

Morning Service 2nd August 11am Cudham Churchyard

Please say the words in **bold**

Today we hear how Jesus fed a large crowd of people, all sitting down on the grass! We'll also be using our senses of hearing and seeing to focus on the creation around us. Families can take part in a special activity too.

The Greeting

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the world that the Lord has made.

Let us receive it with thanks, and respect it with care.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you lovingly spoke all creation into existence
And shaped each one of us within our mother's womb;

As we gather outside to worship you today,

Fill our hearts with wonder and our mouths with praise

At the wildly wonderful world you have made.

In the name of Jesus, by whom and for whom all things were created.

Amen.

Opening Song – which we sign rather than sing!

If I were a butterfly,

I'd thank you, Lord, for giving me wings.

And if I were a robin in a tree,

I'd thank you, Lord, that I could sing.

And if I were a fish in the sea,

I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee;

But I just thank you, Father,

For making me 'me'.

For you gave me a heart

And you gave me a smile,

*You gave me Jesus
And you made me your child,
And I just thank you, Father,
For making me 'me'.*

If I were an elephant,
I'd thank you, Lord, by raising my trunk,
And if I were a kangaroo,
You know I'd hop right up to you.

And if I were an octopus,
I'd thank you, Lord, for my fine looks;
But I just thank you, Father,
For making me 'me'.

*For you gave me a heart
And you gave me a smile,
You gave me Jesus
And you made me your child,
And I just thank you, Father,
For making me 'me'.*

If I were a wiggly worm,
I'd thank you, Lord, that I could squirm.
And if I were a billy goat,
I'd thank you, Lord, for my strong throat.

And if I were a fuzzy-wuzzy bear,
I'd thank you, Lord, for my fuzzy-wuzzy hair;
But I just thank you, Father,
For making me 'me'.

*For you gave me a heart
And you gave me a smile,
You gave me Jesus
And you made me your child,
And I just thank you, Father,
For making me 'me'.*

We now spend time reflecting on our need to say sorry and to hear God forgive us.

On the 6th day of creation God brought humankind into being – both male and female – Created in the image of God to look after the whole of creation, filled with the breath of God’s creative Spirit.

(pause to listen to your own breathing)

God saw everything that he had made.

And indeed, it was very good.

But sin came into the world through humankind’s disobedience, and we acknowledge our part of that in silence now.

Sometimes, Lord, I know I don’t listen properly to you.

I’m easily distracted, or I listen, but still go my own way, putting myself first.

Forgiven by you, I can start anew.

Sometimes, Lord, I don’t trust you to meet my needs,

to take care of me, to feed me with food both physical and spiritual.

Forgiven by you, I can start anew.

Sometimes, Lord, I’m anything but prepared for my journey with you.

Forgiven by you, I can start anew.

Sometimes, Lord, I look for my own ways out of a situation, instead of seeking and trusting you.

Forgiven by you, I can start anew. 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.**

Bible Reading Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Jesus withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and

saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed those who were ill. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.'

¹⁶ Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' ¹⁷ 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered.

¹⁸ 'Bring them here to me,' he said. ¹⁹ And he told the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Talk

It's great to be outside as we are, there's a real feeling of summer around, even though there remains that lingering feeling that things are not as they once were due to Covid19 – that's true of our schools. Even though children will be returning to school in September, one part of school life that will not be able to resume is daily assembly or collective worship. I'll still be preparing weekly videos for our local schools – that's been both a challenge and an opportunity – how else can I appear three times in the same place as I did for Trinity! Often at school I try to get children to understand the difference between the things that Jesus said and did – healing people, teaching them, and the stories that Jesus told – like the parables we've been thinking about over the last few weeks in our services – from the lost sheep and lost son, to parables about pearls, weeds, fishing nets, treasure and all the others. Have a think for a moment – I wonder which is your favourite? (quietly share it with the person near you). In our gospel reading last week, we heard Matthew comment that Jesus never taught the crowd anything except in parables, and how one of the Psalms echoes this, saying in them are revealed deep and hidden mysteries of God.

And so to today's reading – is it a thing that Jesus did or a parable? What do you think? I wonder if it's both! Like many of the prophets of old, what Jesus does here is an acted parable – and like the parables, there's the face value – Jesus does an amazing miracle, feeding this crowd of 5000 men, plus the women and the children – something in today's restriction we can't begin to imagine! Jesus shows his compassion for people who need God in their lives, and Jesus once again tests his disciples faith – you give them something to eat, revealing how they can't look beyond the material instead of relying on Jesus and his amazing power at work.

So where's the parable?

Firstly, there are echoes of the people of God of old. For many in the crowd they will have reflected on how God provided for his wandering people in the desert long ago, and so this even reminded them that they are still God's people and that Jesus is a much more powerful leader than Moses – one who can be trusted to provide spiritually as well as physically. And the disciples 'how can we feed' also echoes how sometimes as people of faith we demonstrate little faith, unable to look beyond the logical instead of trusting God in all things.

Second, this event reminds us that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things when we listen to Jesus. Look again at this event – who fed the people? The disciples found the young boy with his meagre lunch, and then yes, Jesus takes it, offers it and gives it... to the disciples who distribute it to the crowd. As God's people there are new challenges ahead, and we might need to listen afresh to what Jesus is calling us to do within our community as he takes, breaks, and blesses.

And so, thirdly, there's a parable here if we see ourselves as part of the crowd. There's a modern take on this event, which anyone who's arranged a party (remember those!) will echo-as members of the crowd say 'is it vegan' 'I can't do fish' 'how much will it cost'? Jesus offers us life, and life in all its fullness, but so often we want to challenge, question, doubt, instead of having faith like little children – remember the one who offered his lunch – Matthew doesn't mention him but the other gospel writers do

– maybe he saw something, was ready to experience something that the disciples and the crowd could not.

I wonder if we today, here outside sitting on the grass are another parable? Are we listening to Jesus? Do we expect him to meet with us and call us to take steps of faith? Will we let him serve us through the lives of others? Enjoy the beauty of what we see, feel, hear and experience around us – that’s been one of the positive features of the last few months, give thanks to God for it, and bless others as we let Jesus bless us here today and each time we meet.

Music for reflection

The Creed

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.**

The prayers – *the response is ‘open my senses, Lord’*

Open my senses, Lord,

to understand and answer the needs of others.

Keep my ears attuned to the laughter of children,
my eyes to the needs of the hidden.

Open my senses, Lord

Let my nose smell the beauty of flowers
and transform the earth's decay to the scent of fecundity.

Open my senses, Lord.

May my touch be gentle in raising up
those who live under a heavy burden.

Open my senses, Lord.

May I savour the taste of your abundance
and make the earth sustainable for all.

Open my senses, Lord.

Jesus taught us to call God our Father, so in faith and trust we pray:

**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.

Let's hear how families got on with the activity...

Closing song – *which again we sign rather than sing!*

Jesus, Jesus, here I am; Jesus, Jesus, take my hand;

You give to everyone a love that won't end;

Thank you, Jesus; you're my friend.

Blessing

The power of God, displayed in creation,
Fill you with grace to serve God in his world;
The peace of God, breathing in every living thing,
Enable you to spread God's peace wherever you go;
The love of God, which fills the universe,
Flow through you that you might reflect his image,
And the blessing of God almighty,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go into God's world in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.