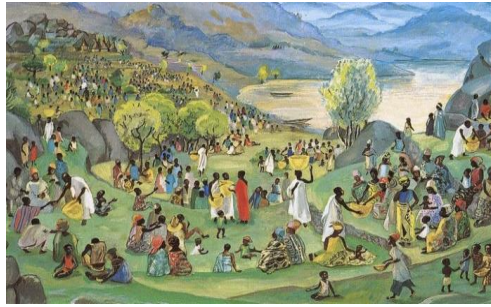


Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



A Service for the 8th. Sunday after Trinity

WELCOME - *do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready*

The Lord be with you
and also with you

OPENING PRAYER

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND ABSOLUTION

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
 we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
 in thought and word and deed,
 through negligence, through weakness,
 through our own deliberate fault.
 We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
 For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
 who died for us, forgive us all that is past;
 and grant that we may serve you
 in newness of life
 to the glory of your name.
 Amen.**

Almighty God,
 who in Jesus Christ has given us
 a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
 forgive you your sins,
 open your eyes to God's truth,
 strengthen you to do God's will
 and give you the joy of his kingdom,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE COLLECT

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
 we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and
 bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments;
 that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
 we may be preserved in body and soul;
 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.

READING : Matthew 14:13-21

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.
(At home, please read Romans 9:1-5)

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REFLECTION

This story about the five loaves and two fish, is told four times, which shows its significance, in the four Gospels.

Can you imagine the scene?

Think of all the different people assembled together. The different age groups, family groups. What might they have been thinking, feeling, and learning as the meal came together?

Jesus-Wanting a little quiet to mourn John the Baptist's death, he is confronted by a large crowd who want his attention. John's murder makes Jesus realize more fully what is ahead for him and leads him to begin preparing his disciples for leadership. How does that influence his relationships with his disciples?

The disciples-

- * How did they feel when Jesus told them to feed the crowd?
- * What did they think when they realized that there was going to be enough and what to do with the left overs? * How did this event change them?

The crowd

- * How did it feel to be offered free food with no questions asked in a remote place in a time when food was not abundant?
- * In that day who you ate with was important. Jesus often got in trouble over the people with whom he ate. How did it feel to sit down with huge numbers of strangers to share food?

Us- What can do we in the Berrow Benefice in response to this story?

- * With which character/s do we most identify?
- * What does this story suggest we need to work on a bit more?

It was Passover time in Israel, a time of religious gatherings, of fasting and feasting and traveling. Jesus had healed people of their diseases and his popularity was becoming enormous.

But also, according to the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist had just been beheaded by King Herod. John, the Baptist, was the greatest prophet the land of Israel had experienced for four hundred years. A person that everyone looked to for moral and religious inspiration.

Everyone, including Jesus, were stunned and grieving because of the tragedy of John. People had looked to him for moral and religious inspiration. Jesus wanted to get away by himself to grieve, to pray, to remember. But the crowds could track his movements from shore, so when Jesus' boat landed, many of the crowd had already arrived.

His reaction as he looked on the massive crowd, was with compassion; they were sheep without a shepherd, a people in need of spiritual feeding. And so, he taught them and he healed them.

After a long day, one of the disciples said: "Lord, the hour is late, and the people don't have any food and we are a long way from any villages. Maybe you should send them home now." Jesus said, "Look around the crowd and see what you can find." Andrew found a young boy with five loaves of bread and two fish, and brought the boy, fish and bread to Jesus. Jesus invited everyone to be seated on the green grass. Jesus took the bread...looked up into heaven...gave thanks...broke it...gave it to his disciples...who gave it to the crowds. And they all ate and were all satisfied ...*and*... there were twelve baskets of bread left over. The number who ate were five thousand men, plus women and children.

The story continues in a similar pattern a few days later.

You can imagine the disciples discussing amongst themselves, "What just happened?". Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asked them: "Don't you get it about who I am? God of abundance and generosity. Don't you get it that God will take care of you in your needs? Have you not personally seen these miracles?"

For me, the story captures the *very essence* of Jesus as the wondrous Son of God, a God's who is abundant and extravagant with generosity and grace. And his disciples, who don't get it, have seen first-hand, God's miraculous work in their lives.

Jesus can work miracles with five loaves and two fish. That little boy brought and surrendered his small gifts to Jesus, his five loaves and two fish, and look what mighty miracles God did with them. And God wants to do the same with us; that we bring our small gifts to God, our five loaves and two fish, our ordinary talents and gifts, we bring ourselves to God, and look what mighty miracles God can do with our lives.

People ask. How did Christ feed all those people with so little food, with merely five loaves and two fish?" The real transformation then, was not of the loaves, but of five thousand hearts. Jesus said that Christians today would do greater miracles than he did when he was on earth; and if the hearts of Christians were really transformed, could we not feed the entire globe?

There is also a liturgical link. Jesus took the bread...looked up to heaven...gave thanks, broke the bread...gave it to his disciples...who gave it to everyone...and they all ate and were satisfied.

The disciples saw miracles first-hand - but did they understand? Do we?

Jesus, in breaking open the bread, brings forth the possibilities and capabilities hidden in the depths of what is already there in our hearts. If we can be more open, we also have the capacity to do far more than we otherwise could. He transforms us by making us more fully ourselves, by revealing that identity of which we ourselves are - fully unique, and in the image of God.

St. Paul puts it this way: "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus the Lord" (Phil. 4: 19).

Since this is so, are we ready to go out to the community, to the world and be prepared to transform the lives of others? Implied in the story is this question: Have you surrendered your five loaves and two fish to Christ? "Have you surrendered? Have I?" Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We are gathered together to meet with our God, let us pray to Him now.

Lord, let us awaken to our need of you and make us hunger and thirst for you as individuals and as a community. Whatever issues we have to deal with, increase our love and compassion so that we long to serve you to the best of our ability in the world about us.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

Lord, allow our world to see the true value of things, so that we do things that are worthwhile and meet the real needs of people. Guide our leaders in wisdom and integrity and enable us all to co-operate in the proper care and stewardship of the world's resources.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

Lord, as we eat our food this week, remind us of your spiritual feeding. May the meals we prepare and eat together be opportunities to grow closer to one another and to you. May we reach out to those who do not have enough food or clean water.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for all who need medical treatment or are waiting in pain for surgery. We pray for those who need mental health care or those whose lives are blighted by addiction and are seeking help to set them free. We pray for all those who have made wrong choices which have ended in disillusion, heartache and in despair,

(pause)

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Lord, welcome into eternity all those who have died. Have mercy on those who approach death and give comfort and love to those recently bereaved. May they know God's love is theirs forever.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Please ask for any additional prayers

**Merciful Father,
 accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in 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.
And 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.**

THE PEACE

We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;**

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he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting.
Amen.

THE THANKSGIVING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
 Lift up your hearts
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
 You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
 His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
 And so we gladly thank you,
 With saints and angels praising you, and saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
 And as we obey his command,
 Send your Holy Spirit
 That broken bread and wine outpoured
 May be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

Here is the table set for a special meal.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
Do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took a cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this all of you;
This is my blood of the new covenant,
Which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection
Until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
Help us work together for that day
When your kingdom comes
And justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
Gather into your loving arms with St Faith, St John the Baptist, St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul and all the Saints to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

**Jesus, Lamb of God
have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

**Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast**

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise
be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the
light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with
your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you for ever.
Amen.

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and
spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste
of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.**

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship
you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;**

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**you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.**

Amen.

THE BLESSING

May the father from whom every family
in earth and heaven receives its name
strengthen you with his Spirit
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen