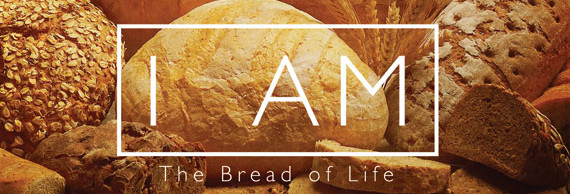
**Morning Praise**

**Sunday 15th August 2021**



**Opening prayer:**

Lord Jesus, true bread from heaven, giving life and refreshment to the world, fill our lives with your goodness, fill your church with your presence, that we may live and work to your praise and glory, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, are one God, now and forever. Amen

**Confession**

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith. cf Romans5:8

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you. We are not worthy to be called your**

**Children. We turn to you again.** **Have mercy on us,** **bring us back to yourself** **as those who once**

**were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Luke 15

**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: Psalm 111**

**Reading John 6: 51 – 58**

**Cathy’s Talk**

Most of us given a loaf of bread could give at least 3 or 4 interesting facts about it, know that it‘s rich in Vitamin b and can also have the potential to give us penicillin if we leave it in the bread bin for too long again! We know what to do with it, we can bake it, toast it, make sandwiches, dip it in the gravy if mum’s not looking and, my favourite…… make bread and butter pudding out of it. I thought that by my age I had a pretty good handle on bread until…..I came across Delia’s chocolate bread and butter pudding…now that opened up a whole new experience of bread.

Sometimes we think we know everything there is to know about something as familiar and every day as bread and then we can get surprised. Jesus was sent by his Father to be our Saviour, to show God’s total love in words and actions throughout his life. Sometimes this must have been thrilling for him, as the crowds began to understand how God was reaching out to them, but other times he faced opposition like in this encounter, when he was faced with his fellow teachers.

***The problem was that the Pharisees and teachers thought they knew*** who ***Jesus was,*** they had seen him grow up as the carpenter’s son in Nazareth, they knew his mum and brothers and sisters. They may even have had a table or chair or two that he had made.

Their problem was that Jesus was familiar to them and they couldn’t see past the familiar. They couldn’t accept there was something else to Jesus they hadn’t seen before.

Surely Jesus was just Mary’s son….wasn’t he?

It reminds me of the story …..

During the second world war, a baby boy was born to a lady whose husband had been called up. his mother tried to ease his loss with a little ritual every bedtime. Every night, after putting on his pyjamas, the boy would say hi prayers and then kiss his picture of his dad goodnight, before tumbling into bed.

This went on for three years. Then came the great day when his dad finally came home. That night dad joined their bedside ritual. Mum said ‘now you can kiss your father goodnight.’

The boy ran over to the picture, kissed the photo and then jumped into bed….leaving his dad standing with empty arms.

How often do we leave our heavenly Father standing with empty arms?

How often does our familiar religion become the focus of all we do and not the Father himself?

Jesus was using familiar images for them, the bread of life, the bread which fed, the Israelites in the desert, the bread which sustained Elijah, the bread which they shared at a family meal is bead which would not last, but Jesus was telling them that ***he is the bread of life which would last, life everlasting for all who believe in him.***

This is crucial to who Jesus is and all he came to do. He was asking them to believe, to listen and see for themselves. Look at the signs he’s saying to them, in me, Jesus says, is the visible expression of God’s total love, life and feeding…and it’s there for all who believe. I am the bread of life, come to me and you won’t be hungry anymore. So why couldn’t’ they see it?

They then started to mock him by saying ….*how can we eat his flesh*?!

They were educated enough to now that Jesus was speaking figuratively but they wanted to make him look stupid in front of the people around, they wanted to denigrate his words and make themselves look clever.

They would also have known the words in Psalm 34 which says ‘ *taste and see that the Lord is good.’*

Of course not to literally eat him!

Do we miss what God is doing in everyday situations because of preconceived ideas about how we believe God works? Do we know how to REALLY listen to God?

Are we ready to be surprised, are we willing to look and see him at work in unlikely people and places? Are we ready to notice and listen to what he is saying?

Good listening is like tuning into a radio station, we can only tune into one at a time. If we tried to listen to Woman’s hour and Ken Bruce at the same time, we would hear neither programme properly. We might try to filter out Ken, but surely his voice would still keep coming through! Our ears and brains can only cope with one signal, so why is it that we expect to hear God when we are doing about 6 different things at a time?

We need to be quiet, to focus on God, reading the Bible can help us to do that, choose a time when there are no distractions, early in the morning, late at night, sitting in the garden…...

But as we listen, it’s about opening our hearts and minds too, about humbly setting aside our ideas, however cherished they are, and listening to his.

If we are to grow in our spiritual lives, we need to feed on the bread of Life, we need to get to know Jesus, learn from his words and teaching and learn from how he treated and loved those whom he met.

Those teachers walked away angry and frustrated, they missed their opportunity to believe in Jesus, the one whom God had sent, they allowed bitterness and anger to take control, to take complete hold on their lives.

They missed out on the love of their Saviour and the loving arms of the Father. There’s always more to learn, new joys to discover, even better than Delia chocolate bread and butter pudding! Let’s ask Jesus to help us to listen, to filter out our set ideas and to be ready to be surprised and blessed by all he wants to do as we receive the bread of life.

**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**

Father, we give you thanks for all that you have done for us, for life and the love that you bestow upon us. May we be mindful of your gifts, that we may be content and grateful giving our life and love to you all our days. **May we praise you with all of our hearts.**

Father, you have shown to us the way of life, help us to walk in your ways and to do your will.

We pray for all dedicating their lives to you, to the newly baptised, for all who are seeking and enquiring about faith. **May we praise you with all of our hearts.**

Father, bring light and hope to all who live in darkness and hatred. We pray especially for the people of Plymouth following the shooting on Thursday, for the people of Afghanistan, for all fearful for their lives and future. For those caught up in bitterness and fear may they find your love. We pray for all in trouble, the sick, those in hospital or undergoing treatment, for all who have lost so much in the recent fires or floods…..

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. 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 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:** The Lord lead you from darkness to light, the Lord renew and refresh you 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**