



# The Methodist Church

Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit - Worship at Home –

6 August 2023

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you are sharing in this act of worship, you are welcome.

As we worship, let us delight in the works of the Lord and sing and shout our praises for all the things God has done for us, because God is gracious and merciful and keeps His promises for ever and ever.

Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. As we worship today let us receive you and be renewed by you. Amen.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 443

Come let us sing of a wonderful love, tender and true; out of the heart of the Father above, streaming to me and to you: wonderful love, dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell, joyfully came; came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell, sharing their sorrow and shame; seeking the lost, saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; Why do they roam? Love only waits to forgive and forget; Home! Weary wanderers, home! Wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart now, O wonderful love, Come and abide, lifting my life till it rises above envy and falsehood and pride; seeking to be lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Lord of all life, beginning and end,  
provider of food and drink, clothing and warmth,  
love and hope, life in all its fullness.  
we praise You.

You are the one who sustains us. the one who nourishes  
and strengthens us throughout our daily lives.  
we praise You.

When the journey is long and we hunger and thirst,  
Bread of Life, You sustain us.  
When the road is hard and our bodies weak  
Bread of Life, You heal us.  
When our spirits are low and we can't carry on  
Bread of Life, You revive us.

When we offer our hand in love and in service,  
Bread of life, You bless us.  
When the challenge is great and the workers are few,  
Bread of Life, You empower us.  
When the victory is won and we see Your face,  
Bread of Life, You will rejoice with us.  
We praise You.

Father God, You are wise, and sometimes we are foolish.  
Instead of listening to You, we try to solve our own problems and  
make our own paths.

Jesus, You are the bread of life, and generously give all that we need,  
but sometimes we try to provide for ourselves, or forget to share  
Your generosity with others.

Spirit of God, You are faithful, and we are fallible,  
forgetting to trust in Your promises.

God, gather us back to Yourself,  
set our feet back on Your paths once more  
and let us walk in Your footsteps as we go out into the week ahead.

Reading: 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

Reading: Matthew 14: 13 – 21

13 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. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup>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.' <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' <sup>17</sup>They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' <sup>18</sup>And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' <sup>19</sup>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. <sup>20</sup>And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 544

As the deer pants for the water, So my soul longs after You. You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You.

You alone are my strength, my shield, To You alone may my spirit yield. You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You.

I want You more than gold or silver, Only You can satisfy. You alone are the real joy-giver And the apple of my eye.

You alone are my strength, my shield, To You alone may my spirit yield. You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You.

You're my Friend and You are my brother, Even though You are a King.

I love You more than any other,  
So much more than anything.

You alone are my strength, my shield, To You alone may my spirit yield. You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You.

## Reflection

This is one of those bible stories, the ones that were told in Sunday Schools, the ones that even those who never pass through the door of a church building know. There is a danger in these passages, a danger that familiarity leads to complacency. A danger that we read it and think, 'very nice,' and get on with our days without really considering its meaning, in particular what it says about Jesus' character and then what that might mean for us in our attempts to follow Him.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider the broader picture in this event and encounter with Jesus we are presented with. Jesus is tired, the disciples are tired, the crowd is tired, it has been a long day. Jesus had hoped to go away to a lonely place, to a quiet place to mourn, to pray, to reflect on the brutal death of John the Baptist. The sun shining down, the dirt underfoot, uneven paths, sore feet, and sore backs. Evening comes, and the people are probably grumpy, and hungry. The disciples are likely more than ready for home...maybe even Jesus is ready for home. Nevertheless, in the abundance of love which He has for us all, Jesus looks out at a crowd of people – probably of all ages, all classes, all backgrounds – 'and He had compassion for them and cured their sick'

Jesus saw their hunger, and with what little He had or could source, He fed them. In this moment and this story, we are shown a foretaste, an example of the abundance of God and the reality of the coming kingdom. Where generosity and love abound even in the barren places, even in the times when people are at their lowest, even when people are at their most grumpy or desperate, God doesn't turn away. Jesus opens His arms wide and the people are fed.

Even though He may have been tempted to send them away, to take time for his own grief and pain, Jesus' first instinct is to care, to love, and to tend to the people. There are lessons in this for us.

First, in all things Jesus remains steadfast, and second, to truly follow Jesus we need to find a way to emulate that same compassion, love, and care for all those around us, even when it may feel most difficult.

How generous are we?

God with us, in all our speaking, fill us with your word. In all our thoughts, grant us your generosity of spirit, in all our deeds, show us how to share our bread.

Space to pray your own prayers

Hymn: Singing the Faith 465

Guide me O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land.

I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.

Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.  
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,  
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield; Be Thou still my Strength and  
Shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to Thee;  
I will ever give to Thee.

## Benediction

Lord, the eyes of all look to you in hope; and you give them what they need.

You open your hand and satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

Into a world of plenty, we go to speak charity,

Into a world of pain, we go to speak healing,

Into a world of hunger, we go to feed,

Into a world of need, we go to bring the good news and abundance of our Saviour.

God with us, in all our speaking, fill us with your word. In all our thoughts, grant us your generosity of spirit, in all our deeds, show us how to share our bread.