

Sessions – Outdoors Jesus

<http://www.myfishbites.com/sessions-outdoorsjesus.php>

'Outdoors Jesus' - what's that all about?!

This came out of discussions we had about who should speak at our church weekend away. Some people wanted to bring in someone who spoke about God's love, God as daddy (Abba Father) and help people emotionally. To me, this sounded great but not really my scene. I suggested Bear Grylls as our speaker, wanting a bit more action and less passivity. I felt the Holy Spirit put the phrase 'Outdoors Jesus' in my mind. This is a session about Jesus, the outdoors and his band of brothers, the disciples.

Why not get out and about to do this session? You'll need to take a laptop for the video clips if you use them. Go up a hill, a mountain, sit in a forest or safely by a river. Remember to tell people where you're going and take the right gear! Don't be unwise, it's your responsibility!

Bear Grylls clip - download, DVD etc

If you don't have any of his series on DVD or download, you can search YouTube and find the most appropriate one such as 'Man vs Wild' or 'Running Wild' or survival type shows.

Despite the haters, Bear Grylls does an incredible amount of good for the kingdom of God and has a great way with people. It's worth letting young people know that they shouldn't venture into wilderness places and situations without the kit and the knowledge! And learn how to use a map and compass!

The Journey

Life is a journey. You get older, you do different things, meet different people, travel to new places and see varied situations. Proverbs tells us in Proverbs 16.9 and 20.4 that God directs our steps. Steps suggest movement, a journey, going somewhere. The Christian life isn't passive. It doesn't stop but there's always something new. The Bible tells us we are a new creation in 2 Corinthians 5.17. Lamentations was written by King Solomon. In chapter 3, verses 22-23 we read:

[Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.](#)

Jesus knew what he was doing, where he was going. This involved motion, doing, going - as well as stopping to have compassion, spending time relaxing and prayer alone with his Father in heaven. If you read the Gospels about the life of Jesus, he is always on the move. He's up and down mountains, across lakes, on boats, walking by the lake. The actual area he lived in was relatively small - transatlantic flights hadn't yet come on the scene - but this was life with a purpose and a life of risk. In the same way, Paul lived this kind of life - following in the footsteps of Jesus.

The question is - know where we're going and what we're doing in life?

Romans 12.1 tells us: *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

So we have to get our priorities straight - Jesus, his Kingdom and allow Jesus to transform our thinking and our hearts. Then, we can test and get God's approval about what we should be doing. After that, God will lead us into an increasingly clear direction and lifestyles - good, pleasing and perfect will. But one of the key words here is 'test'. Don't be afraid to try new things, meet new people and go to new places to see opportunities and possibilities. All this with a growing faith in Jesus! Are we living this kind of life?!

Band of Brothers - Official Intro Clip

This was a dramatised series (from Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg) about Easy Company of the US Army Airborne Paratrooper division and their mission in WWII France during Operation Overlord. The story is about comradeship, about fighting together to overcome the enemy, the Nazis. In the same way, we are a band of brothers (and sisters) working together to fight for Jesus and overcome the real enemy, the prince of darkness.

Direct Link to the Official Trailer of Band of Brothers – <https://youtu.be/1wYPlwjGOY> (accessed April 2019)

Jesus and his Journeys

Let's look at Jesus and his followers and their journeys! This was no sitting around in a room discussing theory, this was out and about, doing his Father's work, but with his team with him! All these are from examples in Matthew, but the Gospels are full of other accounts.

Lesson 1 - The Wilderness

When Bear Grylls goes out, he goes to wild places around the world. In Matthew 4.1, we find that Jesus 'went into the wilderness' where he was tempted by and overcame the devil. If you want to be a follower of Jesus, you'll have wilderness times and times where you are attacked when you feel weak. To be a real man or woman of God you will have to fight to overcome. But God's Word tells us that we can 'take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ Jesus.' He's armed us with prayer, the Bible spoken out and with the shield of faith (Ephesians 6) and other Christians! Beyond that, why not get out and about doing some kind of outdoors stuff - it really builds your character!!

Lesson 2 - Walkabout

The Christian life isn't theory. It's not about sitting in a room all the time. It's about action, getting out there, connecting with people and allowing the Holy Spirit in you to bring life and light, fun around you. OK so it's not always like this, but it can be! In Matthew 4, we find that Jesus walked past the lake, invited Peter and Andrew to join his team. He was a man on a mission and people wanted to follow. When you've got Jesus in your life, he still wants to lead you today. A Christian is someone who 'follows Christ'. Are you following Christ? Jesus causes a reaction in people!

Ray Mears – Walkabout – https://youtu.be/N_vqIknFufQ (accessed April 19)

In Matthew 4.23 we learn: "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

Lesson 3 - Teaching by 'on the job training'

One of the things that we need to think about is that Jesus taught his disciples as he was doing the stuff. This wasn't learning in a classroom, this was 'on the job training'. I like this style of learning. We all learn in different ways but watching, copying and learning is one of the best ways as you're using more of your senses! For this teaching session, like many others, Jesus went up the mountain.

Matthew 4.1-2 - "Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them."

Summit of Mount Everest by Elia Saikaly – <https://youtu.be/NhBzhi9jPFs> (accessed April 2019)

Or my way less dramatic compilation of Lake District Photos with some ambient electronica for music – <https://youtu.be/RiRYluu9uxA>

When I see mountains, one thought comes into my head, "I'd like to climb that." I think God built us to attempt things, try and achieve things in life. But there's something really special about climbing to the top of a hill, a mountain, a tor or a peak etc. It gives a special sense of achievement. No wonder Jesus went up the mountainside to pray and teach - he could get away, enjoy his creation and have a sense of awe and wonder!

Lesson 4 - Seeing the power of God on the water

I once went on a boat in Italy. Not content to sit inside (boring!) I decided to hang off the front of the boat (attaching my arms around the rail and looking over the front). Now this may make you feel a bit seasick but it was like riding waves like an watery rollercoaster. Incredible and totally unsafe! I'm actually not a great water fan, though I have done canoeing etc.

Matthew 8.23-27 - *Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"*

Can you imagine the times of adventure with Jesus. You're an experienced fisherman, you're on a lake you know and suddenly a storm comes in - the maddest one you've known so you fear you're going to drown. But Jesus steps up and commands the wind and the waves to be still - and they are! Are

you aware that same power is inside all who believe in Jesus through the Holy Spirit?!! This kind of event is what bonds people together as a team. This is why comradeship is so strong in the army. As Christians, it's important to be together, to go on a journey together as a team, an army if you like! This brings people together, knowing that we have to 'fight the good fight' for and with Jesus (1 Timothy 6.12).

End

Don't let people fool you about who Jesus was. One of my lines in a rap says the following (pointing out that Jesus is nothing like this):

You're living in illusion thinking Jesus was a hippy
Wearing robes and sandals, saying 'peace out', getting trippy
So Christ was a bum? Telling stories, unemployed
Maybe slightly simple, his mind empty, devoid
Was Christ a bearded freak, walking talking with the animals
Skipping through the meadows making daisy chains, in flannels

Jesus wasn't a hippy, he was a real man, an outdoors man and the one who is calling you to follow and obey him today!