

May 2024 – Supernatural life lessons

Please note Bible stories and themes may occasionally differ from this overview.

As we move into May we look at some extraordinary teaching moments where learners respond to Jesus in different ways. We see the feeding of at least 5,000 people before Philip and Andrew's eyes, then Peter being invited to trust Jesus like never before. A teacher of the law gets an awkward surprise before Mary and Martha are home-schooled. These are lessons in the supernatural life where goodness, peace, kindness and patience are only available through the Holy Spirit.

Session 1 May 4/5

Session Aim: To explore how a boy helped Jesus
Bible Ref: John 6:1-15

Today's fruit

Goodness is demonstrated by the boy who shared his food and by what Jesus did with it.

Philip and Andrew's lesson

Many people followed Jesus as word spread about his ability to perform miracles such as healing the sick. On one occasion, near the time of the Passover feast (which we explored last month), so many people followed him that there was a crowd including 5,000 people. Jesus asked Philip how they would feed such a large crowd, but Philip knew you would have to work for a year to get the wages to buy enough bread for them all.

Then Andrew met a boy with five loaves and two fish, but he knew this was nowhere nearly enough either. Nonetheless, Jesus thanked God for this food and began to share it out. It was a miracle – everyone had enough to eat. Not only that, but Jesus also told the disciples to gather up all the leftovers, so nothing went to waste. After this, Jesus knew the people would want to make him a king by force, so he went into the hills to be alone.

Think about

Philip knew that work and wages were needed to feed the crowd, but that it would take far too long. Andrew saw a different way through. Are you more like Philip or Andrew? What work would you like to do one day?

Why do some people thank God for their food? Jesus made sure there would be no waste. Do you recycle? How can children make a difference to the world?

When Jesus went to the hills, he was moving away from being forced into power. Does this type of goodness surprise you?

9 May: Ascension Day

There are many extraordinary key moments in Jesus' life. Ascension Day marks when Jesus was taken up into Heaven, an event which the disciples celebrated with great joy.

Session 2 May 11/12

Session Aim: To see how Peter reacted to Jesus' supernatural power
Bible Ref: Matthew 14:22-36

Today's fruit

Jesus wants to bring peace to Peter. But Peter demonstrates how we can easily lose sight of Jesus and look elsewhere, like to the wind and waves, instead.

Peter's dramatic lesson

Jesus went to be alone in the hills while his disciples were in a boat heading for the other side of the lake. The wind picked up and blew against it, making conditions very rough.

In the early hours of the morning Jesus walked on the water towards them. The disciples were scared and thought they were seeing a ghost! He told them to not be afraid, inviting Peter to walk towards him to prove it really was Jesus. Peter began well, but seeing the wind and waves, Peter began to sink before Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. With both men back in the boat, the wind grew calm again.

After this event the disciples thought Jesus truly was God's son. When they came to shore at Gennesaret, people gathered again. News was spreading all the time, and the sick even came just to touch the edge of his cloak to be healed.

Think about

Some parts of the Bible are very hard to imagine. In fact we wish we could be there to see how this all happened. What we do know today is that when God does supernatural acts, he doesn't want us to be afraid. God only wants to bring peace to people, especially when circumstances are making them afraid or they are doubting he is real.

Imagine what it feels like to be in a storm and fear for your life. School, home, friendships – they can all feel like 'storms' sometimes.

Do you have questions for God? The ending today seems so straightforward, but there are many sick people today whom he doesn't heal. How do we feel about this?

11/12 May: Candidates Sunday

This is a Salvation Army event which encourages people to focus on what God's calling is on their lives. For some, they will answer God's call to go on the journey of becoming Salvation Army officers and spend their lives bringing peace to others experiencing storms.

Session 3 May 18/19

Session Aim: To be challenged by Jesus' story of kindness
Bible Ref: Luke 10:25-37

Today's fruit

Kindness is shown in the way Jesus' parable shows us who and how to love.

A lesson for a teacher of the law

A teacher of the law, a very religious person, asked Jesus how he could get life for ever. As often happened, Jesus asked a question in reply, but the teacher already knew what the law said about loving God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. The teacher also knew he should love his neighbour, but he dug deeper, asking Jesus who his neighbour might actually be (v29).

Jesus then turns a corner in the conversation, telling a parable about a Jewish man who was attacked by robbers. Left for dead, he was ignored by a Jewish priest and a Levite (a man who helped the priests in the Temple). The third person to arrive was a Samaritan from Samaria.

At this time, Samaritans and Jews hated each other, but this person helped the injured man, bandaged his wounds, put him on a donkey and paid for him to stay in safety. Jesus makes it clear that this last man – even though he was a Samaritan – was a neighbour, then tells the teacher to go and do the same.

Think about

What makes a person 'religious'? Is this different from someone who lives knowing God to be with them, praying in private and trusting him quietly?

Today is a difficult lesson. The teacher of the law just wants to know who he must love, but ends up learning how he must love – everybody! The Samaritan breaks down a tradition of hatred and cares for the injured man. Are there people you dislike? What would it take for you to care for them?

Jesus taught in picture stories called parables. In what way does this make it easier to remember?

19 May: Pentecost

This day helps us to remember when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples and gave them power to live like Jesus. Perhaps the Holy Spirit in you is the only way you can show kindness to your enemies?

Session 4 May 25/26

Session Aim: To see different reactions to Jesus
Bible Ref: Luke 10:38-42

Today's fruit

While Martha lacks patience, it seems that Mary has plenty. Jesus is patient with Martha too.

Mary and Martha's lesson

Jesus had been travelling with his disciples when a woman named Martha let him stay at her house. Martha had a sister named Mary, but each sister reacted very differently to the presence of Jesus in their home. Mary sat at his feet listening to every word he taught, while Martha became more and more angry because, due to their guest, there was so much work to do.

Eventually Martha asked Jesus, 'Don't you care that I'm doing all this work alone?' It hardly felt equal, but Jesus gave another surprising lesson. He told Martha that she was worried and upset about many things but Mary had chosen the one right thing which would not be taken away.

Think about

Learning from Jesus is clearly a choice. Are you somebody who likes to be on the move, or do you prefer to sit still and relax? Do you know anybody who fusses a lot, tries to do everything for everybody, then blames others when jobs don't get done?

Tidying the house, cleaning our bedrooms, cooking meals – these are important for how we live. Helping adults is important too. But sometimes we might need to stop, especially if we are neglecting something that Jesus wants to teach us.

Are you somebody who likes everything to be perfect? Perhaps real life is not like that, and choosing to stay close to God might mean letting somebody else down once in a while.