



**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020**

**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

**The Beacon Parishes Mission Community of Ipplepen with Torbryan,  
Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland**

**FIRST READING**

**Genesis 32.22-31**

**Jacob Wrestles at Peniel**

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

**PSALM**

**Psalms 17.1-7**

**Prayer for Deliverance from Persecutors**

A Prayer of David.

Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry;  
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.  
From you let my vindication come;  
let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,  
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;  
my mouth does not transgress.

As for what others do, by the word of your lips  
I have avoided the ways of the violent.  
My steps have held fast to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;  
incline your ear to me, hear my words.  
Wondrously show your steadfast love,  
O saviour of those who seek refuge  
from their adversaries at your right hand.

## **SECOND READING**

### **Romans 9.1-5**

#### **God's Election of Israel**

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

## **GOSPEL**

### **Matthew 14.13-21**

#### **Feeding the Five Thousand**

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

## Reflection by Rev'd Anne Burden

There's been a slight oversight with the rota for offering these weekly reflections - which means that you are hearing from me for two weeks running. No one's fault - but apologies to those who might be disappointed!! However there may be a benefit - which is that I'm reflecting on this week's Gospel reading 'The Feeding of the 5000' but with last week's reading still very much in mind. Perhaps you remember that there was a series of parables last week - parables of the kingdom - each starting with the words "The kingdom of heaven is like ....." And I'd like to suggest that we hold that thought as we move on to consider today's passage. It's not an unreasonable thing to ask as the passages follow one another in the Gospel.

'The Feeding of the 5000' is a very well known and loved miracle story - thought to be so important by the early Christian Church that it was included in all four Gospels. There are several example of miracle stories involving Jesus in the Gospels - walking on water, changing water into wine, the miraculous catch of fish - as well as the feeding of the 5000 - where Jesus carries out an act which would be impossible for ordinary human beings. This can be seen as a demonstration of Jesus's divine power - but notice also that each miracle has a purpose - in each case it is a response to a specific human need. In the case of today's miracle, Jesus is feeding hungry people. He is showing what he can do because he is God - but also what he is like - his kindness and compassion - and his generosity in providing enough and more than enough for the whole crowd to be fed. It's a happy story - and no wonder it's popular.

If we imagine the words "The kingdom of heaven is like ....." before the story - it helps us to move on to another level. The focus widens from Jesus - his divine nature and character - to include the disciples and the whole people of God including the seekers and enquirers. Most importantly it invites the question "what does this mean to us?" - to today's disciples, living in today's very different world. How do we help to build the Kingdom, here and now - and what might it be like. I'd like to pick out just three things that occur to me from this passage - feel free to find many more of your own!

1) All are invited to share in the meal - all are fed - and all eat together. There are no questions about whether people are worthy or deserving or even have been organised enough to bring their own packed lunch. And we are specifically told that this includes the women and the children - even though the Jewish practice would have been for the women to serve the men, and certainly not to eat with them. Jesus feeds everybody and invites them to sit and eat together.

What does this mean to us in our society?

2) Jesus is clearly in overall charge but involves the disciples in the thinking and planning and doing. He urges them "you do something about it"

What is Jesus urging us to do?

3) The food doesn't arrive from nowhere, or from heaven, but from the multiplication of what is already there - from the loaves and fishes. Those loaves and fishes obviously belonged to somebody - who gave them over to be used and shared - probably without understanding what was going to happen next. The miracle was in how the little - when taken, blessed, broken and given by Jesus - became enough, with plenty of left-overs.

What are our loaves and fishes - and what should we do with them?

Notice too the strong hint for those who can see it that the Jesus's feeding is not just physical but spiritual. Those words 'Take - Bless - Break - Give' link both with Jewish Passover practices and with our own service of Holy Communion. Our priests today still say those words as they carry out Jesus's command to "Do this in remembrance of me" - and Jesus still feeds all who come with empty hands ready to receive. This link is made even clearer in John's Gospel chapter 6 which starts with his account of the 'Feeding of the 5000' and ends with a reflection on Holy Communion - on Jesus the Bread of Life - broken that all may eat.

What does this teach us about our understanding and practice of Holy Communion?

So many questions - sort of sorry! - but they are your questions - yours to explore in the days and months and years to come. Enjoy the journey!!

Anne