

Bulletin for Sunday

2nd August 2020

Good morning! This Sunday's reading is one of the relatively few stories of Jesus which appears in all four gospels, and which is therefore very well-known - the story of the feeding of the five thousand (plus women and children!). First let's sing:

Hymn: Let all the world in every corner sing (Rejoice & Sing 114)

Prayer: As we begin our worship this morning, let's think of some of the people we would normally expect to be worshipping alongside, and who perhaps we haven't seen for many months now... we hold them before God... and we pray:

Loving God, we turn from our everyday lives to worship you:
giving thanks for your creation, and for your presence with us,
even when the world keeps changing
and the ground feels unsure beneath our feet.
We give thanks that you know, understand, and love
each one of us through and through,
with all our needs... all our fears... all our hopes...
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we bring to you or give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Matthew chapter 14: verses 13-21

Reflection: We thought last week, in the context of the parables of the pearl of great price, and of the treasure hidden in a field, of our deepest and most genuine desires. If we are physically hungry, or fear that we soon will be, food can become a desire so strong that it preys on our mind to the exclusion of other things, as well as gnawing at our stomach.

The crowd had followed Jesus because they had many needs - and he had compassion on them, because he understood; so he spent the day teaching and healing them. But now that the day was drawing to a close, their most pressing need was for food. The disciples could fully understand that. What they couldn't grasp was Jesus' expectation that they do something about it! Surely this was an impossible task...

Does this sound familiar? So often we can see need around us - hunger for food; hunger for community and friends; hunger for affection, for love, for belonging... but meeting that

need seems far too daunting; what on earth can we possibly do? We don't have great resources or wisdom or energy. Listen:

Jesus brought the little that the disciples had to God in prayer:

"Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds." And with God's blessing, what they had turned out to be not just adequate but far, far more - meeting the needs of the whole crowd and then overflowing in abundance. As Rebecca Froley writes in *Roots: With God's blessing the small gift shared grows in the sharing until it is enough....* Amen.

Hymn: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us (R&S 543)

Prayer: Living God, we pray for our world - and its hungry people.
We pray for those who don't have enough to feed themselves
and for those who worry that they can't feed their children.
We give thanks for foodbanks and charities,
and those who donate, organise and distribute much-needed food.
Teach us to appreciate and to share food - never to waste it -
as we look for the day when all will sit around the table and be fed.
We hold before you in prayer all those in need:
those known to us... and those known only to you...
We pray for our loved ones, and for our communities,
and for ourselves.....
In Jesus' name, Amen

Hymn: Guide me, O thou great Jehovah (R&S 345)

May we receive the food God offers
to fill our hunger - and also share it with others;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
this week and every week. Amen

A more modern hymn which I would have liked to fit into this service, given the opportunity, is Graham Kendrick's 'Beauty for brokenness'.

There will again be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom this evening; contact me for an invitation - all very welcome as we hear the story of Jacob wrestling with God. Please let me know of any news or prayer requests to be shared.

Anne Lewitt