**Morning Praise @ Home 28th July 2024**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading John 6: 1 – 21

### Reflection from Philip

Sometimes it’s worth looking afresh at the old bible stories we might have heard when we were children, to see if there is something more beyond a simple description of events. We need to ask ourselves, what was the gospel writer trying to tell us, what was he trying to show us?

So John’s account of the feeding of the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes is one of those that we have probably heard many, many times. Yes, of course it’s a miracle. But what was John really trying to show us?

Well we read at the opening of this passage in verse 4 that ‘The Passover was near’. This was the Jewish celebration of the flight from Egypt, the ‘Exodus’, led by the great prophet Moses.

Again and again in our reading John is comparing Jesus to Moses.

The crowd, we read, followed Jesus to a place described as ‘the other side of the sea of Galilee’. Not to a named town – so this must have been the countryside – and in that area, that can mean a wilderness. Somewhere with little, if anything, available to eat.

Just as the Israelites followed Moses in the wilderness…

We read that Jesus went up the mountainside. Do you remember Moses did that too? As in Exodus, God’s will is about to be revealed.

So, John is highlighting the striking similarities between the situation of Moses, the prophet, and Jesus. But John wants to be quite clear – Jesus is not ‘just’ another prophet, not just another Moses…

Of course, Moses was (and is) treated with huge respect by the Jews. And by all who read their Bible.

This is the Moses who saw the burning bush and spoke with God, Moses who led his people out of slavery in Egypt, Moses who was given the Ten Commandments, who led them in the wilderness towards the promised land.

Caroline and I travelled to Jordan early last year – and a highlight was going up onto the top of Mount Nebo, where we are told in Deuteronomy that Moses met with The Lord, and was shown the promised land. It really is a great view from up there, and sure enough, looking West, you can see right across to modern-day Israel in the distance.

But Moses was ‘just’ a prophet. While he was shown the promised land from Mount Nebo, he was not allowed to go there. So John referencing the similarities between Moses and Jesus was a big deal. But John goes on to show us that Jesus was far more than a prophet like Moses…

When Moses led his people in the wilderness there was nothing for them to eat. Moses had to ask God how he would feed all the people – he couldn’t do it himself. So God told him to tell the people to collect manna.

When in the passage, Jesus asks Philip ‘Where are we going to buy bread to feed all these people?’ we are told it was a rhetorical question, a test for Philip – John tells us ‘He (Jesus) himself knew what he was going to do’

How do we respond to being tested? As individuals, as a church? Do we just try to work out things in monetary terms? Do we sometimes fail the test God is giving us? Do we have the vision for what God can really achieve?

So Jesus takes the bread and fishes from the boy and the miracle happens – and there are twelve baskets of leftovers! (1 for each disciple, or 1 for each tribe of Israel..?). But unlike the manna that the Israelites had to collect each morning, here there were leftovers that didn’t go off and that could be saved for later.

We read that the people saw the miracle, and immediately saw the similarities with Moses – John 6: 14 ‘This is indeed the prophet, who is come into the world’.

The people want to see Jesus as a political leader, to lead his people against the hated Roman occupiers – in fact, we are told by John in verse 15 that ‘they wanted to make him king by force’. So he withdraws to a mountain by himself – Jesus knows it is not his mission to be that sort of king.

If we have any doubts about Jesus being just another prophet, another Moses, then John seals the deal by next giving us the account of Jesus walking on the water. This was no prophet, this Jesus was indeed God.

Moses was the great prophet, the leader of his people, who was given the Ten Commandments, but Jesus, we see, is so much more.

This passage isn’t just about a miracle involving a few loaves and fishes a little boy’s mother had given him for his lunch. It’s about John showing us the differences between the great prophet Moses and Jesus - the Son of God.

How do we look at Jesus? What role does he take in our lives? Who is Jesus to you? A great teacher, a holy man? John makes it quite clear who Jesus is – who is he to you? **Amen**

### 

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by John MB**

King of the universe, Lord of the ages, maker of all things, sustainer of life; we offer our prayers to you today.

Holy God, make us receptive and open as we lay our intercessions before you. May we accept Your kingdom like children taking bread from the hands of their father or mother.

We thank You for our Vicar and the leadership team who are working faithfully to lead your church here in Burton, and we pray that you will work through them.

May they always be aware of the blessings you bestow on them; strengthen and uphold them when they grow weary in their ministries.

Constantly remind us of all that You who began all good work in us will ultimately perfect through your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Creator God we pray for your whole creation; for our brothers and sisters throughout the world; for their lives to be respected and revered regardless of creed or colour, gender or sexuality, wealth or status.

Lord, we pray for a responsible sharing of precious resources and the conservation of our fragile and beautiful world.

We pray for our King, Charles and our new Government; and all world leaders and the responsibilities that they have in bringing these things about.

Father God, we raise before you those in our community trying to grow or produce our food under difficult circumstances as climate change continues to affect farmers and producers.

Loving God, bring healing to all who are wounded, make whole those who are broken, and shed light wherever there is darkness.

Hear now those we name before you who have asked for or who are in need of healing.

Merciful God, we thank you for those who have travelled before us on the way of the cross and are now at peace in your eternal presence. Help us to live always mindful of your promise to us that the road of faith will lead into your heavenly kingdom.

Faithful God, fill our hunger with the food that lasts, the bread of God which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

At this time of great uncertainty, we place our hope and trust in our God, whose love never fails.

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

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

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