

Traditional Home service Sunday 25th July

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts. Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Just as I am*)

READINGS - 2 Samuel 11.1-15
Ephesians 3.14-21
John 6.1-21

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Praise to the Lord*)

CONCLUSION

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the source of all goodness and growth, pour his blessing upon all things created, and upon you his children, that you may use his gifts to his glory and the welfare of all peoples; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to
thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2 Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee, whose blood can cleanse
each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse,
relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the
King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy
health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple
draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all
things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so
gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires
e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

3 Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper
thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here
daily attend thee;
Ponder anew what the Almighty can
do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

4 Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is
in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now
with praises before Him;
Let the Amen sound from His people
again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Sermon Notes - Nigel Clent
JOHN 6 1-21
"Keep your eyes on the prize"

The reading from John's Gospel this morning is essentially about two miracles performed by Jesus.

The feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the water. The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle that is mentioned in all four of the Gospels. Why?

Why does the Holy Spirit want this story mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. What does it say to us, what is so important, What is the message of these miracles.

We know from previous chapters that the disciples have been busy. They have been sent out on mission, John the Baptist has been executed and they need a rest. They are trying to take a break from the multitudes to a solitude place.

They take their boat across the waters towards Bethsaida in order to discourage the crowds from following them, but their plan doesn't work and in verses 5-7 it tells us that, Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward them. Jesus said to Phillip, where shall we buy bread for these people to eat, he asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

The situation, is a multitude of people to feed, the problem, is Phil didn't have enough to feed them and the result is the problem is bigger than Phil. There was more to be done than Phil could do.

He and the rest of the disciples have been with Jesus for some time now. They have seen the miracles and heard the sermons, but do they have the faith to now turn to Jesus in a crisis, or will they rely upon themselves and just look at all the problems, speaking only of the reasons why it is not possible to do what must be done.

This is the test, not that Jesus has caused a problem to test them. A problem has presented itself and Jesus can use it for the good.

There isn't anything wrong with being tested, we are tested all through life, In school, driving test our jobs, tests help us to realise ourselves, how far we have come, they prepare us for progression. We learn our lessons and move on.

When it comes to our faith being tested by Jesus, it isn't like a loud, abusive, belittling teacher. Jesus is our coach, our gentle mentor. He will correct us, he wants us to progress and if we don't pass the test he will try again later and give you another lesson. What way do you turn in a crisis, to yourself or Jesus. Do we, as the disciples did, after already receiving so much from Jesus, just complain about the huge task in front of us. We have no bread, we have no money, we don't even have enough for ourselves. That would cost six months wages. Send them home, let the people feed themselves.

It can't be done, it is just too hard.

When I first started college, we studied the book of Philemon. Which my class lovingly referred to as Phil Lemon. I wasn't used to studying, I hadn't done it before, I barely went to school, and now here I was writing theological assignments. I found it all a bit overwhelming and complicated.

Did I turn to Jesus for help? no, I turned to Peter Smethurst.

Why do all that research and study, I thought, when all I have to do is have a five minute chat with Peter, he seems to know what he is talking about. Because I was asking Peter about Philemon, he assumed I knew what I was talking about, but I didn't. Peter said, ah, the famous Onesimus and his brother Tioseymous and chuckled. I said ok, that's interesting and made a note of it. He explained a few more things to me and then I thanked him and left. In college the following Wednesday, I was asked what I had taken from the letter of Philemon and I proceeded to tell the class about the adventures of Onesimus and his brother, only to hear chuckles starting to ripple around the classroom.

There is no Tioseymous, but there is a Onesimus and he certainly didn't have a brother. I was rather embarrassed to say the least.

Lesson learned, cheats do not prosper. Do the research, go to the word, pray about it. If the problem before you is too big for you go to Jesus, Have faith and believe in him. Put it in the hands of Jesus and he will multiply it and put it back in your hands. That's what he does.

In Marks account of this story, chapter 6 v 38, Jesus asks the disciples to take stock and see what they do have. Andrew Simon peters brother tells him, we have five small loaves and two small fish, but how far will that go amongst so many. Jesus instructs them give him what they have and to have the crowd sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties.

They the disciples, must of thought what is he going to do now. Jesus takes the meagre rations, looks up to heaven and gave thanks to god for what we had been given. He then instructs the disciples to start serving the food.

We know five thousand men were there, but other accounts tell us there is also women and children, multiplying that number to possibly 15 -20 thousand, some three hundred groups of people, sat on the grass stretching down the mountain.

Each disciple would of carried what he could to each group then having to return back to Jesus for more.

What was going through the disciples minds as they watched Jesus turn virtually nothing into a plentiful bounty again and again. I think they would of thought we couldn't do this without him, we can do nothing without him. Jesus manufactures all that we need and we just distributors.

They now are completely focused on him as they keep returning back to Jesus, Wanting and needing more, they open there hands. Jesus multiplies and manufactures, of Jesus, from Jesus. We just receive turn around and distribute. Jesus does all the hard work , if we would only let him.

They then pick up all the broken pieces, filling twelve baskets. Everybody has eaten their fill, not just a bite to eat, and each disciple has a basket of bread. They have more than what they

started with and everyone is full. Everyone is in awe. Jesus has taken a situation of lack and turned it into a situation of abundance, because they looked to him, because they finally had faith and trusted.

They have all passed the test. For us to pass the test we need to spend more time with him, abide in the vine, to be the branches and just hang with Jesus. Confide with him watch him and build trust. Grow a bit of fruit and let Jesus just work in our lives, because you never know when the next test is coming. In the case of the disciples it is pretty much straight away.

Verse 16 of john tells us It is now evening and the disciples are heading down to the lake and sail to Capernaum, Jesus hasn't joined them yet. Marks gospel chapter 6 v 48 says Jesus is going to dismiss the crowd and then goes up to a mountain side to pray. It says Jesus is on the land and can see the disciples straining at the oars for the wind was against them. The sea had got rough because of the strong winds and they had managed to only row about four miles after many hours at sea.

They are working so hard and getting nowhere. So much work and effort, with no profit or gain. They are discouraged because they are not making any ground, they are tired. That all sounds rather familiar. But Jesus is watching them from the shore the whole time. If you are in a storm, or the next time you are, it won't be long, give it a month or two, because that's life. That's your Sunday morning encouragement. Will you trust that he is watching you. When its cloudy and you cannot see him, will you trust that he can see you. Will you trust that he will come for you, even if it isn't straight away.

Verse 19 tells us, when they saw Jesus coming they were afraid. Marks Gospel tells us they thought he was a ghost and they shrieked. This reaction tells me they were not expecting Jesus to help. They didn't recognise him because they wasn't looking for him. Why not?

Wouldn't it be easy to look at the twelve baskets of bread and say he came through for me before, he is going to do it this time as well.

Their hearts, I believe were full of fear, and not faith, the fear cancels out the faith. I have experienced this many times before, most people have.

I have memories of being desperate, crying out to Jesus and he has come through for me, I have written some down, I remember them. But when that next storm comes, all that has happened before, everything he has done for me slips from my mind and there I am again straining at the oars going backwards.

You would think I would look at my basket that's full to the top and say, I know he is on the way, but many times I don't. Maybe you are more spiritual than me, when your trials come you just say, boom, Jesus is going to walk on the water. That is what Jesus is trying to teach them.

All too often we fail to see the depths of what Jesus is doing, because we are focused on what serves our immediate desires and needs. We fail to realise how graciously God is acting among us, for our sake and the rest of the world. We only see partially and in distorted ways. We need the continuous word of Jesus and the gift of himself if we are to move ever deeper into his glory

Verse 20, Jesus says, It is I, don't be afraid. Chill out, stop screaming. Then they finally recognised him

Verse 21. then they were willing to take him into the boat. Immediately the boat reached where it was heading.

This struck me as odd. They travelled the rest of their journey immediately. The bible tells us that they had been rowing for 3-4 miles when Jesus reached the boat, but the lake is 7 miles across. This means 3 miles had been covered as soon as Jesus got in. Something to ponder on.

As soon as they got their minds off the waves, off the dangers and onto Jesus they were where they needed to be. On solid ground.

All the dangers that brought fear to their hearts, wind sea, storm, drowning and death, Jesus just steps over them like they are nothing, in order to get to his people.

They averted their eyes to him and in their hearts and minds they had peace. They took Jesus in, they received him.

In the Gospel of John the sea isn't calmed down straight away. Jesus brings them to solid ground with no mention of the waves being calmed. I like this because sometimes the storms in our lives don't stop straight away either. We are brought to safety and we can now view everything with a different perspective, from a safe place. Not getting tossed about in the eye of the storm, but in the company of Jesus, we watch the storm eventually pass, under his security.

When we stop striving, fighting and start resting and trusting in him. When we get our eyes off our problems and onto Jesus we will immediately, in our hearts and minds be on solid ground.

The next step as always is for us to look to Jesus, to know him better, trust him more. We need to stop screaming and panicking. We cannot do it by ourselves.

He can feed you, help you to feed others. He can save you, give you peace. Jesus takes away the fear, he builds your faith and mends broken hearts. All we have to do is give it all to him, stay focused on him. We can experience the joy of being his basket bearers, empowered to distribute to the multitudes and feel the weight of his abundance as we help to pick up the pieces.

We miss out on so much blessing.

He is looking at you, he just wants you to look back, for his gaze to lock on to yours.

Have your eyes on the prize, that is Jesus. He is for the taking now, not just in the life to come.