

JOINING IN GOD'S WORK

JOHN 6:1-15 NLT

SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER 2026

Evangelism - "We are joining in with what God's already doing."

29 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

John 6:29 NLT

The work of evangelism, discipleship, teaching, caring, speaking, walking with, raising up, sending out - it's only ever for us to believe in the one God has sent - Jesus. All the work from the beginnings of faith, to full expressions of faith is to believe in him.

We believe in Jesus. We help others believe in Jesus.

1 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. 3 Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. 4 (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) 5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" 6 He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!"

8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. 9 "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. 12 After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." 13 So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" 15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

John 6:1-15 NLT

Often viewed as one of the stories that we tell kids in kids church this story is one of 2 main stories that gets repeated in all 4 gospels alongside the resurrection. The early church across the entire roman empire knew that this story was an important story for building up believers.

Passover is about God's leading, guidance, and provision out of slavery, through the desert, and into the promise land over the 40 years.

What do we learn from the way Jesus invites us into his work?

1. TESTING REVEALS GOD'S WORK

Philip - full of faith in John 1.

45 Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

John 1:45

Time and ministry weariness in him now after a year of ministry in local towns. Faith lowered. All he can see is in the natural.

Jesus tested Phillip.

Luckily all of creation isn't reliant on whether I believe in something.

Jesus doesn't say "you don't know what to do - fine leave me." He invites us into the work whether we know the options or not. The invitation into the work requires us to be share our faith. It'll be tested.

Neither does Jesus just say watch what I do. He invites us into but it'll test our faith.

"Just tell me what to do." He invites us into the work.

Surely god won't make it uncomfortable for me?

2 Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. 3 Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NLT

God let them through the wilderness. God tested them. Will you obey his commands? He let you go hungry. He fed you. Believing in God isn't about the natural but about the supernatural. It's about believing in the one who sent you. But to know if you are sometimes God tests.

You might be like Phillip in that you need to look not at the bread but every word from the mouth of God.

2. GOD'S WORK SHOWS OUR INADEQUACY AND HIS ABUNDANCE

Andrew brings the little boy with his morning tea - 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. Andrew loves to bring people to Jesus!

The kid is poor. The farmers are poor.

How good is Andrew at bringing people to Jesus!

But Jesus doesn't shrug his shoulders and decide not. He takes it and multiplies it. God brings the abundance.

Some of us think we have nothing to give. "I don't think I have enough"

What's in your hand? What gifts do you bring. Where can you use what you have in the work of God?

God provides meat to 6 hundred thousand - meat for a whole month!

23 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Has my arm lost its power? Now you will see whether or not my word comes true!"

Numbers 11:23 NLT

Moses and his staff. The widows oil.

What's in your hand? Is it time, money, food, space?

20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Ephesians 3:20 NLT

Maybe you might be like Andrew and say what good is what's in my hand - God can take it and multiple it.

3. GOD'S WORK REQUIRES SERVANTHOOD

There was mess afterwards that the disciples had to clean up.

The mess doesn't mean that the leftover food was a waste. Imagine saying God's abundance is wasteful.

The mess also doesn't make the work a showroom.

The work will be messy.

Jesus stepped into a messy and broken world and served it. The king of all of creation served.

28 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:28 NLT

Jesus taught his disciples about serving others. We deal with mess through service.

Jesus continues to teach the disciples about serving - washing their feet.

So often we think we need to be perfect before we can be used by God. Jesus uses messy people to help messy people. The disciples are never perfect but he still sends them.

4. GOD'S WORK IS CONTINUOUS

The national pride of Passover stirred the nation for a king. But they had the wrong picture of who Jesus was.

God can do suddenlies and we need faith for the miraculous moves of God. But God also does things over time.

We don't keep coming back to God because his work wasn't enough the first time. We keep coming back because his work is continuing in us

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Philippians 3:12-14 NLT

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1. Can you think of a time you felt tested that the result increased your belief in God?**
- 2. Is there something in your hand that you think is small and unusable, and if it's any good, but actually God can use it through his abundance to help others?**
- 3. Is there a way of serving, here or elsewhere, that you've avoided because it's unglamorous or uncomfortable?**
- 4. Where are you in the middle of something you can't yet see the end of? What would trusting him there look like this week?**