

## Circuit Worship for Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 prepared by Revd David Shaw

### Welcome

Welcome to worship. I am delighted to say the sermon has been prepared by Rev Andrew deVille, our District Chair. You may remember Andrew from 'The Week' when he was heavily involved with us. His contribution reminds us we are part of a District and the Connexion.

Take a moment to picture a church, maybe two which you know beyond the Circuit. Then picture those who over the years you have worshipped with. These pictures point to the reality that our worship is always with the Communion of Saints on earth and in heaven. With those pictures in our heads let us sing our opening hymn - 'Come let us join our cheerful songs'

### Hymn H&P 810 (StF 743) 'Come let us join our cheerful songs'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyj2QijjsBc>

1

Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
with angels round the throne ;  
ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
but all their joys are one.

2

'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,  
'to be exalted thus !'  
'Worthy the Lamb ! '  
our lips reply,  
'for he was slain for us.'

3

Jesus is worthy to receive  
honour and power divine ;  
and blessings, more than we can give,  
be, Lord, for ever thine.

4

Let all creation join in one  
to bless the sacred name  
of him that sits upon the throne,  
and to adore the Lamb.

Isaac Watts  
(1674–1748)

### Prayer

Extraordinary God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are at the centre - at the centre of our worship, at the centre of all that is, at the centre of the lives of your children.

Extraordinary God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit you are the focus – the focus of our worship, the focus of the lives of all those we pictured a moment ago. Help us to keep our eyes, hearts and attention on you during this service. Take away anything which would prevent us from meeting you and focussing on you in this worship.

Extraordinary God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are worthy of all praise. So, our voices cry out with the angels in the hymn 'Honour', 'Blessing', 'Power' belong to you.

Extraordinary God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we praise and adore you for all you are

loving and gracious  
holy and merciful  
forgiving and generous  
just and faithful

and for all you have done –

for your creation in its beauty, complexity and intricacy.  
for your constant desire to speak with your people and to lead your people  
for your coming in Jesus and all that He accomplished in life, death and resurrection  
for your gift of yourself in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit begun at Pentecost and never-  
ending since then

for your calling to follow you.

In the blessed name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.

Loving and gracious God, we also bring to you the rubbish that there is in our life. Some of it, Lord, is of our own doing and some of it we have picked up from others. It weighs us down. It saddens us. It diminishes us and others. We are sorry for our part in the rubbish of our lives and in the lives of others. We seek your forgiveness and your grace to forgive others. Somehow loving and gracious God transform the ugliness into something beautiful for you. We are grateful that you do forgive us through Jesus. Thanks be to you.

Amen

Hymn H&P 467 (StF 153) Break thou the bread of life

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAigUNye\\_jl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAigUNye_jl)

1

Break thou the bread of life,  
O Lord, to me,  
as thou didst break the loaves  
beside the sea.  
Beyond the sacred page  
I seek thee, Lord ;  
my spirit longs for thee,  
O living Word !

2

Thou art the Bread of Life,  
O Lord, to me,  
thy holy word the truth  
that saveth me ;  
give me to eat and live  
with thee above ;  
teach me to love thy truth,  
for thou art love.

3

O send thy Spirit, Lord,  
now unto me,  
that he may touch my eyes,  
and make me see ;  
show me the truth concealed  
within thy word,  
and in thy book revealed  
I see the Lord.

v. 1 Mary Artemisia Lathbury  
(1841–1913)  
vv. 2 & 3 Alexander Groves  
(1842–1909)

Readings: Genesis 32 v 22 - 32  
Matthew 14 v 13 – 21

**Sermon – prepared by Revd Andrew deVile, Southampton Methodist District Chair**  
**Sermon Matthew 14: 13-21 A thoughtful place.**

I don't know how many of you have been fans of Pooh Bear – the creation of the children's author A. A. Milne.

The children's books allow us to share in the ups and downs of life for Pooh Bear and his many friends – Christopher Robin, Piglet, Tigger, Eeyore – to name but a few – as they live out their life in the Hundred Acre Wood.

In one of the books – The House at Pooh Corner – we are introduced to the place which was halfway between Pooh's house and his friend, Piglet's House – at this spot there was a log which Pooh used to go and sit on – and a sign he had put up which said – Thoughtful Spot.

This was the place where Pooh would go to think about what to do that day – to dream his dreams, which usually involved eating honey – and where he could think about life in general – this was his Thoughtful Spot.

We all need a Thoughtful Spot – a place where we can go and sort things out. Your thoughtful Spot could be in your own home – a favourite chair where you can sit, with a drink, and just think about what to do – mull over a problem in life.

For others their Thoughtful Spot might be in the great outdoors – a favourite place in the city, or in the country – sometimes couples might go there together to talk about things – I have to say that Helen and I usually use a coffee shop as our thoughtful place, usually on my day off, a Friday, where we can go and talk through the last week, and plan for all that needs to be done in the coming week.

Jesus was no different to us – he needed a Thoughtful Spot – and in the reading from Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus – having heard of the death of his cousin, John the Baptist – wanted to go somewhere to be alone – just to sit and think about John, perhaps to pray to God, to think what the future might hold for him – and so he set off in a boat to find that place, that Thoughtful Spot.

Jesus found a secluded place – away from the crowds – or so he thought. As the reading reminded us the crowds followed Jesus – they came to see him with all their wants and needs – we are told that thousands traipsed around the countryside trying to find him.

People wanted to listen to what Jesus had to say – some just valued being in his presence – others brought sick people to him for healing and kept him busy.

As Jesus was a long way from any town or village, when it became late in the day, then people started to realise they were hungry and wanted to have something to eat. We heard the story of how Jesus told the disciples, when they brought the message of the people’s hunger, that they should find them something!

The account in another Gospel – John’s Gospel – heightens the drama – that account tells us that Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, came to Jesus saying, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fish.”

Jesus said, “Give them to me.” And he took their offering, he blessed it, he broke it, and he gave it.

Five thousand people ate and, we are told, they were filled.

The words are important – Jesus took .. he blessed .. he broke .. he gave.

That is the way, so often, that Jesus works, and not just with loaves and fishes. It’s the way he works in our lives.

How many times have we seen a need? A charity makes an appeal. We hear a cry – so often today from across the world – and we think, “There’s little I can do about that. What is my small offering worth?”

Yet if everyone thought like that, nothing would be done.

And it’s not just at times of crisis outside of our personal lives that we feel too insignificant to be useful. Similar emotions have been felt by many with the trauma we are experiencing in our own lives today – all that the pandemic brings to us – the bereavements, the difficulties in relationships, the loss of jobs, the real uncertainty about the future, our own health concerns.

Perhaps like me you find yourself asking the question – “What can I do now?” – What good can I do – what help can I offer – what words of comfort can I use?

And yet today I believe Jesus is saying to us – whatever you have to offer – however little you feel it might be – I can use it – I can bless it – I can multiply it – I can bring good out of your life – if only you would let me.

Jesus asks – he actually invites – today, us, each one of us to offer our lives to him – and he says I want to bless you and your life – sometimes I might want to break some bad habits in your life – and then I want to give you a new life – and through you give life and hope to others.

This story we have heard this morning is about us responding to Jesus – it’s a story to show how Jesus can use the offerings we have – the things we can do – our talents and skills – and use them to meet our own needs as well as the needs of others.

We should never be afraid that what we can offer is of no use – because Jesus says all we have is of use to him.

So when you go to your Thoughtful Spot in the next few days – or if you haven’t got one then now’s the time to find one, to create one – when you go there in your thinking and prayers try to be honest in offering something to Jesus, because it might just be the one thing Jesus is waiting for at that moment.

Jesus says to each one of us, “Give your life to me” - make an offering and let Jesus bless it and use it for God’s Kingdom here on earth.

May God bless each one of us as we respond to the call offered through Jesus into our own hearts and lives.

Amen

Time for reflection – you are invited to go to your ‘Thoughtful Place’ and reflect on what are you offering or are able to offer that God might bless and use?

Hymn 705 Take my life (StF 566)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sss-g50Dw1Q>

1

Take my life, and let it be  
consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
take my moments and my days,  
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2

Take my hands, and let them move  
at the impulse of thy love;  
take my feet, and let them be  
swift and beautiful for thee.

3

Take my voice, and let me sing  
always, only, for my King;

4

Take my silver and my gold,  
not a mite would I withhold;  
take my intellect, and use  
every power as thou shalt choose.

5

Take my will, and make it thine;  
it shall be no longer mine;  
take my heart — it is thine own;  
it shall be thy royal throne.

6

Take my love;  
my Lord, I pour

take my lips, and let them be  
filled with messages from thee.

at thy feet its treasure-store;  
take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal  
(1836–1879)

## Prayers of Intercession

What is going on in the life of the world, this nation, your community and family that needs your prayers?

Take some time to think about that.

To help you think here are some suggestions for you to consider:

Lifting of lockdown, the impact of the virus on poorer nations, inequality/injustice in our society in relation to race and income, climate change, the work of 'your' local church.

Talk to God about what is on your heart. Listen too for God's quiet word.

Lord's Prayer – our prayers will all have been different, but orchestrated by the same Spirit. Together with the brothers and sisters we pictured earlier let us say the Lord's Prayer

Hymn H&P 767 (StF 661) Give me the faith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Juya3B08xp8>

1

Give me the faith which can remove  
and sink the mountain to a plain ;  
give me the childlike praying love,  
which longs to build thy house again ;  
thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,  
and all my simple soul devour.

2

I would the precious time redeem,  
and longer live for this alone :  
to spend, and to be spent, for them  
who have not yet my Saviour known ;  
fully on these my mission prove,  
and only breathe, to breathe thy love.

3

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,  
into thy blessed hands receive ;  
and let me live to preach thy word,  
and let me to thy glory live ;  
my every sacred moment spend  
in publishing the sinners' friend.

4

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart  
with boundless charity divine :  
so shall I all my strength exert,  
and love them with a zeal like thine ;  
and lead them to thy open side,  
the sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

Charles Wesley  
(1707–1788)

Blessing from 2 Thess. 3 v 16 -hear in your head others offer this blessing to you. Say it out loud as a blessing to those you pictured earlier.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. Amen