

Worship at Home – Trinity 9

Sunday 1st August 2021

Prepared by Rev Adam Pawley, Rector



Prayer to start

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Bible Reading – John 6:24-35 – *Jesus is the bread of life*

²⁴ Once the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were [on the mountainside where the 5,000 had been fed], they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?'

²⁶ Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.'

²⁸ Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'

²⁹ Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'

³⁰ So they asked him, 'What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."'

³² Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'

³⁴ 'Sir,' they said, 'always give us this bread.'

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Thought

Today's story is on the day after Jesus has fed the 5,000. The crowd, wondering where Jesus has got to, eventually find him. On finding him, Jesus says to them, "You are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." (v26) The crowd responds with reference to the Old Testament story from Exodus 16, where God sent manna or bread from heaven to feed the Israelites *daily* for 40 years. Perhaps the crowd was thinking if Jesus is from God then Jesus will do the same for them now? It's now a new day, they are hungry again and what easier or better way to be fed than to have Jesus provide for them! But Jesus replies, he's not here to provide for our physical and temporary needs as much as he is for our spiritual and eternal needs. He responds (vv27-29), "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man (i.e. Jesus) will give you... The work of God is this: believe in the One he has sent."

We find eternal life (life that's worth living forever, life in all its fullness for both today and always) by believing in Jesus Christ. That's the purpose of the miracle of feeding the 5,000 – as John concludes (20:30-31), "These miraculous signs are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name".

The Israelite's ancestors may have eaten the manna or bread from heaven in the wilderness for 40 years, the crowd may have eaten the day before as part of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, but Jesus here is saying the bread that's really worth eating is him. Yesterday's miracle is a 'foretaste' of the bread to come. Today, He says, (v35), "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

In Jesus, we have God's greatest gift to us. Come to Jesus and we will never go hungry, never be thirsty – Jesus will quench our spiritual hungers or our spiritual thirsts. Jesus is the never-ending supply. Jesus is the all-satisfying end of every longing. To the distressed he brings peace, to the bereaved he brings comfort, to the sinner he brings forgiveness, to the sick he brings strength and healing and to the suffering he brings hope. Any emptiness in ourselves that we may have or spiritual longing – for meaning and purpose, for life after death, for hope, for forgiveness – can all be satisfied in Jesus Christ. Through Jesus we can know God, we can learn to love, we can learn to forgive, we can discover help and strength to change for the better. We can put our efforts toward good and find pleasure and gratification in anything of say hard work, money, music, sport, success, relationships, but even though these things aren't wrong in themselves, ultimately they still don't satisfy our spiritual or eternal longings because they don't last. Rather (v35) Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

To come to Jesus, to believe in Jesus, it's two ways of describing the same thing: come to Jesus, believe in Jesus and our spiritual hunger, our spiritual thirst, our spiritual longings and needs are quenched and fulfilled as life, eternal life, life that's worth living forever, life that's worth living for today is found.

Closing Prayers

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Help me to know eternal life through Jesus please. When life is difficult or empty, please give me your hope and strength and peace. **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.**

We hope you are safe and well. Please get in touch if we can help (Adam 01978 760439, Gareth 07731 827988). This Sunday (1 August) we have Holy Communion at 9:30am in Penyffordd and 11am in Hope, and Morning Worship at 11am in St John's. You are very welcome to join us. Our next midweek communion is 12 August.