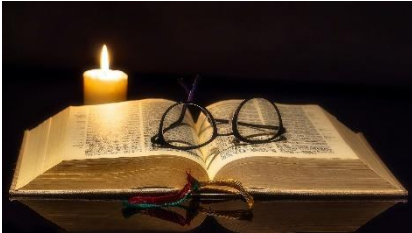


# 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



**Opening Prayer:** Creator God, you sustain all things by your Word, and you reveal your power among us through Jesus and your Holy Spirit. Help us see your power at work and submit to your authority, recognise your love, receive your mercy, know your forgiveness, and live in your life to the glory and honour of your name. **Amen.**

### **Song:**

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that  
Thou art.

Thou my best Thought, by day or by  
night,  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my  
light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my  
true Word;  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me,  
Lord;  
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee  
one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for  
the fight;

Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my  
Delight;

Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high  
Tower:

Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power  
of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty  
praise,

Thou mine Inheritance, now and  
always:

Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my Treasure  
Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,  
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright  
Heaven's Sun!

Heart of my own heart, whatever  
befall,

Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

**Read:** John 6:25-42.

**God himself satisfies:** *A summary of the talk given by Jane Hughes.*

### **Only God can draw us to himself.**

No one can come to him unless prompted by the Father, Verses 37, 44 and 65 all point to God drawing us to himself, we alone cannot come to Jesus. As fallen people, not one of us has the will or the strength to seek after the Lord in our own strength. But in His grace, He sent the Holy Spirit to draw us into the saving arms of Jesus.

God gave us free-will, we can choose to believe in Him, or reject His offer of salvation. All are given an opportunity to respond to His tug of love on their hearts.

Only God can draw us to Jesus who then shows us the way to his Father. God prompts us to believe in Jesus, then Jesus by his sacrifice connects us to God.

### **Only God can satisfy.**

Today's passage comes directly after two miracles, the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus' walking on water and begins with Jesus rebuking the crowd, many of whom had been witnesses and probably eaten the bread and fish the day before.

He's saying you only want me because I fed you. Maybe they expected breakfast after dinner the day before.

Move forward 2000 years and we can ask the same question, 'Why are we following Jesus?' Are we hungry for bread that satisfies, this bread that only Jesus offers? Or are we hungry as children have been heard saying: "I'm not hungry for dinner but I'm hungry for chocolate!"

Are we hungry? Jesus spent much of his time ministering to people's physical needs when his real purpose was to save people's souls. When he told the crowd this, they began to lose interest. If he fed their bodies, they thought he was great. But, they wanted him to be their king, a king who would feed them miraculously every day, as He had done the day before, and as Moses had done in the dessert with Manna.

All through this passage the crowds struggle to understand what Jesus is saying, we find them demanding a miracle from Jesus to prove who He is and so they can have faith. Yet, he'd just, the day before, fed 5,000 people with only a handful of food!

In verse 35 (and similarly in verses 48 and 51) Jesus declares I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. What does Jesus mean by I am the Bread of life?

Firstly, he is saying he is essential to life.

Secondly, he is referring not to a physical life but eternal life, trying to get the crowd away from thinking about their physical needs and to consider their spiritual needs.

Thirdly, Jesus makes a claim to be equal with God. The phrase "I AM" is the covenant name of God, revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). A phrase the Jews who were listening would have automatically understood as a claim to deity.

Fourthly, Jesus offers an invitation to come and believe.

And lastly, there are the words "hunger and thirst." But not a physical hunger. Here Jesus uses a familiar and legitimate craving of the body for food to describe a deeper hunger, the hunger of the soul for God and the longing for eternal life.

Most of the rest of chapter 6 seems to go around the same loop; Jesus explaining who he is and what he has been sent to do and the crowds grumbling. I wonder if He is exasperated or just saddened at their disbelief.

When Jesus begins to talk about eating his flesh and drinking his blood (verses 51-59) the people and even

some disciples really begin to struggle -It's too hard to understand, they are thinking from a literal level.

But The answer is the same as in John 6:35. where Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.' Coming to Jesus as the bread of life to satisfy the hunger of the soul is the same as believing in him.

Eating his flesh and drinking his blood are symbolic, Jesus saying: Believe in me, trust me, receive me, get your nourishment from me. Get life from me. Jesus is also pointing towards the cross, the Jesus we receive gave his flesh and blood in atonement for our sins, we receive him as our perfect substitution, the all-satisfying bread from heaven giving life because he died in our place.

Chapter 6 ends with many turning away, they cannot accept this truth, and Jesus challenging his 12 disciples asking if they too were going to leave him. Simon Peter answered, '...Lord there is no one else that we can go to! Your words give us eternal life. We have Faith in you and we are sure that you are Gods Holy one.' (verses 68-69)

I wonder, what would our answer have been at that time? And what is our answer now?

**Prayers:** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.



**Collect: 5<sup>th</sup> after Trinity:** Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in

the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer:** 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.**

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

**The Notices:** We are now holding ticketed and socially distanced services in the building on Sundays at 9.30am. Further information on our website or by ringing our vicar, Howard.

If you know of others who would like to receive this, or you would rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends, or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

