



# DORE METHODIST CHURCH

## Weekly Update - 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020.



### Message from Gail.

#### REFLECTIONS FROM THE SEA OF GALILEE

This week's Gospel reading is set on Lake Galilee, it is the account of Jesus walking on water in the midst of a storm. Having visited this area a few years ago, every time I read about Lake Galilee in the Gospels, I can't but help recall my memories of this special place. So I share a few with you today.

The Sea of Galilee, also known as the "Kinneret" (from the Hebrew for violin, due to its violin-like shape) is the lowest fresh water lake in the world, and the second lowest sea in the world (after the Dead Sea). There are many special things about the Sea of Galilee, but there's something remarkable about seeing the fishing boats out on the water- it's a glimpse of how it would have been in Jesus's time. His first disciples we know were fishermen from the area of Galilee, and it was on or in the surrounding area of this this lake, that Jesus taught, fed the five thousand, (and the four thousand!) healed the sick, and performed many miracles. Just being in this place was an incredible experience. We began to see the scriptures come to life before our eyes, and our understanding of stories we had been familiar with for years, deepened.

Being physically on the Sea of Galilee, in a wooden boats, was a place of peace and tranquillity, and a poignant part of our visit. We headed out to the centre of the lake and then the engine of the boat was stopped and we sat, not in a storm, but in the calm. At first we just sat in silence, then a passage of scripture was read, and finally, before moving on, we sang "Dear lord and Father of mankind."

As the boat started to move again I gazed across the water, and thought about what it must have been like on the lake in a storm after darkness had fallen, and recalled the story of how Jesus had walked on this very water to ease the fear of his disciples. This story is a reminder for us all about trust. For Peter to be rescued from drowning, he had to totally rely on Jesus and it is his spontaneous prayer, "Lord, save me" that opens his heart wide enough for the power of Jesus to enter in.

**This week's "Pause for thought and prayer" follows.....**

## Pause for thought and prayer



“A time for... ”

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)

During these last few months I know quite a few people who have taken to cultivating their own fruit and vegetables, and we have joined that group and grown some strawberry and tomatoes plants. Waiting for the right time to pick the produce is crucial, but the wait is always worth it. There is nothing better than the taste of home grown produce. The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes reminds us of the importance of waiting for the right time for many things.

### **READ ECCLESIASTIES 3: 1-15.**

This reading helps us understand the cycle of life and the bigger picture of Gods design. In each stage there is work for us to do but sometimes it may seem that barriers are put in our way, and events happen which seem to contradict Gods plan. However we are reminded that nothing is a barrier to God’s presence, all time is in His hand. He has put a sense of past and future in our minds, and of course eternity on our hearts.

**As you pray this week think about how you can pray for the right time.**

The right time for effective treatment to commence for those who are ill; The right time for an operation; The right time to stop, for those who are struggling; The right time to offer a helping hand; The right time for the government to announce changes; The right time for new opportunities to open; The right time for churches to make decisions; The right time to tell others about Jesus.

Father, You know the end from the beginning and that everything under heaven is within Your authority, help us to trust you at all times. Amen

*Gail.*

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### **Worship at Home for Sunday.**

Our worship for next Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, produced by “Twelvebaskets”, follows. Although we still cannot meet together it would be good for as many as possible to read through this service at 10-30 a.m. on Sunday.

### **Grace Food Bank.**

Once again, many thanks to everyone who contributed to the latest foodbank collection. The next collection will be on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August**. If you would like me to collect from you please phone me on 0114 473 1998 (or email [peter.ann.smith@gmail.com](mailto:peter.ann.smith@gmail.com)) and then leave a bag outside your front door for collection by **9.00 a.m. on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August**. Peter.

**Please send any contributions for our “Weekly Update” to the Baileys by TUESDAY evening. Tel: 2351085. Email: [john.bailey23a@btinternet.com](mailto:john.bailey23a@btinternet.com)**

## Call to worship

God welcomes you here.

To this place where we gather  
this place where we listen  
this place where we wonder  
this place where we come ready to be changed forever.

God welcomes you here.

**Amen.**<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn: 152 STF – This is the day the Lord has made

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

This is the day, this is the day when he rose again, when he rose again.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day when he rose again; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day when he rose again,

This is the day, this is the day when the Spirit came, when the Spirit came.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day when the Spirit came; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day when the Spirit came.

Anonymous. Reproduced from Singing the Faith No 152.

## Opening Prayers

Lord of all faithfulness,  
Thank you for never giving up on us  
and for always welcoming us home.

We are sorry for the times when our trust in you wavers  
when we take our eyes off you  
because we are more concerned with ourselves.

Help us to stay oriented towards you  
and faithful in all we do.

**Amen.**

Jesus bringer of hope,  
Thank you for giving us a hope that sustains us  
and a future with you that we can be sure of.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Thank you for your death and resurrection,  
which makes it possible for us to enter into new life.

Help us to live in light of this reality  
with gratitude and praise.

**Amen.**

Gracious Father,  
Thank you for your love for our world  
your care and imagination in its creation  
and your grace and mercy in its redemption.

Thank you for not abandoning us in our rebellion  
but in your Son, making a way possible back to you.

We are grateful for this restored relationship  
and the wonderful acceptance we receive.

**Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

**We now say the Lord's Prayer**

**Readings: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28**

Meanwhile Jacob had settled down where his father had lived, the land of Canaan.

### **Joseph and His Brothers**

<sup>2</sup> This is the story of Jacob. The story continues with Joseph, seventeen years old at the time, helping out his brothers in herding the flocks. These were his half brothers actually, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. And Joseph brought his father bad reports on them.

<sup>3-4</sup> Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the child of his old age. And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him—they wouldn't even speak to him.

**12-13** His brothers had gone off to Shechem where they were pasturing their father's flocks. Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are with flocks in Shechem. Come, I want to send you to them."

Joseph said, "I'm ready."

**14** He said, "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing and bring me back a report." He sent him off from the valley of Hebron to Shechem.

**15** A man met him as he was wandering through the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

**16** "I'm trying to find my brothers. Do you have any idea where they are grazing their flocks?"

**17** The man said, "They've left here, but I overheard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph took off, tracked his brothers down, and found them in Dothan.

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Claire Welch

**18-20** They spotted him off in the distance. By the time he got to them they had cooked up a plot to kill him. The brothers were saying, “Here comes that dreamer. Let’s kill him and throw him into one of these old cisterns; we can say that a vicious animal ate him up. We’ll see what his dreams amount to.”

**21-22** Reuben heard the brothers talking and intervened to save him, “We’re not going to kill him. No murder. Go ahead and throw him in this cistern out here in the wild, but don’t hurt him.” Reuben planned to go back later and get him out and take him back to his father.

**23-24** When Joseph reached his brothers, they ripped off the fancy coat he was wearing, grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern. The cistern was dry; there wasn’t any water in it.

**25-27** Then they sat down to eat their supper. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites on their way from Gilead, their camels loaded with spices, ointments, and perfumes to sell in Egypt. Judah said, “Brothers, what are we going to get out of killing our brother and concealing the evidence? Let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let’s not kill him—he is, after all, our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

**28** By that time the Midianite traders were passing by. His brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

### **Matthew 14:22-33 - Walking on the Water**

**22-23** As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

**24-26** Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o’clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. “A ghost!” they said, crying out in terror.

**27** But Jesus was quick to comfort them. “Courage, it’s me. Don’t be afraid.”

**28** Peter, suddenly bold, said, “Master, if it’s really you, call me to come to you on the water.”

**29-30** He said, “Come ahead.”

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, “Master, save me!”

**31** Jesus didn’t hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, “Faint-heart, what got into you?”

**32-33** The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, “This is it! You are God’s Son for sure!”<sup>4</sup>

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## Reflections on the readings:

Biblical translators can generally find respect for bringing clarity and meaning out of texts that were written in languages that relatively few people today are comfortable using. Genesis 37 is a passage that can test that respect. What was traditionally a multi-coloured marvel – the coat of many colours – has more recently been retranslated as ‘a coat with long sleeves’.

Perhaps you find this difficult. It challenges the visually dramatic part of the account, as well as fond memories you may have of trying to list all the colours sung by Jason Donovan, “It was red and yellow and green and brown and scarlet and black and ochre and peach and ruby and olive and violet and fawn...”

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat sounds much more appealing than Joseph and his Baggy Sleeves!

Translators risk provoking a negative reaction over what might seem like an unnecessary technicality that doesn't affect the development of the passage. We like the multi-coloured coat - does it really matter what it looked like? This provocation might help us empathise with the brothers, for whom the presence of the coat is an aggravation, it is a provocative part of Joseph's story. Every time the coat of big sleeves is pushed centre-stage people react. If we are challenged by the 'coat with long sleeves' we might find ourselves briefly in the shoes of Joseph's brothers, a place we might not like to be. But to be honest, any of the people in this account might hold an uncomfortable mirror to aspects of our own lives.

In Jacob we see a parent who is prepared to privilege one son over the others, who is blinkered to the way his actions aggravate teenage sibling rivalry.

In Joseph we can see the tactless teenage snitch, who flaunts his father's favouritism, and derives some of his identity in grassing on his brothers.

In the unnamed brothers is the anonymous assembly, known for their collective voice rather than individual contributions. Here are people that are content to alter their views with changing whims and proposals. They may be named elsewhere, but here all blur into one, where being anonymous helps deflect personal responsibility.

In Judah, who goes along with the jealousy, is the opportunist who proposes a personally profitable option. Why dispose of his brother and be guilty of murder, when the same ends could be reached, minus the guilt of murder or manslaughter, but with a financial reward?

In Reuben, we have a moral voice that falls short. We have someone of conscience but not someone of courage; someone of compromise, but not of conviction. Compared to the other brothers, Reuben stands out as resisting the injustice to Joseph, but compromises on it. Rather than condemning the sin of ending Joseph's life for being a frustrating younger brother, Reuben nevertheless vocally justifies it, suggesting a compromise, where the end result is the same, but the means are different. If we take Reuben as our moral-compass we may well end up adrift,

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offering self-justification for acts of injustice on the basis that they are not as bad as the alternative. Any of these people can hold an uncomfortable mirror to parts of who we are.

Christ does not call us to be Reubens and Judahs. What Christ does, however, is to challenge us to notice how any of our actions that express hatred, are on the same moral plane as murder.

None of Joseph's brothers are exempted blame from what happens to him; Reuben and Judah are as culpable as the unnamed majority, even if their involvement is different. Neither is Jacob let off the hook, as his actions seem to demonstrate a love that expresses an underlying callousness. Jacob may show actions of love to Joseph, but he does this in such a way that his actions seem to communicate the absence of love to the other brothers. His actions show that discriminating love can be part of the chain of actions that escalate into tragedy and injustice, as much as actively hating someone can. This discriminating love can be as sinful as any of the actions we might normally put in the category of sin. Discriminating love is as far from the kingdom of God as hate is.

To truly love indiscriminately is a high calling, fulfilled only by God, and demonstrated in Jesus. We see something of what it feels like to strive for this perfect love played out in our gospel reading – from Matthew 14. As Jesus calls Peter out onto the water to walk towards him, for a precious few moments, he manages it. But soon, the wind and the fear get to him, and he begins to sink. This is the challenge we must all live with as Christians – seeking to love indiscriminately, as Jesus loves, whilst knowing that we will eventually fall short. But this knowledge must not stop us from making the effort. Will you love, because he first loved us?

One of the messages contained within these passages is the effect that discriminate love, and indiscriminate love can have. Both of these have long lasting effects, being factors in chains that can ultimately lead to ruptures or restoration, to sorrow or salvation, to hatred or to healing. These passages show the relationship between our human society connections, and our spiritual God-connections, and that we can draw a false distinction between our relationship with other humans and our relationship with God. As God loves us indiscriminately, so does God not only love others around us, but in Jesus God shows us what this looks like and prompts and inspires us to reflect this indiscriminate love. This is part of our salvation and the building of the kingdom of God. A high calling yes, but by the grace of God, may we do this. Let us declare our desire to do this, and be the voices that speak the conscience of God with conviction and be the ones who bring good news.

What do you think about this distinction between indiscriminate or unconditional love, and a love that places requirements or boundaries in the way? Are you able to truly love unconditionally or can only God do that?

*[You might like to have a conversation about this – perhaps in small groups, or perhaps by getting in touch with someone else and sharing this reflection and question with them over the phone, online or in a socially-distanced visit!]*

God of all grace, show me how to love,  
Use me today, to build communities and kingdoms of love,  
In Jesus' name.

**Amen.**<sup>5</sup>

## **Prayers of intercession**

In the stillness, we bring you all the people who are on our hearts today. Perhaps some of them are close to home. Perhaps some of them are many miles away.

In the quiet, we hold their names and faces in the light of your love.

*[Hold a few minutes of quiet. You might like to light a candle or play a calming piece of music to help you focus on your prayers].*

Come amongst us, Lord of light, and show us how we can bring your love, your grace, your peace, to your world today. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

## **Hymn: 663 STF – I the Lord of sea and sky.**

1 I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.  
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

2 I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain;  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am.....*

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts are satisfied.  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am.....*

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## **Blessing**

Go then, leave this space,  
Knowing God is with you,  
Knowing you will be richly blessed,  
Knowing that you are called to make a difference,  
Knowing that God will bless others through you,  
Knowing the overwhelming love of the living God.

**Amen.**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Based on a reflection written by David Lees

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<sup>6</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker