Jesus once described heaven as a great banquet where God is the host  
And his guests get to feast forever with Him  
The choicest foods, the best wines all at God's expense  
And an invitation is issued but many make excuses  
I just bought property  
I just got married  
I just bought some farm equipment that I need to test out  
And they miss out

One person who will not miss out  
Will be my uncle Didi  
He accepted the invitation to trust in Jesus when he was a university student  
He committed his life to serving Jesus  
He met and married my aunty when he was in his 30s  
And they spent the best part of 30 years translating the bible  
For a people group in Cambodia  
After his cancer diagnosis  
I spoke to my uncle Didi about the prospect of dying  
He told me had no fear  
He wanted to stay for the benefit of others, especially my aunty  
But he was also looking forward to being with Jesus  
I can't wait to see my uncle at the great banquet  
Enjoying food once again in his new body  
Tears of joy will replace tears of grief

But let me ask you, what will you do with the invitation of Jesus  
Luke recorded Jesus' question for all his readers: "who do you say I am?"  
That is the question for you as you leave today?  
You've met the compassionate King who welcomes you as you are  
The generous King who wants to feed you more than you can imagine  
The loving King who suffers in your place  
But who do you say that I am?

If today, you feel ready to be fed by Jesus  
And you want to accept his invitation  
Then I would encourage you to talk to God  
With a simple prayer like this  
Which is just saying sorry, thank you and please to God

Dear God,  
I'm sorry for my sin.  
Thank you for Jesus and his willingness to suffer for me.  
Please help me to trust and follow him.  
Amen

And if you pray a prayer like that  
This is the start of a new life fed by Jesus  
We would love to help you continue in this new life with Jesus  
Speak to the friend who brought you

If you're still trying to figure out who Jesus is  
And whether his death and resurrection are real  
Why not come to Christianity Explored with your friend or family member  
Come see if Jesus is worthy of your trust.

I'm going to pray to finish  
And if you want to be fed by Jesus  
Pray the prayer on the screen with me quietly after each line.