

OCTOBER WEEK ONE: FEEDING 5,000

Monday

John 6:1–14

Once Jesus started teaching and preaching, news spread about his miraculous ministry or healing the sick. Many who were ill or disabled followed Jesus because they wanted to hear more of his wise and authoritative teaching. So a great crowd of people followed Jesus as he traveled from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other.

When Jesus reached the other side of the Sea of Galilee, he went up to a mountainside to kind of try to get away, and sat down with his disciples. Jesus looked out at the huge crowd that had followed him. He asked Philip, one of his disciples, where they could find some bread to buy for all these people to eat.

Philip knew that Jesus and the disciples didn't have enough money to buy even a tiny bit of bread for each person. The crowd was just too enormous – thousands of people.

Then Andrew, another one of Jesus' disciples, spoke up. "There is a boy here who has five small bread loaves and two fish," Andrew said, but what good would that do with so many people?

Of course, Jesus knew all along what he was going to do. He told the disciples to have all the people sit down on the grass. About 5,000 men sat down, plus women and children. Jesus took the boy's bread, gave thanks, and began giving it out to everyone. Then he did the same with the fish. Miraculously, the food did not run out, and the people had as much to eat as they wanted.

When the 5,000 men, plus women and children, had finished eating, there was still more food left over than they had to begin with. The disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish.

After people saw this miraculous sign of Jesus' power and authority, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Only God's power could turn five loaves of bread and two fish into such a great feast!

God has power over all things in heaven and on earth. He is the one who provides us with food and everything else we need every day of our life. But Jesus isn't still on a mountainside handing out bread and fish, because Jesus came to provide us with something much more valuable than that. The greatest treasure God gives us is the salvation he provides to us through faith in his Son, Jesus our Savior, who provides our greatest needs, heals us from our sin, and has power over death.

- Why were so many people following Jesus?
- How did Jesus feed all the thousands of people?
- What does Jesus provide for you?

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK ONE: HEALINGS

Tuesday

Luke 4:31–44

After Jesus left his hometown of Nazareth, he traveled to Capernaum. He taught again in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. All the people who heard him were astonished at his teaching, because he spoke with great authority.

In the synagogue there was a man with an evil spirit who cried out with a loud voice. The evil spirit recognized that Jesus had great authority. "I know who you are," the evil spirit said, "the Holy One of God."

Jesus told the evil spirit to "come out of him!" The evil spirit obeyed and came out of the man! The people in the synagogue were amazed.

"What is this teaching?" they asked. "For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!"

After Jesus left the synagogue, he went to Peter's home. Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever. Immediately, the fever left her, and she began to serve Jesus and his followers.

Later, as the sun was going down, many people came to Jesus with family members or friends who were sick or injured. Jesus laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. Jesus also cast out more evil spirits.

When the morning came, Jesus went away to be alone. Once people found him, they begged him to stay, but Jesus told them he had come to preach the good news of the kingdom of God in other places too.

During his life on earth, Jesus preached and healed many people. When he died on the cross, Jesus provided the complete healing from sin, for all who by faith believe in him.

- **How do you see Jesus' healing and authority in your life?**

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK ONE: JESUS CALMS THE STORM

Wednesday

Mark 4:35–41

One evening, after a day full of teaching by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was very tired. He said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." So they left the crowd and got in a boat. As they started across the water, some other boats followed.

While they were in the boat, the weather changed pretty suddenly. A strong wind began to blow. The wind tossed the waves higher and higher until the water splashed over the side of the boat and began to fill it. The disciples began to worry that the boat might sink – with them in it!

While the storm was raging, Jesus was asleep on a pillow in the back of the boat. He did not seem worried at all. But the disciples were afraid that they were about to drown. They woke Jesus and said, "Teacher, do you not care that we are dying?"

Jesus got up. He rebuked the wind and water, and told the storm to be quiet and still. "Peace! Be still!" he said. And immediately the wind stopped blowing and the water was completely calm and flat.

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

After seeing this miracle, the disciples were filled with great fear at Jesus' power and authority. They said to one another, "Who then is this that even the wind and waves obey him?"

Jesus became a human like us, but he is also God. Jesus is able to control the wind and the sea because he created them. Jesus did amazing things like calming storms so that we would know he really is who he says he is, the Son of God. We don't need to worry when trouble comes our way. We can trust Jesus at all times because he's not asleep in the back of our lives, but he's in control.

- **Why were the disciples afraid?**
- **What did Jesus do?**

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK ONE: JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Thursday

Matthew 14:22–33

Many people had come out from the towns into the countryside, following Jesus to hear him teach. Jesus had compassion on the crowds, and he healed the sick and taught them all day long.

When evening came, Jesus saw that the people were hungry and had nothing to eat. Jesus took five pieces of bread and two small fish, and he made enough food to feed the huge crowd of more than 5,000 men plus women and children – probably more than 10,000 people altogether!

When everyone had eaten, they were all tired, especially Jesus and his disciples. Jesus told his disciples to get into a boat and go to the other side of the big lake, called the Sea of Galilee. The disciples started out in the boat, but Jesus was not yet ready to go. He stayed behind to send the crowds away, and then he went up on a mountain where he could be alone and pray.

By then it was dark, and the disciples were in the boat, a long way from shore. The wind was blowing hard and big waves were crashing against the boat. Just before morning, Jesus started walking – on the water! – toward the disciples in the boat. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were terrified. They thought Jesus was a ghost, and they cried out in fear.

Immediately, Jesus spoke to them saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

Peter answered, “Lord, if it is you, tell me to come out to you on the water.”

Jesus replied, “Come.”

So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, too, toward Jesus! But when Peter saw how the strong wind was blowing the waves, he was afraid again and started to sink. He called out, “Lord, save me!”

Immediately, Jesus was next to him and reached out and took hold of Peter’s hand, lifting him up so he wouldn’t drown. “O you of little faith,” Jesus asked, “why did you doubt?”

As soon as Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind stopped. The disciples in the boat worshipped Jesus and praised him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Peter focused on the things around him, the things in the world that scared him, and he stopped trusting Jesus. Jesus was gracious to Peter and his disciples. Jesus is gracious to us too. Just as Jesus reached out to Peter and the disciples in their fear and doubt, Jesus also reaches out to us to call us and lead us to trust him. We can trust Jesus’ promise that even if we get killed, we’re going to be ok. Jesus calls us to himself through his Word. He

gives us faith to trust him. And he wants us to keep our eyes fixed on him throughout our lives. Jesus saved Peter from drowning in the lake, and he saves us from sin and death.

- **Why were the disciples afraid when they saw Jesus walking on water?**
- **When Peter was walking on water toward Jesus, why did he suddenly start to sink? What did Jesus do then?**
- **How does Jesus reach out to us to save us?**

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK ONE: NAAMAN

Friday

2 Kings 5:1–14

Long ago a little girl lived in her home with the people of God in Israel. But soldiers came and took the little girl far away to live in a land where people worshiped idols and did not know the one true God.

The little girl stayed in the home of a rich man named Naaman, where she worked as a servant helping his wife. Naaman had a terrible skin disease called leprosy. Doctors could not make him better.

The little girl knew that God could help Naaman. She told his wife about Elisha the prophet who lived in Israel, where the little girl used to live. She said Naaman should go see Elisha, and he would cure Naaman of his leprosy.

So Naaman did. He rode to Elisha's house in his chariot pulled by horses. When Elisha heard that Naaman was coming, he said, "Let him come to me" so that he will know that there is a prophet of God in Israel. When Naaman arrived at Elisha's house, Elisha sent his servant out to tell Naaman, "Go wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times." If he washed in the Jordan River, he would be healed and his skin would be like a baby's.

Naaman was annoyed by these instructions. He didn't want to wash in the Jordan. He had rivers back home that weren't as muddy as the Jordan. If washing in a river worked to heal him, he wouldn't have had to come all this way to see Elisha. He wanted Elisha to come out, wave his hands over him, and do some kind of magic to heal him. Instead, Elisha just told Naaman to go bathe in the river. Naaman wanted to go home, but his servant told him that if Elisha had asked him to do something crazy or difficult, he would have done it. Why not try washing in the river like Elisha said?

So Naaman went down to the Jordan River. He walked into the water and dipped down one, two, three, four, five, six, seven times. All at once, Naaman's skin was clear like the leprosy had just been wiped off. He was healed. Overjoyed, Naaman went back to Elisha's house to thank him. Naaman said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."

God worked through that little girl to help Naaman and bring him to faith. God made Naaman well again, and Naaman learned about God's love.

God gives us helpers like our parents and teachers and pastors. They take care of us and tell us about the true God and about Jesus, his Son. And God can use us to tell others about his love, too, just like the little girl helped Naaman to learn about God.

- How do we know the little girl loved and trusted God, even though she had been taken from her home to live in a faraway land?
- What happened to Naaman when he washed in the Jordan River seven times?
- Who in your life could you help by pointing them to God and telling them about God's love?

Close with prayer