



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 2nd August 2026

Compiled by Angela Banfield - Lay Assistant

'Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!'

Words from Isaiah 55 which introduce today's Gospel, in which we hear about Jesus blessing five loaves and two fish, and feeding five thousand men and all those present.

We pray:

Loving God, enable us today to give you our hearts and minds.

May we serve and please you in all that we do, through the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

Hymn 56 STF

1] King of glory, King of peace, I will love thee;
and that love may never cease I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request, thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast, thou hast spared me.

2] Wherefore with my utmost art, I will sing thee
and the cream of all my heart I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried, thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied, thou didst hear me.

3] Seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven, I can raise thee.
Small it is in this poor sort to enrol thee:
e'en eternity's too short to extol thee.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Reflection on the hymn

Written in the early 17th century there are some strange rhymings and words within this hymn, but it carries a true authentic note of praise that somehow we understand and wholeheartedly agree with. I think that the analogy of the 'cream of all my heart', speaks of our need to offer God the very best of us that we can.

We pray together

We come to you our God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, perfectly balanced in the loving harmony that we know as Trinity. Your heart aches for us to know our sins are forgiven and the peace your mercy brings. Help us in your mercy to turn away from vain idols and fix our eyes upon you. Help us to see you in the world in which we live and to respond to need with the same compassion that Jesus showed. Give us faith that trusts your goodness, whether by still waters or on rocky roads. May we rest peacefully, knowing your presence and the strength of your will to keep us safe. In Jesus name we pray and then say:

Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever, Amen.

Reading. Isaiah 55:1 - 5

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come buy and eat! Come buy wine and meat without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I make him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that you do not know will run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy one of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Reflection on the reading

In this prophesy the emphasis changes from David to Israel being the continuing light to the Gentiles that Isaiah talks about in Ch. 49. Simeon recognises this light in Jesus, when Mary and Joseph presented him to God in the temple, Luke 2: 32. And in Acts 13: 47 Paul quotes Isaiah 49 when he defends his preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. How do we join in this legacy of sharing the Good News to people who don't know God loves them?

There's a chorus:

'This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

And a verse hardly anyone knows goes:

Let it shine around the world. We're gonna let it shine
Let it shine around the world. We're gonna let it shine
Let it shine around the world. We're gonna let it shine
Let it shine around the world.

I don't think we'll be singing this a lot anymore, but it's got a point and is quite clear,
no hiding our lights under a bowl or under a bed! Luke 8:16
Instead, we can sing:

Hymn 175 STF

1] Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see -
beauty that made this heart adore you,
hope of a life spent with you.

*So here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that you you're my God.
and you're altogether lovely, altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.*

2] King of all days oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly you came to the earth you created,
all for love's sake became poor.

So here I am to worship, here I am to bow down.....

And I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

And I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

So here I am to worship, here I am to bow down.....

Tim Hughes (b. 1977)

Reading Matthew 14:13 - 21

Prologue

Now when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been beheaded, he withdrew from where he was teaching in Galilee, and got into a boat on the lake to go to a desolate place to be alone, this was near the town of Bethsaida.

Text

But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said 'this is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, "They need not go away, you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish" And Jesus said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Reflection on our Gospel reading

There is so much in this story to remind us of the miracle of Holy Communion, when we break the bread, offer it to God and ask for the Holy Spirit's blessing upon it, and then share together in the mystery of God's abundant love made plain by Jesus. It becomes for us what God knows we need, perhaps each of us differently understanding what it is that we so desperately long for in Christ. Yet all of us are fed.

We hear in our reading that there was more bread than people could eat, another lesson for when we doubt the will or the power of God to make a difference. Or if we feel that surely God's patience with us must have run out. As we see, it will not ever run out, because God loves us and that never alters. When we ignore the gracious and overwhelming providence and mercy of God, we are the hungry ones and it's because we refuse to eat.

There have been so many good sermons about this wonderful miracle, The Feeding of Five Thousand + people, and surely the punch line is when Jesus says, "you feed them".

Well, to save you from yet another sermon, I will tell you about a cartoon on Face Book that I saw recently. Charlie Brown and his friend Linus were chatting. Charlie asks, "Why does God allow all these wars and so much suffering in our world?" Linus replies, "I always think he is asking us the same question."

Let us pray

Loving God, we pray for our world and for those places suffering war and unrest today.

Help us to ensure that we speak and work for justice for all people, and for fair and proper peace. Help our leaders to know, that we need them to speak peace and bring hope wherever and whenever they can.

Make us uncomfortable with our peace until all mankind can share in the same privileges that we enjoy.

We are grateful for them, but are distressed that so many of our fellow human beings suffer so much. We pray for those who are hungry when we have baskets of food to spare, for those who are sick, and there's no one to heal their pain. We give you thanks for our medical care and realise we can help those in distress through our prayers and generosity. Lord God, give us the compassion of Christ and the will to serve you as he did. Amen.

Some prayerful verses from Alan Gaunt. A hymn but such a wonderful prayer for us:

"We pray for peace but not for the easy peace built on complacency and not the truth of God, we pray for real peace, the peace God's love alone can seal.

We pray for peace but not for the cruel peace leaving God's poor bereft and dying in distress; we pray for real peace, enriching all the human race.

We pray for peace: holy communion with Christ our risen Lord and every living thing; God's will fulfilled on earth and all creatures reconciled. We pray for peace, and for the sake of peace look to the risen Christ, who gives us the grace we need to serve the cause of peace and make our own self - sacrifice.

Hymn 707 STF

1] Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where's there's injury, your pardon Lord;
and where's there's doubt true faith in you:

*O master grant that I may never seek,
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

2] Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy:

O master

3] Make me a channel of your peace.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

*Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)
from the prayer of St. Francis*

Blessing

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all for evermore. Amen.