

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 16B

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Ordinary 16 - Year B
18th July 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn OR

608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell OR

530 STF – To be in your presence

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

653 STF – O Christ, the Healer, we have come OR

346 STF – Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other

What are you being called to?

Hymn:

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space OR

651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

434 STF – Rock of ages, cleft for me OR

654 STF – The love of God comes close

Blessing

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Call to Worship

The Spirit of God says 'come'.

Jesus Christ, the bride of the church, says 'come'.

Let anyone who hears this say 'come'.

Let anyone who is thirsty, thirsty for the water of life, come.

Come, all are welcome,

The Spirit of God is in this place. Come.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn OR

608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord

Opening Prayers

We do not follow idols
or earthly philosophies,
or place our hopes in creeds devised by human minds.

Though we are small
when measured in universal terms,
and often powerless
when faced with difficulties or fear,
our hope is not founded on the sand of the shore
but on the firm foundation of faith.

For we are children of a living God.
In him alone do we put our trust.
In him alone do we place our hope.
To him alone do we give our lives to be used for his glory.

A prayer of confession

Gracious God,
whose love is greater than the wickedness of this world,
forgive our wrongdoing.

Remind us of your love
and our indifference;
remind us of your peace
and our impatience;
remind us of your touch
and our brokenness;

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

remind us of your kingdom,
and our homelessness.

Gracious God,
whose love is greater than the wickedness of this world,
draw us into your arms and set our feet once more on solid ground.

Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord,
that in your kingdom
there are no haves or have-nots,
no privileged or paupers,
no rich or exploited,
for in your eyes
all are of equal worth;
loved as only you can love,
blessed as only you can bless.

Thank you that we are counted as your children
and can open our hearts to a heavenly Father
who will listen to our prayer.

Thank you that we are precious in your sight,
and may our lives be counted
worthy of such love and grace.

Through Jesus Christ we ask,
who died that we might live,
and lives that we might know
the fullness of your love

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

I wonder who in your family is the feeder? We all have at least one person don't we? A nan, an uncle or maybe even one of your parents? Each family often has someone who just loves to feed people up to their so full that they can barely move.

Jesus was a great feeder! I mean Jesus was often seen with some sort of food in his hand. Whether it be on the side of a lake cooking fish or at a wedding, Jesus often had food with him. However in our story today Jesus is caught out! Jesus is followed by literally thousands of people. They sit down on the side of the hill and listen

² Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

intently to every word that he has to offer. They listen so well in fact that they are forget its past their tea time and that they are starving.

Jesus panics a bit and asks the Phillip on of the disciples: “he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”

Can you imagine Phillip’s panic! I mean how much would they have to earn to simply afford that let alone find somewhere that would have the food. It wasn’t like now where we have supermarkets. No they had nothing like that.

Thankfully a young boy offers what he has. Five loaves of bread and 2 fish... That hardly seems enough does it? Yet, much to the surprise of the disciples, Jesus breaks the food up and hands it to them to give to well over 5000 people! Can you imagine doing that?

You would think that after say 20 people the disciples would have returned empty handed wouldn’t you? Yet, amazingly, after all, yes all were fed. The disciples came back with twelve baskets full of food left over!

What an amazing miracles that happened that day. All were fed.

This story is amazing in so many ways. Firstly because Jesus was able to perform such an amazing miracle and it shows once again how awesome Jesus is. Secondly and I think importantly it goes to show how special it is when we share what we have. When we share, others benefit and enjoy what we have.

What could you share with others? How do you think they would feel if you were to share?³

Hymn:

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell OR

530 STF – To be in your presence

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Reflections on the reading

*“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes... Including you.”
Anne Lamott*

Can we start by just taking a few moments to think back over your past week... think about the times you were happy... (*pause*), the times you were stressed... (*pause*), but specifically can you remember those times when you deliberately put some time aside for YOU... to rest... not when you were sleeping – that doesn’t count! – but instead when you actually took time to rest and take some genuine “time out”.

³ All Age talk written by Matthew Forsyth

So that last question will have gone one of two ways, I suspect.

Those of you who do that from time to time will hopefully have remembered those occasions with positivity and warm reflection. Well done to you. I mean that. Then there will be those of you who, like me, cannot think of such an occasion in the last week. Today is for you.

Three of our lectionary readings today specifically make reference to such occasions.

- The story of Samuel starts with the report that God, by purposefully putting the new King David in his home surroundings had given him a time of “rest” from his enemies. This was a deliberate act of creating “downtime” to allow him to recharge the batteries, so to speak. David then went on to summon Nathan to hear his prophecy from God. He was recharged, refreshed and ready.
- Possibly the most famous of all the Psalms - the beautiful comforting message of Psalm 23 is framed with the thought that God makes us “lie down in green pastures”. A metaphor for the same sense of a time of relaxation where we can be alone in our thoughts without the noise of life getting in the way.
- In the Gospel reading Jesus gives a direct instruction to his friends to retreat. The image created by the story is very vivid... the disciples are busily telling Jesus about all the things they have done, so much so they had not even taken time to have something to eat... and then Jesus just calmly asks that they take a moment, and chill...

It is a VERY long time since I intentionally “lay down in a green pasture” and just watched the clouds go by. How about you....? Metaphorically, however, I have been taking steps towards this in recent months, and I would like to share something of these experiences with you today.

In the Autumn of 2020 during the depths of the pandemic and all that that brought for us all, my wife Lorna and I embarked on a journey of meditation, and it has been a very positive process for us both.

It started with an invitation to an introductory course of five weeks on the topic of “Take Time Meditations”. This is a venture encouraging guided Christian meditation. It has been hugely positive for us in many ways in and of itself, and has also provided inspiration to meditate in other ways at other times. It’s totally true for me to reflect and say whilst some of the occasions have been “quiet” in terms of the impact on me (in fact some of them involved only sleep!) every one of these occasions has been positive for me – and that can be no bad thing. Some of the occasions have been nothing short of transformative for me too, and that is wonderful.

The format of Take Time Meditations is that there is a short session of relaxation exercises leading into a meditation session around a short Gospel passage where you are invited in to be a part of the immersive experience of being “in” the story, maybe walking with the disciples, or as part of a crowd. During these stories Jesus personally invites you into an encounter with him where you have the chance to talk to him, and perhaps more importantly listen to his response. It can be an incredibly powerful experience, and one where if you allow yourself to be immersed then amazing things can happen. You are then slowly guided out of the meditation and brought back to the here and now. In the group sessions we have been attending there is then an opportunity for a group discussion about the experiences that have taken place which has provided some amazing sharing sessions with some powerful emotional experiences.

(As you can tell, I could not recommend these sessions highly enough. More details can be found here: taketime.org.uk)

There are truly real times and moments when we are deliberately invited to “lie down in green pastures”. They are literally a chance to withdraw and “take time” for refreshment and renewal.

Some of the more transformative experiences I have had have been where I have been invited in to be part of a gospel story which I knew well – or I thought I did - but this format has allowed me to experience it in a totally new way, plus it has allowed me an incredible sense of freedom to explore stories which I have maybe struggled with by directly talking to Jesus and sharing with him what they mean to me. I would like to briefly share two such experiences with you today.

1. The Storm on the Lake (Mark 4:35-41)

I had heard this story often before but I experienced it differently during this meditative encounter as I was invited in to be sat in the boat when the storm came. Because of this I experienced the power and speed of the change in the weather in a more profound way than when I had heard or read the story before. It was violent and I was scared. I was really scared.

Jesus came to sit next to me and I was instantly calmed by his presence. It was profound. I asked him how I could harness this instant peace at other times in my life. He reminded me of the line from the story of the prodigal son, where God says to us (through his conversation with the son who stayed home): “My child, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours”.

I am always here, Jesus said, to ME.

I can always help you in your storms, Jesus said... to ME.

It made me think about the times when I get nervous, which are plenty. I have always been annoyed with myself when I get nervous. I became very aware of the fact that I

feel like I fail every time I get nervous. I have lived all my life with this underlying notion that one day I would “grow up” and it wouldn’t happen any more. I could vividly see in this moment how ridiculous this was. I will always get nervous. It is a fundamental part of being human. I realised very acutely during this “chat” with Jesus that I need to stop piling added pressure on myself to stop longing for something which will never happen.

Maybe... just maybe... as a result of this experience at this time in my life... I might just be able to live with my natural, inevitable nerves in a more peaceful and productive way. This may sound ridiculous, but the experience was very real and very profound for me.

2. The Bleeding Woman (Mark 5:25-29)

This was the story of the woman who sought to touch Jesus’ cloak so she could be healed from 12 years of misery. Again, this was a story I had heard often and knew well, but I “secretly” held a bit of a problem with it. I do struggle a little with the stories of physical healing, especially as many of the occasions of physical healing we see these days take place in huge auditoriums with charlatan televangelists delivering some very dramatic “healings” where wheelchairs are thrown aside etc. As you will probably sense I am somewhat sceptical about these events, to say the very least.

Jesus took me to one side and pointed out to me that in the story he never specifically said she had been physically healed, just that she had been healed. She had been healed as a result of her encounter with Jesus. She was in a dark place. She sought Jesus with passion and energy. She found him. She connected with him. She was healed.

During the discussion afterwards a Minister that was in our group remarked she had recently been in a study group where this story was discussed and the point was made that the woman would have been made to live as an outcast and not as a legitimate part of society because of her condition... and the encounter with Jesus freed her from that exclusion.

You see... being “healed” by Jesus, and through our connection with Jesus comes in many forms. It does not have to be physical, and this does not make it any less powerful.

I am a true believer in the power of Jesus to help us heal ourselves and our relationships with others, but I feel we often make a mistake of being hung up on the literal nature of some of these stories.

These are two real examples of how these meditative experiences have helped me, and how the deliberate act of creating space and time to be immersed in these experiences by blocking out the “day to day” have proved to be so very positive and

affirming for me. In fact they have in some cases been absolutely transformational for me.

However we do it, it is undeniable that these “withdrawal” experiences can be positive for us. This is exactly what was being referred to in all three of our Lectionary references today.

Another way of looking at these moments is that they are a chance for change. This is what I find exciting about our journey with Jesus. Living with Christ is dangerous and exciting – precisely *because* it can change us.

Experiencing bible stories in a new way is very much a way in which we can be changed, refreshed, renewed and inspired to be a part of this amazing journey that Jesus constantly invites us into.

It does mean however that we must be *prepared* to be changed.

We may have to allow some of our lifelong beliefs and views to be challenged.

We may have to be willing to see things in new ways.

We may have to be willing to be taken in new directions.

We may have to be brave enough to see these things as “good” instead of seeing them as threatening or scary.

I wonder if that is why they called it “good” news...?

I hope so. ⁴

Hymn:

653 STF – O Christ, the Healer, we have come OR

346 STF – Christ is the world’s light, Christ and none other

What are you being called to?

Let’s be still for a moment. Perhaps you are being called to stillness, to time out, to rest, this day and in the week ahead.

Let us hold the stillness, and make space for God.

[Pause – you may like to play some soft music, or just hold the silence.]

Amen.

Hymn:

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space OR

651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you

⁴ Reflection Written by Kevin Dobson

Prayers of intercession

Today, instead of using lots of words for our prayers of intercession, our prayers for the world, we are going to hold a couple of times of quiet, and I simply invite you to bring your own prayers into those spaces.

Firstly, I invite you to spend a moment praying for those close to you: people in your family, your friends, perhaps members of this church, who are in your thoughts. It might be the people you are worried about, or just someone who you know needs to feel God's presence today.

In the stillness, hold that person, and their situation, in the light of God's love.

[Pause for a minute or two. You might like to play some quiet music during the stillness].

Come Lord God. Answer our prayers, in Jesus name.

And now, in this space, I invite you to bring a situation or person further afield. Perhaps a story from the news, or a situation or story that has found its way to you. It is probably about people or a person you will never meet, but in this moment, you want to hold those people in prayer.

In the stillness, we pray for a better world.

[Pause for a minute or two. You might like to play some quiet music during the stillness].

Come Lord God. You know the names, the faces, the situations that we've held in our hearts and minds over these past few minutes.

Answer our prayers, in Jesus name.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Thank you Lord, for all you have given to us and all we have received. We respond to your grace with generosity – we give out of the enormous wealth we have received. We are yours, put us to what you will,

In Jesus' name. Amen.⁶

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Hymn:

434 STF – Rock of ages, cleft for me OR

654 STF – The love of God comes close

Blessing

God of grace, Spirit of hope, Christ who transforms us – send us out with your courage, your love, your peace to bring into a community and a world in need.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker