



**Worship at Home – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**  
*Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate*

***Prayer to start***

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

***Bible Reading (Mark 6:30-34; 53-56)***

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

<sup>32</sup>So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup>But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

<sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. <sup>54</sup>As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. <sup>55</sup>They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

***Thought***

Everyone’s an “armchair expert” these days, aren’t they? We’re no exception in our house. I’ve spent the last couple of weeks commentating on the tennis but won’t even watch a match in the 50 weeks in between Wimbledon each year, let alone play one. Every Autumn, you’d think Shavonne and I were professional dancers, given the way we analyse the efforts of the contestants on Strictly – but again, we haven’t danced since our wedding day eight years ago. As I scroll down my Twitter feed, I’ll scream at politicians and the decisions they make, but do I get involved myself – not really. And I imagine many had a thing or two to say about the English football team last weekend. As “armchair experts” we’re very good at talking the talk, but walking the walk is a very different matter.

It is easy to become Christian “armchair experts”. On Sundays we might attend a service, watch a Facebook video, or read our weekly sheet, but how much of a difference does that make to how we live our lives Monday to Saturday? Obviously, trying to undertake any

activity has been hampered during the pandemic, but there are things we can do to ensure we are living authentically Christian lives – walking the walk, as well as talking the talk.

This is the example we're given by the disciples at the start of today's reading. They have just begun their mission of preaching and healing in the local community and now they come back to Jesus to share their experiences and to rest in his presence. Then, at the end of the reading, they get back on with the mission again. Church – whether that's in a building, outside, online, or with a weekly sheet - is the same as the disciples returning to Jesus in the middle of their work. In itself, Church is not the Christian life but it should be what sustains us in our Christian life.

We've seen over the last few weeks and months in our reflections what it means to live this life – to be witnesses of Christ's power and messengers of his Good News. We've thought about how healing is about inclusion of everybody, even when they have characteristics that mean the wider world avoids and excludes them. We've thought about the how the message is about hope – both for eternal life and for an improvement of life here and now. We've thought about how calling people to repentance means little more than encouraging them to think in Jesus' mindset rather than our own.

This week, we might like to take a moment to think about how we spread this life-changingly positive message in practical terms. How do we carry out the mission? We can do this through large projects, like setting up food co-operatives or youth drop-in centres, but we can do this through small gestures like phone calls, visits, or prayers for those in need. Because whenever we do anything for people out of the love that Christ has for them – the love that he demonstrated fully on the cross - we are being Christian witnesses. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 - *he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

May we be inspired this week to leave the comfort of the armchair and think afresh about how we might be authentic Christians in the world.

### ***Prayers to end***

Generous God,  
you give us gifts and make them grow:  
though our faith is small as mustard seed,  
make it grow to your glory  
and the flourishing of your kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.*

*Services on 18<sup>th</sup> July:*

*Holy Communion at Emmanuel 9:30am and Hope 11am*

*God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988)*