

Lunch with Jesus

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[0 : 00] But if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John.

John chapter 6, page 891 in the church Bible. John 6, we're going to look at the whole passage. But if we read again at verse 5. John chapter 6 at verse 5. Lifting up his eyes, that's Jesus. Lifting up his eyes then and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?

He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. He himself knew what he would do. I'm going to be honest. You know, there's one channel on the TV that I never thought that we'd be watching again as a family. And that's the children's TV channel, CBeebies.

[1 : 14] Because when David Finlay and Daniel, when they were younger CBeebies, it was on all the time. It was on from the moment it started, I think at 6 in the morning till 7 at night.

But as they grew older, they started watching other TV channels and other TV programs and things on YouTube and Netflix and all that. But now that Matthew is in the house, CBeebies has reappeared on our TV screen.

And I have to say that I quite like CBeebies as a TV program or a TV channel. There's all these great programs. There's Octonauts and GoJettors and Peter Rabbit and Postman Pat and Alpha Blocks and Number Blocks and Bing and Bluey and Teletubbies and Twirly Woos.

All these great programs. I know that for some of you, those names of TV programs would have probably just gone straight over your head. But for others, you'll not only have understood me, you'll probably have sat and watched them with your children.

But there's one thing I'd forgotten about CBeebies. And that's it. When it comes to lunchtime, there's a lunchtime song. As you'd expect with children, there's a lunchtime song.

[2 : 21] And I think it's a brilliant song for kids. It's got these lyrics. It says, what's on your plate? We love lunchtime because it's lunchtime. What's on your plate?

And if you've never seen it, I don't want you to miss out. So there's a link on this week's notices. If you go online, you can watch the song, What's on Your Plate? The lunchtime song.

But you know, for the 5,000 plus people in this chapter whom Jesus had lunch with, what was on their plate, it was all planned, prepared, and provided by Jesus.

It was all planned, prepared, and provided by Jesus. Now, as we mentioned last week, throughout his ministry, Jesus, he not only went around towns and villages, healing and helping people, as well as preaching and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus was also found, many times he was found enjoying and eating with people, which is why we're doing a short series on eating with Jesus.

[3 : 23] Eating with Jesus. Because the wonder is, and the glory of the gospel is, that Jesus invites us to eat with him. He says to us, Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me. Jesus invites us to eat with him.

And last week, we were eating with Jesus at, as we were saying to the children, in the most important time of the day, the most important meal of the day, we were having breakfast with Jesus, looking at John chapter 21.

But now it's time for the next meal of the day, as we have lunch with Jesus. And I'd like us to think about lunch with Jesus under three headings. Planning lunch, preparing lunch, and providing lunch. Planning lunch, preparing lunch, and providing lunch. So first of all, we see Jesus, or someone else, planning lunch. We see Philip planning lunch.

[4 : 25] We see that in verse 4. We're told in verse 4, Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?

He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Now, although we're often told that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, for many people, lunch is actually their first meal of the day, because they don't like eating anything first thing in the morning.

I can't do that. I really cannot do that. I love having my breakfast. I love eating something. But some people, they can live without breakfast. Other people, they can't live without lunch, especially on a day like today.

On Sunday, people can't live without their Sunday lunch. Because when it comes to Sunday lunch, or more specifically, our Sunday roast, there are people who cannot live without it.

The thought of having anything else other than a Sunday roast on a Sunday is just unthinkable.

They couldn't think of it. Because for them, it's not Sunday without a Sunday roast.

[5 : 39] It's not Sunday without a Sunday roast. Whether that roast is beef, or chicken, or lamb, or even if you were to be adventurous and have venison. It's not Sunday without a Sunday roast.

And it's not a Sunday roast without all the sides that come along with it. The carrots, and the turnip, and the broccoli, and the cauliflower, and cheese sauce, and the roast potatoes, and the Yorkshire pudding, and the gravy, and the mustard, and I'm making you hungry at the thought of it.

It's not Sunday without a Sunday roast. But you know, sadly, and I would say more solemnly, for many people in our congregation, and in our community, that their Sunday roast is what keeps them from Sunday worship.

Their Sunday roast is what keeps them from Sunday worship. In fact, over the last ten years of being a minister here, I've actually lost count of the amount of times and the amount of people I have asked to come to church.

And they excuse and they exempt themselves from Sunday worship because they are cooking the Sunday roast. As if that was more of a priority and more of a pressing need than the salvation of their soul.

[7 : 00] And I've often wondered what they'll say when they say to me, Murdo, no, no, I'm cooking the Sunday roast. I've often wondered what they will say to Jesus on the last day when they stand before Him.

Sorry for not going to Sunday worship. I was cooking the Sunday roast. You know, I can understand someone when they say it's not Sunday without a Sunday roast.

I can understand that because I love a Sunday roast. But you know, as a Christian, I can't understand anyone who's happy to have a Sunday without Sunday worship.

Because Sunday worship ought to be first and foremost before a Sunday roast. Because, my friend, lunch with Jesus is much more of a priority and a pressing need in our lives.

And this lunch with Jesus that we see here in John chapter 6, this was an amazing lunch. It was a lunch on a completely different scale. And in the opening verses, John, the gospel writer, he seeks to set the scene for us.

[8 : 13] He seeks to put this lunch in its context because he tells us that it's the Passover. It's Easter time. It's around March, April time. You could say it's spring.

And Jesus and the disciples, they've been down at the shore of the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias, as the locals called it. And Jesus had been there among the crowd showing signs and healing sickness.

But after that, we're told that Jesus and his disciples, they took this much-needed time out. They ascended from the shore of Galilee up to the heights of, you could say, the Golan Heights.

But their peace and quiet, as we read through the narrative, their peace and quiet was disturbed and disrupted as the crowds follow them and found them.

And then we read in verse 5, we read there, Jesus saw the crowd coming over the hill or coming up the hill.

[9 : 21] He saw them in the distance coming towards them. And he knew immediately, these people are going to be hungry. So he turns to Philip, one of the twelve disciples, and he says to Philip, Philip, we need to plan lunch.

Where can we buy bread so that this crowd can eat lunch? And John, he gives us that little note that Jesus was testing Philip because Jesus knew what he would do.

But for Philip, you know, it must have sent him into a panic. How on earth am I going to plan this lunch? How am I going to plan a lunch for all these people?

I don't know what you're like when you have people coming over for a meal, maybe at Christmas or New Year or even during the year. There's always an element of anxiety and apprehension as you plan and prepare for all your guests because, well, you want people to relax.

You want them to enjoy themselves. You want them to feel at home. But you have to make sure that there's enough of everything in. Enough seating, enough plates, enough cutlery, enough napkins.

[10:27] But more importantly, you have to make sure that there's enough food. You also have to be aware of allergies and make sure that the food is piping hot and that you don't accidentally burn something.

There's a lot to think about when planning and preparing a lunch, which is why we can often be overcome by panic. But for Philip, his panic wasn't so much about planning or the preparation or the provision of lunch.

His panic was about the price. How much is this going to cost? Philip's panic was about the price of lunch. Philip's concern was all about the cost and how much it would be to feed this large crowd.

How much is it going to cost to get the caterers in to feed this crowd? And he says in verse 7, 200 denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get even a little.

A little crumb. Now, a denarius was a day's wage. So you worked all day and you got a denarius. Which means that 200 denarius was 200 days wages.

[11:38] It's about eight months wages. And Philip knew that the disciples, they didn't have the means, they didn't have the money to feed this many people walking towards Jesus. But of course, Philip was looking at things with facts and figures and not with faith.

Philip was looking at things with facts and figures, not with faith. You know, one commentator, he describes Philip and he says, Philip's was the classic process person.

He was a by-the-book, non-forward-thinking individual. You could almost call him a killjoy. Always pessimistic. Always trying to find reasons as to why things can't be done.

Rather than trying to find ways to do them. Philip was, you could say, a predisposed pragmatist. He was a short-sighted cynic rather than a vivacious missionary.

My friend, Philip looked at things with facts and figures. Not with faith. Which is why he failed the test. He failed the test.

[12:47] Because when Jesus asked Philip, where are we going to buy lunch to feed these people? Instead of saying to Jesus, thy will be done. He said to Jesus, it can't be done.

Instead of saying to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, thy will be done. He turned to him and said, no Lord, it can't be done.

But you read on in the passage and you see that that's not how Andrew, the other disciple, that's not how he responded. Because as we see, secondly, Jesus had already been preparing lunch.

Jesus had already been preparing lunch. So we see, first of all, planning lunch. Philip was planning lunch. And then secondly, preparing lunch. Preparing lunch.

Look at verse 7. Philip answered Jesus, 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.

[13:56] But what are they for so many? What are they for so many? Now, as you know, we were talking to the children earlier about what's in your lunchbox and who prepares their lunchbox.

You know, when I was an electrician, you could actually tell what day of the week it was by my lunchbox. If you were to look inside my lunchbox, you could tell me what day of the week it was. Because it was always ham on Monday, tuna on Tuesday, cheese on Wednesday, egg on Thursday.

And I was really adventurous on a Friday. I had ham and cheese on a Friday. You could tell what day of the week it was by simply looking at my lunchbox. But, you know, for Philip, he would never have thought of even opening the little boy's lunchbox.

Because Philip, with all his facts and figures, with all his counting, Philip thought that the little sandwich inside the little boy's lunchbox, that's no use. That's never going to satisfy this crowd.

Let's put that to the side. It's absolutely no use. Because Philip, as this large crowd appeared and arrived where they were, Philip, he was already counting all the heads that were coming towards

them.

[15:04] And he's counting them and he's reaching 1,000 and 2,000 and 3,000 and 4,000 and 5,000 men. That's not even including the women.

And their children. So, 5,000 men plus 5,000 women plus, well, let's say they all had three children. That's about 25,000 people.

Philip, as Philip planned lunch, his pessimistic persona had sent him into panic when he thought about the price of this lunch. Philip was so concerned about the cost and how much it would cost to feed anything up to 25,000 people.

You imagine a stadium full of people. How are you going to feed them? But as we said, Philip, he had the figures. He had all the figures.

Not even 200 denarii. Not even eight months' wages was enough money to feed all these mouths. In today's terms, the average annual salary in the UK is 35,000 pounds.

[16:11] Eight months' wages of that is just over 23,000 pounds. Which would work out, you could say, as less than one pound per person gathered on the hillside near Galilee.

One pound per person. It's not that bad. But it's a hefty bill for a picnic lunch. 23,000 pounds. And yet Philip, his pessimistic persona, he's panicking.

Who's going to pay for this? Who's going to cover the cost? And instead of saying to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, thy will be done, he turns to Jesus, as we said.

He says, it can't be done. It can't be done. Philip's looking at things with facts and figures, not with faith. And you know, my friend, we are so like him.

We are often so like Philip. Because we look at the Lord's cause, especially when it comes to evangelism and outreach.

[17:10] And like Philip, we list all the facts and all the figures of church finances and church membership and church attendance.

And we say, well, it's disappointing. It's discouraging. It's depressing. Because it's all declining. It's all going downhill. So what's the point?

The facts and figures are all there. We don't have the resources. We don't have the resilience. We don't have the means. We don't have the money. So instead of confessing, Lord, thy will be done, we conclude, well, it can't be done.

It can't be done. And instead of confessing with God all things are possible, well, we just say, it's impossible. Who's going to do it? It's absolutely impossible.

But it's all because we're looking at things with facts and figures. Facts and figures and not with faith. And, you know, sometimes I feel the leadership in our church often does that.

[18:13] Do you know how many times I'm presented with graphs? Facts and figures, not faith. Do you know the moment we do that, when we look at things with facts and figures and not faith, the moment we do that, we put God into a box.

And we put boundaries and barriers on the creator of heaven and earth. The moment we do that, we restrict and restrain the only Savior of sinners, whom the Bible tells us that his arm is not shortened, that he cannot save.

Neither is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. The moment we do that, the moment we start looking at facts and figures and not faith, the moment we do that, we are following Jesus with our head and not with our heart.

We're following Jesus with our head and not our heart. And, you know, that was the difference between Philip and Andrew. Philip used his head. Andrew used his heart.

Because while Philip was planning and pricing and panicking about lunch with all his facts and all his figures, Andrew went out and saw a little boy with his lunchbox and brought him to Jesus.

[19:27] Philip used his head. Andrew used his heart. Verse 9. There is a boy here, says Andrew. There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.

But what are they for so many? You know, I find it fascinating to think that Jesus already knew about the little boy in his lunchbox. Jesus knew about him. Because he knows everything.

He knows everything that's going on. Jesus knew about the little boy in his lunchbox. He knew and he had planned and prepared lunch even before the little boy arrived.

Jesus had been preparing the answer even before he asked Philip the question. But as we read, the reason Jesus asked Philip the question in the first place was because he was testing him.

He was testing Philip. And Jesus was testing Philip. Because if you're a disciple of Jesus, your faith must be tried and tested in order for it to grow.

[20 : 31] If you're a disciple of Jesus, your faith must be tried and tested in order for it to grow. Your faith must be stretched and sometimes stressed in order for it to be strengthened.

Because our Bible tells us, in fact, Peter, Andrew's brother, tells us and teaches us in 1 Peter, that the trials of our faith, they are much more precious than gold that perishes, even though it is tried and tested by fire.

Why? So that it all might be found unto the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ. My Christian friend, if you're a disciple of Jesus, then your faith must be tried.

It must be tested in order for it to grow. Your faith must be stretched and stressed in order for it to be strengthened. And sometimes, like Philip, we fail.

Sometimes, like Philip, we falter in our faith because we're not perfect. No Christian is perfect. We fail and we falter in our faith. We make mistakes. We get things wrong because we're not patient sometimes.

[21 : 41] We're not looking at things with an eternal perspective. We're not waiting on the Lord as we should be. And yet, through it all, the Lord is teaching us. Because as we often say, we live and learn.

We live and learn. And that's what the life of a disciple is. A disciple is a learner. That's what the word disciple means. It means learner.

We're pupils in the school of Christ who are being taught and told by the greatest teacher, Jesus Christ. But for Philip here, and he'll learn later on, though.

Jesus doesn't forget us or forsake us. He keeps teaching us. Philip here, he had failed the test. He failed in his faith because he was following Jesus with his head. But for Andrew, this is where Andrew begins to flourish in his faith.

Because he's following Jesus in his heart. And as we said, that was the difference between Philip and Andrew. Philip followed Jesus with his head. Andrew followed Jesus with his heart.

[22 : 46] And you know, my friend, that's six inches between your head and your heart. It makes all the difference. Because Andrew knew that although five loaves and two fish wasn't enough to fill one dish, Andrew knew that Jesus was able to use the little boy's lunchbox to feed this whole crowd.

Andrew knew that Jesus is able to use, as we were saying to the children, Jesus is able to use the little we have and the little we give for his glory. Jesus is able to use the little we have and the little we give for his glory.

If we are willing to give it to him. And you know, that's the message of this miracle. Jesus is able to use the little we have and the little we give for his glory.

If we're willing to give it to him. Jesus is able to use our character and our conduct and our conversations for his glory. Jesus is able to use our energy and our efforts and our enthusiasm all for his glory.

Jesus is able to use our time and our tithes and our talents for his glory. My friend, Jesus is able to use the little we have and the little we give all for his glory if we're willing to give it to him.

[24 : 02] And you know, whether that's been welcoming to a visitor who comes through the door, the little we have, the little we give. Whether it's speaking to someone we know and love about their soul.

Whether it's visiting someone we know who is sick. Whether it's encouraging someone we know who is struggling. Whether it's showing hospitality to someone else. Whether it's looking out for someone who's lonely.

Helping someone who needs help. Or volunteering to serve in some way. Whatever it is. Jesus is able to use the little we have and the little we give for his glory if we're willing to give it.

Why? The Bible teaches us. He is able to do in us and for us exceedingly, abundantly, above all, more than we could ask or even think.

He's able to use the little we have and the little we give for his glory if we're willing to give it to him. And so as lots of people have lunch with Jesus here, we see Jesus planning lunch and preparing lunch.

[25 : 11] And then lastly, he's providing lunch. Providing lunch. Planning, preparing, and providing lunch. Providing lunch. Look at verse 10.

Jesus said, make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated.

So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost. So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.

When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world. You know, as this message of the miraculous lunch comes to a conclusion, John, the gospel writer, John has a purpose in putting this miracle into his gospel.

Because John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd. He's the shepherd of his sheep. John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd of his sheep.

[26 : 32] And we know that from all those little notes that he makes. John always has these little notes throughout his gospel. He writes there in verse 10. Look at verse 10. He says, make the people sit down.

Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down, about five thousand in number. So John, he not only tells us that Jesus had the disciples instruct the people to sit down for lunch. He also tells us, random fact, there was much grass in the place. Which, on the surface, it might seem like an insignificant thing to point out.

But John is showing us that Jesus is the shepherd of his sheep. John is showing us that Jesus is the shepherd of his sheep. And you know, and with this I'll conclude.

You know, you read these verses, but you have to read them from above. You have to look down from above.

[27 : 31] You have to have this aerial view, a bird's eye view of this miracle here. Or better still, you could say, you have to look at these verses from heaven's perspective. Heaven's perspective.

Because you look at it from heaven's perspective, this large crowd of people, or this gathering of people, and they're all sitting. And they're sitting, we're told, on a hillside of green grass.

Which might not seem much to us, but from heaven's perspective, it would have looked like a shepherd feeding his flock. That's what it would have looked like.

It would have looked like a shepherd feeding his flock. More specifically, you could say, it would have looked like a scene from Psalm 23. It would have looked like a scene from Psalm 23.

And you know, that's what John wants us to see. John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd, who not only plans and prepares, but also one who provides for his people.

[28 : 33] John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd who feeds his flock and satisfies their soul. My friend, John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd of Psalm 23.

Because as you know, and as we've sung so often throughout our lives, as we've probably memorized from our youth, We know that it's in Psalm 23 that every sheep of the good shepherd confesses, The Lord's my shepherd.

I'll not want. What does he say? He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me. The quiet waters by.

And how does he go on? My soul he doth restore again. And me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, e'en for his own name's sake. But you read through Psalm 23.

We're going to sing it in a moment. And you see that the good shepherd plans, prepares, and provides food for his flock. Because every one of his flock, they confess, My table thou hast furnished.

[29 : 38] In presence of my foes, my head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows. He gives to me an abundance. Sometimes more than I could ask or even think.

And you come to John chapter 6, and John wants us to see Jesus as the shepherd who plans and prepares and provides for his flock. And that's why he tells us that there were twelve baskets of leftovers.

There were twelve baskets of leftovers. Verse 12. When they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost. That nothing may be lost.

There's twelve baskets of leftovers to show us that there's a provision for those who are not yet part of his flock. The twelve baskets of leftovers are there to remind us that there's a provision for those who are not yet following this good shepherd.

The twelve baskets of leftovers are there to remind us that there is a provision for those who still sadly consider themselves as black sheep and outcasts from this flock.

[30 : 51] But my friend, John wants you not only to see that Jesus is worth following. John wants you to follow Jesus.

John wants you to follow Jesus. I want you to follow Jesus. I want you more than anything else to follow this Jesus.

Because this Jesus has planned and prepared and provided salvation for you through his death on the cross.

As Jesus says in John chapter 10, you carry on through John's gospel. You come to chapter 10 and Jesus confesses, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

And my sheep, they hear my voice. And they follow me. And I give to them eternal life and they will never perish. Neither shall they be plucked out of my hand.

[31 : 54] My friend, I want you to follow this Jesus. Because he is worth following. He's a good shepherd. The good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

And the 12 baskets of leftovers are a provision to remind you that there is room for you. There is still food available.

There is a provision for you who are not yet part of this flock. You know, my friend, needless to say, Sunday worship is much more of a priority and pressing need than Sunday lunch.

Unless your Sunday lunch is with this Jesus. Because when you have lunch with Jesus, he reminds you that he has planned it.

He has prepared it. He has provided it all for you. And all he asks you to do is commit your life to him and confess with David in Psalm 23, the Lord's my, my shepherd.

[33 : 11] I'll not want. The Lord's my shepherd. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for providing lunch for us this morning and assuring us that there is a feast for us to come and to taste and see that the word good, that the gospel table has been spread.

And Lord, our prayer is that we would all come to it and feast upon it, to feast upon this Jesus who offers himself so freely and so fully in the gospel that we would come to him and that we would be filled.

For blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Or that we would all be part of that flock where there is one flock and one shepherd following this good shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hear us then, we pray. Go before us, we ask. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion.

This morning we're going to sing the words of Psalm 23. Well-known words. Words that we sing often.

[34 : 37] Words that we'll sing tomorrow morning at Shonach's funeral. But as I always say, and I think I will keep saying it until the Lord silences me.

It's one thing singing this shepherd's psalm. It's one thing knowing the shepherd's psalm. But we all need to be following. We all need to know the shepherd of the shepherd's psalm.

We all need to claim and confess the Lord's my shepherd. He's my shepherd. He's one who leads me.

He's one who walks with me. He's one who provides for me. And as Shonach could say, and as every Christian can say, as they come to the end of their life, goodness and mercy, all my life, shall surely follow me.

And in God's house forevermore, my dwelling place shall be. Make this psalm your psalm. The shepherd's psalm.

[35 : 43] We'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd's I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. And pastures green He leadeth me The quiet altar shine My soul he doth restore again And be to alter me Within the paths of righteousness Heal for his own sake

Ye though I forget death's a grail Yet will I fear my ill For thou art with me at thy haunt And stop me come for still My table thou hast furnished In presence of my foes

My head loud as with all your noise And my cup overflows Goodness and mercy on my eye Shall surely follow me And in God's house Forevermore My dwelling place shall be

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen