

Unpredictable

Sometimes I think it is funny looking at social media posts tagged #surprising or #unexpected. It is typically a dog or cat you expect to do one thing who instead does the most random thing. You think you know what is going to happen next, but soon realize you have no clue. I feel like hanging out with Jesus would be a lot like this. Just when you think you know what He will do next, He pulls something completely out of nowhere. We are going to look at a few stories like this today.

Remember Jesus had just finished talking about how His miracles, John the Baptist, the Bible, and God the Father all testify that He is the Messiah. By the end of chapter 6, He will bring His disciples to a key decision point about who He is, but first He has a few more things He wants to show them. Seeing the unpredictable and unexpected will develop their faith and confidence in Him.

Before we look at God's Word, take some time to **pray** and ask God to help you to better see Jesus for who He really is today. Jesus did these miracles for a reason. Some worship songs that can be great prayers on this topic are:

Touch of Heaven – Hillsong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxxr47zEUxE>)

Show Me Your Glory – Third Day (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_e3aJLRsdc)

John 6:1-6 ¹After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ²And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. ³Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

- 1) According to verse 2, why were the people following Jesus? Is this a good reason to follow Him? What might they be missing out on?

- 2) While we probably aren't expecting Jesus to physically heal things around us, what are some of the expectations we have of Jesus or reasons we follow Him?

- 3) According to verse 6, why did Jesus ask Philip where to buy bread? What do you think Jesus is trying to grow or develop in His disciples?

John 6:7-9 ⁷ Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?”

- 4) A denarii was equivalent to a day’s wage. How practical do you think Philip thought Jesus’ question was?
- 5) What did Andrew find? Do you think Andrew thought he had a real solution to feed the whole crowd?

John 6:10-15 ¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ 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. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” ¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

- 6) Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. Jesus has just broken the bread and fish and given you a small basket to start handing out food. What is going through your head? Do you think Jesus’ plan has a chance of working?

- 7) How could the disciples have resisted what God was trying to accomplish? How did they “embrace the awkward” of what Jesus was asking them to do?

- 8) Why do you think Jesus wanted the disciples to gather the leftovers? What do you think He was trying to teach them? How might this prepare them for the future?

- 9) Why did Jesus withdraw from the people? How is this counter to what most people would do?

John 6:16-21 ¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹ Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

- 10) Keep in mind several of the disciples were experienced fishermen. Why is what Jesus did so unexpected?

- 11) I assume like me, you have never seen someone walk on water. The disciples have just witnessed Jesus walking on water, a storm calmed, and basic teleportation. How is the unexpected affecting their confidence in Him?

12) How did Jesus use the unexpected and unpredictable part of His plan to grow His disciples' faith? How might it be part of God growing your faith?

13) Where specifically might God be doing something unpredictable or unexpected in your life to grow and stretch you? How might you be resisting what God is trying to do? What would it look like to embrace God's working in your life?

Even though Jesus was probably the most unpredictable man ever, the disciples grew to just trust and obey what He asked them to do. God had a purpose to grow, test, and develop them. They could have resisted and ignored God, but instead they chose to "embrace the awkward" and watch God work. I think for us over the next few months, things will be very unpredictable, but we do believe and trust that God is working and teaching.

Consider ending your time in prayer, thanking God, even though you don't know what will happen. Psalm 103 is a great prayer of thanksgiving you could use.