

Into his Courts with Praise...



A Service of the Word
for
Sunday 2 August 2026
Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

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

Isaiah 55:1.



THE CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.
Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our
sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God,
I confess that I have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed;
I have not loved you with all my heart;
I have not loved my neighbours as myself.
Have mercy upon me,
cleanse me from my sins,
and help me to overcome my faults,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Receive God's forgiveness

May the Father forgive us
By the death of His Son
And strengthen us
To live in the power of the Spirit
All our days. **Amen.**

PRAISE

O Lord, open my lips...
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Give me the joy of your saving help...
and sustain me with your life-giving Spirit.

THE COLLECT

Gracious Father, revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Let us with a gladsome mind.**

THE WORD OF GOD.

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 milk
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 made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Psalm 145:8-9, 15-end.

The Lord is gracious and merciful, ♦
long-suffering and of great goodness.
The Lord is loving to everyone ♦
and his mercy is over all his creatures.
The Lord upholds all those who fall ♦
and lifts up all those who are bowed down.
The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, ♦
and you give them their food in due season.
You open wide your hand ♦
and fill all things living with plenty.
The Lord is righteous in all his ways ♦
and loving in all his works.
The Lord is near to those who call upon him, ♦
to all who call upon him faithfully.
He fulfils the desire of those who fear him; ♦
he hears their cry and saves them.
The Lord watches over those who love him, ♦
but all the wicked shall he destroy.
My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, ♦
and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

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.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **The God of Abraham praise.***

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.

REFLECTION – Good news, bad news?

What had Jesus heard that made him withdraw from his companions? The answer is in the first part of this chapter, he had heard the news that his cousin, John the Baptist, had been beheaded. John's disciples had been sent to tell Jesus the bad news.

Little wonder then that he needed to have a quiet time of contemplation and mourning on his own. Well, the best plans sometimes fail. Jesus couldn't escape so easily from the crowds which followed him.

Not only that but they continued to bring their sick and injured for him to cure. Which of course, he did.

When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

So much for "me time" for the Saviour, the demand for his compassion and healing was unceasing. Grieving or not, the people needed Jesus.

This brings us to the main part of this story. A well-known one, the feeding of the five thousand. This is a story to be found in all four of the Gospels. There are differences between the various accounts but the main points are reasonably consistent. In Matthew's Gospel there is a later account of Jesus feeding four thousand (Matthew 15:32-39). I'm not suggesting that the correspondence between the versions speaks to the truth of the event but whatever happened we know that there is a great significance to this story.

It is possible to make several interpretations depending how we take Matthew's writing in context. I think it is valid to look at the story in the context of a population living under Roman occupation. Then, as today, living in an occupied country created a wide range of living standards with the extremely rich on the one hand and a larger population who were living in subsistence conditions. The society of Jesus' time was no more fair than the one in which we live.

This is not meant to be a political diatribe, just a look at the New Testament writings which must by the very nature of Jesus' time and ministry have a political context.

His followers had been waiting for generations for the arrival of the Messiah, the one they thought would solve all their troubles and overthrow the Romans. Instead of that here was a man filled to overflowing with compassion and kindness.

This Gospel passage is an example of that. We know that Jesus is grieving, we read that all these people have followed him into a deserted place, the wilderness, and he has spoken to them at length and healed the sick. When the disciples suggest that Jesus sends the crowds home so that they can get something to eat, they probably didn't expect his response;

'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.'

Although perhaps they shouldn't have been surprised – this was Jesus who never did quite what was expected.

We know the story, Jesus looked to heaven and blessed the loaves and fishes (in this telling Matthew doesn't say where they came from). All were fed and there was some left over.

Jesus is not only feeding the crowd, he is fulfilling the prophecy of the Old Testament writings, Prophecies known to observant Jews, that it was God's will that people had food to eat. Our passage from Isaiah is a good example;

*Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

The people of Israel had always known what it was to be hungry, to wonder where the next meal might come from. The ordinary people were used to struggling to feed their families. To make it worse, those in authority, the occupying forces and those who worked with them seemed to have plenty.

God had provided for their ancestors – feeding the wanderers in the wilderness in Exodus for example. Jesus' actions here echo that Godly provision. He endorses the principle of distribution of good things so that all have a fair share.

The language of Matthew's telling in verse 19 and 20, "taking," "loaves," "blessed," "broke" "gave to disciples", "ate," and "all" should remind us of another passage, the last supper in Matthew 26:26-27. There are differences of course, this is not a last supper, there is no wine. The two stories are linked by the use of food and the giving of divine blessing.

So returning to my interpretation of the story in the context of a population living under Roman occupation I think that this is about compassion, about the fairness and generosity of the Kingdom of God. We see Jesus feeding the people, not asking who they were, or if they had a rightful claim. No, Jesus sees a need and provides what is needed.

Lord Jesus we remember that you are the bread of life, help us to follow your actions and give freely to all who are in need.

Amen.

Brian Pateman.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **There's a wideness in God's mercy.***

THE CREED

**All I believe in God the Father,
 whose loving care is the pattern for family life.
 I believe in Jesus, the Son of God,
 who lives in my heart through faith,
 and fills me with his love.
 I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens me with power from on high.
 I believe in one God;
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

A time of quiet prayer for

- *The universal Church - Bishops, synods and all leaders church*
- *The leaders of the nations*
- *The natural world and the resources of the earth*

**Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace.
Look upon our divided world
to be with those who are victims of violence.
We pray for the people of Ukraine
and all who have been subjected to the cruelty of others.
Help us to know the gift of your peace
in the power of your Spirit and
we ask you to soften the hearts
of those who can stop the fighting.
Creator God, we ask for your aid as your children of light
living in the darkness of our world.
Amen.
*Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group.***

Finishing with the South Calder Mission Community prayer...

**Heavenly Father we thank you for the life of your Church
in this place, and in all the villages of the South Calder
Mission Community;
for all who have served and worshipped you in years gone by,
for all who make up your family in our churches today,
for the faith we have in common, and for the people and
traditions which make each church unique.
By your Spirit, guide and equip us,
that together we might find new ways
to reach out to our local community,
to show your love to our neighbours,
and to encourage them
to follow the Lord Jesus in their lives.
Father, we offer ourselves to your service,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
And in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

and the Lord's prayer...

**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.**

THE CONCLUSION

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Let us build a house.***

The following prayer is said

**Be with me, Lord, as I finish my prayer today.
May my lips always speak the truth;
may my eyes which have read your word
see only what is good;
and may my life as well as my worship
be always pleasing in your sight,
for the glory of your name. Amen.**

And now may the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit,
strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs
sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,
send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.
Amen.

So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Let us with a gladsome mind.

<https://youtu.be/dG6kS1o5PpA>

The God of Abraham praise.*

<https://youtu.be/pKAIWQpbSH8>

There's a wideness in God's mercy.

<https://youtu.be/26cyYoBqiQ8>

Let us build a house.

<https://youtu.be/N9bOiAxwi4U>

**Alternative for fans of West Gallery music.*

<https://youtu.be/352MkaAiMa8>