

John 6:1-21

Verses 1-9

How does John set the scene for this account?

It's worth noticing the detail here. Jesus and his disciples cross to the far (Eastern) side of the lake, but a great crowd follow him. We're told later in the account that there were five thousand men – not including women and children, so huge numbers. You can imagine Jesus looking up from where they are sitting on the hillside and seeing all these people coming towards them. The line in v4 seems slightly unexpected at this point – why has John told us it is Passover? The pressing problem is set up in v5. There are huge numbers of people who have come a long way and they need something to eat. Philip, the one with local knowledge is consulted and Andrew finds a small boy with a bit of food, but all this just highlights the seemingly insoluble problem they are facing

Verses 10-13

Think back to what Jesus said about himself in chapter 5. How do we see those claims worked out here?

Verses 14-15

What conclusions do the crowd draw from what Jesus does? Why do you think they do? [Hint: you might like to consider why John tells us it was Passover, v4, and to look up Deuteronomy 18:15-18.]

Why is their response to Jesus unsatisfactory? [You might like to consider their reasons for following him in v2 as well and also check out 2:23-25.]

Verses 16-21

Jesus had said in v6 that part of his purpose in this miracle was to test (ie prove the faith) of his disciples. How does this incident further confirm his identity in this miracle just for them? [You might find it helpful to read Exodus 14:13-22 and notice the echoes of that passage here.]

What consequences does trusting Jesus bring for them?

Thinking it through

How has this passage shown us more of Jesus?

What did the crowd get wrong and why? Can you think of ways in which we might fall into a similar trap?

What encouragements can we take from Jesus' provision both for the crowd and for his disciples?