



**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 2 August 2020 Trinity 8**

Preparation

We meet in the name of God:

All Father, Son and Holy Spirit

From the rising of the sun to its setting

All the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

All O praise the name of the Lord!

Silence is kept

The Lord is here

All His Spirit is with us.

Lord, we come before you now as your servants,
and we worship you:

from sunrise to sunset your name be praised!

You are exalted over all the nations,
your glory fills the skies!

Who is like you, enthroned on high?

Yet you stoop down to look at our world;
you raise up the poor and lift up the needy.

Lord, we come before you now as your servants
and we worship you.

From Psalm 113

All Amen.

The Greeting

Prayers of Penitence

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin
and be faithful to Christ.

As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith,
we renew our confidence and trust in his mercy.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the God of love
bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Gloria

All **Glory to God in the highest
And peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father;
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world. Have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:
Receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven
And became poor for our sake:
When we prosper, save us from pride,
When we are needy, save us from despair
That we may trust in you alone;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The First Reading: Romans 9:1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

This is the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

The Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. 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 may 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 he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. 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 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection from Liz Moy

It can be so special going on a picnic, so it's little wonder that this story of Jesus feeding the 5000 was one of my favourites as a child. Let's imagine the vast crowd who have been listening to Jesus as he taught and shared with them the wonderful promises of God's kingdom. We can imagine the relaxed atmosphere, the wide open space, the beautiful weather – and people feeling that they had all the time in the world. Time to listen, time to reflect, time to savour the hope

which Jesus was sharing with them. No wonder the time flew by and evening was approaching before people's minds turned to more practical matters such as getting something to eat.

Jesus was concerned about their physical needs, not just their spiritual needs. Rather than sending them away hungry, he wanted them to be fed before leaving. We know the disciples asked for food – and the only offering they received was five loaves and two fish, which Jesus blessed and miraculously there was sufficient to feed everyone there. There was even some left over. What an amazing gift!

Sadly as adults, we can become too preoccupied with just how it happened and over years people have tried to explain how the miracle occurred – was it exactly as recorded in the account or when some saw the small offering of food, were they prompted to offer their own food as well. (And is that just a miracle in a different guise?) But, for now, let us put that aside and focus on the amazing gift which, through Jesus' blessing, fed and nourished so many people. What a feast – and what a promise of the feast for all in the kingdom of heaven where no one will go hungry and the needs of all will be satisfied. When we share in Communion, we have a foretaste of that feast. A joy to share now – and a promise of such abundant joy to come!

But I wonder, can this account give us even more food for thought? Before the feeding of the 5000, Jesus spent time with the people teaching them about God and God's kingdom, opening their hearts and minds to the promise of eternal life with God. Then, he showed that such faith was more than just food for their souls and minds, but also that it was manifest in caring for their bodies too. But in the account of such wondrous happenings, before the food was provided, we hear the phrase "it was getting late".

It was getting late – on that occasion referring to evening approaching, and Jesus showed care and compassion for the people by ensuring they were fed before making their way home.

It was getting late. So many times in the Old Testament we read of situations which are becoming increasingly chaotic, when people are rebelling against God's ways and misusing his creation. But God uses people who are faithful to

him to help change things around – Noah, Moses, Amos are some who are used to help others focus on God once more, before it was too late.

“It was getting late”. For many people, the disregard for God, his creation and the people he loved continued. But God did not give up on his creation. He acted in love as he sent Jesus to be that light of hope and promise in the world. “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” He acted in love to meet the deepest needs of all people. And through Jesus, we see that it is not too late. It is not too late to become the people that God calls us to be. It is not too late to share the gospel message with those around us. It is not too late to “love one another as he has loved us”

Through the weeks of lockdown and living with various restrictions, it has been really inspiring to see the way in which many people have acted for the good of others – medical staff and all keyworkers who have continued working in difficult circumstances – and so many others who have supported family, friends and neighbours in practical and thoughtful ways either in the community or from their own homes. They have truly been channels of God’s love in difficult times.

But God does not just call us to follow him in emergencies. Recent lifting of some restrictions does not mean that Covid has gone away – nor does the presence of Covid on the news mean that other worldwide concerns have ceased to exist. There are still concerns about climate change and the effect on the planet. Poverty still affects many areas of our world. Racial injustice blights the lives of many. Individuals still struggle – with illness, bereavement, loneliness, financial worries and so many other concerns. Do we wait until it’s another emergency, until it’s getting late, before we act?

We are called to be channels of God’s love, peace and compassion at all times – not just in emergencies. It is never too late to pray and to bring our concerns and the concerns of the world to God. And as we pray, are we prepared to be part of the answer? We have seen recently how acts of kindness of all sorts, both large and small, can really make a difference for others. Let us pray that God will guide us so that we may become channels of his love where and however he can use us – and may we respond willingly to his call. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

All Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Praise response

See what love the Father has given us,
All that we should be called the children of God.

You are my sons and daughters,
this day I have begotten you.

All See what love the Father has given us.

As many as received him,
to them he gave power to become the children of God.

All See what love the Father has given us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

All See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called the children of God.

Prayers of Intercession led by Jasmin Smith

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
for you provide food for our daily needs
and for all your creatures.
You give food, resources and talents
for us to share with others and give you glory
Blessed are you Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We ask your blessing upon all who hunger and thirst for righteousness and the coming of your kingdom. We remember all who feel their lives are parched and dry and who suffer from spiritual hunger. May the Good News be brought to all who feel empty and that life is meaningless. We bring before you all who go out in mission and all who seek to proclaim your love.

Renewing and refreshing God,
hear us and help us.

We ask your blessing upon all who lack the necessary resources for well being. We pray for all who are suffering from hunger and poverty, all who struggle due to injustice and greed. We remember all who have lost crops and livestock through famine, drought and war. We give thanks for charitable organizations who seek to bring relief to those in need throughout the world and those who through contributing and volunteering in foodbanks bring relief to those locally who are in need. We pray for all who seek to bring relief to the hungry and poor.

Renewing and refreshing God
hear us and help us.

We give thanks for our loved ones, for all who have cared and provided for us. We ask your blessing upon all who work to give us what we need. We pray for all farmers and food providers, for shop workers and all who bring our food to the markets and supermarkets. We ask your blessing upon our families and our neighbours and on those we are not yet able to be with because of the restrictions.

Renewing and refreshing God,
hear us and help us.

We remember all who feel weary with life, drained of energy and no longer able to cope. We pray for all who struggle against great odds. We ask your blessing upon all who feel alone and that no one cares for them.

We pray for all who are ill at home or in hospital or awaiting treatment and tests. We give thanks for those who visit the lonely, isolated and ill and those providing care in very challenging times

Renewing and refreshing God,
hear us and help us.

We give thanks that you give life and life eternal, that you are a renewing and restoring God. As we rejoice in the resurrection, we ask your blessing upon our loved ones departed. May they know the peace and glory of your kingdom.

Merciful Father,
**Accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
All **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.**

Closing Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the courage to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

Blessing

God the Father,
who has given to his Son the name above every name,
strengthen you to proclaim Christ as Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Sending Out

All **Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
in the name of Christ. Amen.**