

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 11 August 2024 - The Eleventh Sunday of Trinity

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

1 King 19. 4-8; Psalm 34.1-8; Ephesians 4. 25 - Chapter 5.2; John 6.35, 41-51

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by Kate Pateman, LLM in the Leverington, Newton & Tydd St Giles Benefice**

Walk into any food shop, any supermarket, or grocery store, or, if you're lucky enough to have one near you, artisan baker's shop, and you will see an astonishing range of bread for sale. Anything from good old-fashioned sliced white to hand-made sourdough loaves; gluten-free, vegan friendly, with seeds, without seeds, the variety is bewildering, and we are simply spoilt for choice. But, whatever style of bread we choose, whatever food we choose to eat to nourish our bodies, we know that, eventually, we will need to eat again. Our energy reserves will run down, we will feel the discomfort of hunger, and we will need to refuel.

What then, does it mean when Jesus says that he is the bread of life? When he tells us that, if we come to him, we need never hunger or thirst again? If that were true, in the literal sense, then surely there would be no need for us to shop for food, to prepare and cook meals for our families. Even better, there would be no more famine anywhere in the world, no deaths of children from malnutrition, no queues at food banks or soup kitchens. What a wonderful thing that would be!

The crowd following Jesus in the days after his miraculous feeding of five thousand people from the contents of one boy's packed lunch, might perhaps have been forgiven for thinking along those lines. Perhaps they were thinking that, if they could just continue following this charismatic preacher who they had identified as a prophet sent by God, then maybe they need not work for food ever again. He could just carry on feeding them as he'd already done, producing lots of good food out of very little. After all, Moses had fed their ancestors in the wilderness, so why not Jesus now?

However, to think like that is to misunderstand just what Jesus means when he says that he is the bread of life. It is not physical bread that Jesus has come to give them, it is not physical hunger that he has come to end. His promise is of spiritual sustenance that will fill their lives with the knowledge of the love of God. It is food that will feed and nurture their souls. It comes to them through him, and with it comes the promise of eternal life in God's own Kingdom.

As Jesus explains to the people around him, when they begin to question what he has said, even the bread provided by God to their ancestors in the wilderness was perishable. It was

enough to feed their physical hunger, but it did not keep. Each day they would wake up hungry and set out to gather fresh supplies. Even this special food from heaven could not prevent them from dying. It was, quite simply, food; and even though it was provided for them by God, in his love and generosity, it had no special properties above being nutritious.

Jesus tells his followers that he is *the living bread that came down from heaven*; bread that is given for the life of the world. This gift of living bread is not, like the manna in the wilderness, just for the people of Israel, it is universal, a gift to the whole world, freely given by Jesus as a sacrifice on behalf of us all.

What Jesus has not said in this passage, but what is inferred by his words, is that, in order to provide this living bread, first he must die. When he says, *'Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'*, he is referring to the sacrifice that he knows he must make on our behalf. He will give up his life for the sake of the world. Out of his death will come life beyond his life, life for the world.

What a gift that is! God's own son, our Saviour, giving up his life for us so that we may have everlasting life with him in God's glorious Kingdom!

He asks for nothing in return. For us to benefit from his courage and his love for us, all we have to do is to turn to him, believe in him, open ourselves up to the teaching he gives; the teaching of love and forgiveness that comes to us from God the Father, through God the Son. We need to be prepared to accept the power of God the Holy Spirit that is at work in the world today. If we can do all that, and it is little enough, so that we can partake of this living bread of love and power, then his promise is that we too will be raised up on the last day to dwell for ever in the house of the Lord.

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder how the people who heard Jesus speak felt when he spoke to them about the Kingdom of Heaven?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

### **Suggested intercessions**

Let us pray to the Father through the Son in whom he has been revealed.

Cleanse the Church from all malice and dissension. Grant to your people the unity of purpose that will spread peace to others. Give to those whom you have called to your service grace to be ministers of the bread of life.

***[Specific petitions for Church, clergy, ministers, congregations .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

Look with compassion on the world where anger so often prevails over love, where false speech and evil words destroy human fellowship. Make all know the peace that is in Christ through his death for the life of the world.

***[Specific petitions for the environment, the peace of world, nations, governments, etc .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

In all our words, to families and friends, to neighbours and colleagues, help us to speak gently and with understanding. Bring reconciliation wherever in this community fellowship has been broken.

***[Specific petitions for local societies, charities, family and children's organisations, schools, clubs, etc .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

Have mercy on those whose lives are twisted by bitterness. All who cannot forgive others or cannot find freedom from personal guilt. Relieve them with the knowledge of your redeeming love.

***[Specific petitions for relief agencies, organisations fighting for human rights, hospital and prison staff, refugees, prisoners of conscience, etc .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

Have mercy on all who are sick in body, mind or spirit. Give to the suffering the comfort of your presence. Heal the broken, bring peace to suffering minds, calm troubled spirits, and restore those who are sad and in pain.

***[Specific petitions for the sick in body, mind or spirit .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

According to your promise, grant eternal life to those who have died in the faith of Christ. As they were strengthened by the bread of life in this world, grant them everlasting refreshment in your heavenly Kingdom.

***[Specific petitions for the departed, the bereaved, year's mind .....]***

**Lord, in your mercy;** hear our prayer.

We pray through Christ, who has called us to himself and will raise us up to eternal life.

*Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen*

Adapted from: *Leading Intercessions*, Raymond Chapman (Canterbury Press, 2006)

### **Suggested hymns/songs**

Alleluia, sing to Jesus

Be still, my soul

Bread of the world in mercy broken

Bread of heaven, on thee we feed

God is love, and where true love is

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

I come with joy

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour

New every morning is the love

The God of love my shepherd is

### **Activities to accompany the service:**

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.com/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@ lectionary resource)