

# **Christ Church, Ipswich**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

## **Sunday Worship**

Hello, I hope you are well. This morning, our Bible readings will be the Psalm Reading for today, Psalm 23 and the Gospel Reading from Mark, Mark 6:30-34, 53-56. This is the story of the disciples' mission report to Jesus, a well earned brief time of rest and then more mission work! Let us worship God together:

### **Call to worship**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Come away...and rest a while.'  
 Come into the Lord's presence now,  
 away from the burdens and stresses of life.  
 Come with open arms,  
 and receive the rest that Jesus offers –  
 to restore our souls,  
 and equip us for whatever comes next.

### **A gathering prayer**

O God, you are our shepherd.  
 Your care and compassion  
 were shown in the life of Jesus.  
 We ask that, this very day,  
 we may experience the rest you offer,  
 the peace that can restore and revive us  
 and enable us to live the promised abundant life.  
 In Jesus' name, we pray.

### **Hymn The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want (*And I will trust in you alone*)**

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;  
 He makes me lie in pastures green.  
 He leads me by the still, still waters,  
 his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone,  
 and I will trust in you alone,  
 for your endless mercy follows me,  
 your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
 and He anoints my head with oil,  
 and my cup, it overflows with joy,  
 I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,  
 I will not fear the evil one,  
 for You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
 are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend Copyright © 1996 Thankyou music.

**A word of welcome and a prayer with our Children and Young People  
 before they go to Junior Church**

### **A prayer of adoration**

Jesus, our Shepherd,  
 who makes us lie down in green pastures,  
 who leads us beside still waters,  
 who restores our souls:  
 you anoint our heads with oil  
 and our cup overflows.  
 We worship and adore you,  
 King of kings and Lord of lords. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of confession**

Gracious God, you always make time for us;  
 we are sorry that we don't always make time for you.  
 When we are rushing around being busy,  
 sometimes even when we are doing your work,  
 we forget about you.  
 We are sorry when we make our lives so full  
 that there is no room left for you –  
 no room to get away, to be in a quiet place with you.  
 Forgive us, Lord, and help us not to hurry but to slow down,  
 to make space for you to dwell within us.  
 And in that dwelling place,  
 may we seek what you want us to do  
 and who you want us to spend time with.  
 Help us to get the right balance,  
 a right rhythm that is in tune with you. **Amen.**

### **Assurance of forgiveness**

Even though we have gone astray,  
 you are our Shepherd –  
 the one who brings us back to the fold.  
 We are assured of your forgiveness,  
 and we are set free in the knowledge  
 that you always make room for us. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

Thank you, Lord, that you always had time for people.  
 Even when you were tired and needed a rest,  
 when the crowds gathered your compassionate heart  
 healed and restored all those who came to you.  
 Thank you that you are kind and caring  
 and lavish your love upon us.  
 Your self-giving love has set us free  
 to be the people you have called us to be.  
 Thank you that you are present  
 in the big and small things of our lives,  
 in the ordinary and everyday times,  
 and in the extraordinary and special times.  
 You never leave us or forsake us.  
 Thank you, Lord, our Shepherd and King. **Amen.**

**Psalm Reading****Psalm 23**

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
 he leads me beside still waters;  
<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.  
 He leads me in right paths  
 for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
 I fear no evil;  
 for you are with me;  
 your rod and your staff—  
 they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
 in the presence of my enemies;  
 you anoint my head with oil;  
 my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
 all the days of my life,  
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
 my whole life long.

**Gospel Reading****Mark 6:30-34, 53-56***Feeding the Five Thousand*

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

*Healing the Sick in Gennesaret*

<sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. <sup>54</sup>When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, <sup>55</sup>and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

**Reflection**

The two short passages from the Gospel this morning enclose Mark's stories of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the water which are not part of the lectionary reading today. Perhaps these are sometimes overlooked because they are passages placed around far more prominent stories. In these brief texts, we hear that the disciples return and report to Jesus, telling him about all that they have done and seen since he sent them out on mission. Jesus responds by offering his exhausted disciples time for rest and relaxation. Not that it lasts very long! The Sea of Galilee is rather like a huge Scottish loch. And if someone had access to a boat, it would be easy to row or sail across to another place. However, because of the hilly ground, anyone watching from the shore would also have a good view of your progress and could make a guess as to where you were going to land and so could make the journey on foot to greet you. This would have been what happened to Jesus when he took his disciples away to a quiet place to rest. The 'great crowds' spotted them and then got there before them. But Jesus has compassion for these people who are desperate to receive his teaching and healing. However, we note that he does take time to be alone when the crowds are gone and he even sends his disciples away (6:45-46). The next time that the boat lands and Jesus walks on the shore, the same thing happens as many people rush to be close to him and to ask him for healing (6:53-56).

Given the way that time and time again, Jesus appears to have been recognised and followed by crowds wherever he went, such that he had very little time to rest or even eat on occasions, it is not at all surprising that Jesus' desire for himself and his disciples was to get away and have some downtime. Of course, just as was so in today's reading, his plans were often thwarted. Perhaps this provokes us to think about what we do and how busy we are. Even through the last year, as time has gone on many of us will have become busy in new ways and of course, some continued to be busy throughout. As one commentator observes, 'busyness, with all its attendant stresses, is a common problem; for some, the idea of rest as a way of 'retreating to advance' is too counterintuitive. However, are we not in a better position to show compassion to others if we first look after ourselves?' The example of air travel might be considered: 'Anyone who has flown will have been told during the safety briefing before take-off, that in an emergency they should put on their own oxygen mask before looking to assist anyone else – putting oneself first is not always the wrong thing to do.' I find that all this is indeed very thought provoking. If nothing else, we sense the relevance and importance of exploring our own approaches to rest and relaxation.

The reality is that we need to have time to rest and recharge. In the text we see that really, Jesus is quite emphatic here, isn't he? His disciples are to rest!

<sup>31</sup> *He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.'* For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup> *And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.*

I do respect that we all appreciate how important rest is. And of course, this is so, not just at this time of year when some of us will be off work or away from our usual responsibilities and perhaps, hopefully going away, but all through the year. The relevance of remembering to rest will no doubt become especially clear again as we hopefully soon see the return of many parts of our church life and mission, which are currently on hold. Perhaps, inspired by the text, what we may wish to explore for ourselves, what we may wish to ask ourselves, is this: is rest and recuperation built into our own lifestyle? Is it part of our life, every day, week, month, year? The lonely, deserted place mentioned in the text need not necessarily be a geographical location, but we will do well to identify how, where and when we are able to rest, relax and recuperate. As it was for the disciples who, as things went, probably only had the boat trip itself before they were confronted with crowds again, sometimes it might be that only a brief rest or series of brief rests is possible. But still the principle and the practice of rest, in whatever rhythm and way we prefer is essential, precious and lifegiving. And hopefully, they won't always be cut short! Wherever and however you choose to rest, I pray that such times will be moments of joy and renewal where you encounter God and find grace and strength to continue to live and love in his name. Amen.

*(A moment for reflection)*

## **R&S 492 Dear Lord and Father of mankind**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways!  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard  
beside the Syrian sea  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word,  
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
the silence of eternity  
interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all  
our words and works that drown  
the tender whisper of thy call,  
as noiseless let thy blessing fall  
as fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still, small voice of calm!

J.G. Whittier (1807-92)

## **Our prayers of intercession**

Lord, your compassion for the crowds that swamped you was ever present. Compassionate Lord, we bring before you all those in Germany, Belgium and beyond who are suffering and bereaved as a result of the flooding disaster. We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world. In China where churches are being destroyed. In South Africa where many are being threatened with guns if they set foot out of their homes. We pray for all Christians. For all victims of prejudice, here and worldwide.

**Lord of all righteousness and peace,  
we pray for a dissolving of hatred  
and a renewal of compassion and unity.**

Lord, you took your disciples away from the crowds to rest and find refreshment. But it was not always easy, because the crowds followed and made demands on your time. We pray for your church today: for all ministers, worship leaders, youth workers and all church workers. All those you have given the responsibility of leadership to. We ask that you enable them to find or regain a healthy balance amid the rhythm of life's rushing and resting.

**Lord of all righteousness and peace,  
we pray for a dissolving of hatred  
and a renewal of compassion and unity.**

We pray for the bereaved. And all those who are sick, in mind, body or soul. For all those burnt out by rushing here and there caring for others without giving thought for their own selfcare. We pray for all those anxiously awaiting long overdue operations. And all those who are having to find new rhythms of life at this time due to suffering long Covid.

We think especially of those in need within our church family and those close to us. We remember before you those recently bereaved and all who feel the pain of loss. We pray for Bill Gale who is unwell in hospital. We keep Bill and Irene in our prayers. We hold Joan and Frank Cross in our prayers at this time. We pray for Janet Souster who is now home on furlough but has some health challenges and would value our prayers. We pray for the Night Shelter guest who is in great need. *A moment of quiet.*

**Lord of all righteousness and peace,  
we pray for a dissolving of hatred  
and a renewal of compassion and unity.**

We lift before you all those in our communities who are finding life transitions difficult and daunting. Refugees settling in new places. Young adults leaving care and forging their own life. Children leaving the familiar surroundings of junior school to head to high school after the holidays. Those leaving and looking forward to college or venturing into the rhythm and challenges of the workplace.

**Lord of all righteousness and peace,  
we pray for a dissolving of hatred  
and a renewal of compassion and unity.**

As restrictions lift, we pray for those preparing to go back to the workplace rather than working from home. Many have been stressed trying to balance work amid family life in lockdown; others have found working from home beneficial and are anxious about returning to the office. We lift all to you as they attempt to restore or find a new balance.

**Lord of all righteousness and peace,  
we pray for a dissolving of hatred  
and a renewal of compassion and unity. Amen.**

## **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. 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.**

## **R&S 289 To God be the glory, great things he has done!**

To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory - great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God!  
And every offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,  
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
but purer and higher and greater will be  
the wonder, the beauty, when Jesus we see:

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) altd.

### **A sending out prayer**

O God, in Scripture  
we read that you rested on the seventh day –  
after all the busyness and work of creation;  
and we read of Jesus' desire for his disciples to rest.  
As your followers, your disciples, now,  
and as we return to our busy lives,  
may we know the rest you offer  
every day of this week. **Amen.**

### **The Blessing**

And may the blessing of our gracious God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, be upon us and all those we love, this day and always. **Amen.**

### **The Grace**

Holding one another in our prayers, we say together:  
**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all, for evermore. Amen.**

As Rob mentioned in his email yesterday, I will be on annual leave from Friday until Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> August. Over the coming weeks, I'm pleased to let you know that our worship will be led by Revd David Thompson, Revd Martin Camroux, Mrs Nichola Glasse and Mrs Christine Myers.

Every blessing to you and I look forward to being with you again soon.

*Neil*

Resources taken and adapted from *ROOTS for Churches Limited* and *BUGB Gathering for Worship*. The Bible reading is from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Christ Church's CCLI licence number is 181784.