



Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Coming into God's presence-

Prayer :- Today, Lord we come. Just as we are with our joys and sorrows. We acknowledge your presence here with us in this place and thank you for the peace that this gives knowing that you are here for us, sharing your love and generosity with the world starting here right now with us. Help us to think about that for a moment –

We look to you, being still in your presence.

May your Holy Spirit show us more of your as we worship together. May we be blessed so that we may be a blessing to others. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Hymn – StF 471 Lord I come to you

Lord, I come to you,
let my heart be changed, renewed,
flowing from the grace
that I found in you.
And Lord, I've come to know
the weaknesses I see in me
will be stripped away
by the power of your love.

*Hold me close,
let your love surround me;
bring me near, draw me to your side.
And as I wait,
I'll rise up like the eagle,
and I will soar with you,
your Spirit leads me on
in the power of your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes,
let me see you face to face,
the knowledge of your love
as you live in me.
Lord, renew my mind,
as your will unfolds in my life
in living every day
by the power of your love.

Hold me close ...

Today's worship is going to have a traditional three aspects to it as we explore three Bible passages. The first two are the suggested passages from the lectionary while the final one is where I have been led.

Reading - John 6:24 – 35

Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'[c]"

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**"

Here we have Jesus taking an everyday item, "bread" as a teaching example to remind the people to work for food that endures and that he is the one that will endure. Bread was a basic everyday food that people needed to make fresh everyday so this was a powerful example to use. But we live in a very different world today with fridges and freezers and tinned food. All that last more than a day.

So what would you consider to be essential everyday food today?

Supermarkets use phrases like Basic food, everyday essentials, to show a contrast with luxury food, The best range etc. Can you think of other labels.?

What are the essential we need in our home? For me there is tea, coffee, vegetables, fruit, milk, for my husband crisps, savoury rice, naan bread.

What about flour, butter, oil, herbs?

Meat, fish, salmon, cake, biscuits, caviar. Which are essential and which luxury? This is a different way of life when Jesus was telling this story – but in Jesus' day the people would have known the story of the Exodus and how God looked after them on their journey through the desert by providing bread each day. Their essential food.

I invite you to choose an item of food today that you could not be without and say to yourself, "Jesus is as essential to me as this item of food. I see him as essential to my life and not as a luxury item that I only turn to on special occasions."

Hymn - StF489 All I once held dear

All I once held dear,
built my life upon,
all this world reveres,
and wars to own,
all I once thought gain
I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now,
compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.*

Now my heart's desire
is to know you more,
to be found in you
and known as yours.
To possess by faith
what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift
of righteousness.

Knowing you ...

Oh, to know the power
of your risen life,
and to know you in
your sufferings.
To become like you
in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live
and never die.

*Knowing you ...
Graham Kendrick*

Our second reading is from Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it^[a] says:

'When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.'^[b]

(What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions^[c]? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Here we have Paul, writing to the early church in Ephesus with clear guidance as to how to live, each day, with others.

There is the reminder that together the early followers of Jesus are one body – being a part of Christ Jesus. One body, that builds itself up just like the way food was needed every day to stay close to Jesus, the bread of life. **Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Peace is important when there may be differences of opinion** . We are asked to look for the Christ in the other and maintain peace and connection.

The Christian community was to see their way of living as acting together in unity with tasks to engage with that would enable their faith and love to grow.

I don't know about you but I have found it is often easier to feel united to others and to Jesus when we are together in church or meeting with people in caring for others than it is when you are sitting at home alone, or simply just getting on with whatever life has thrown at you and surviving.

Yet it is so important to remember not only the essential fact that Jesus is with you but that you are, at any one time, united with others in a spiritual sense as we are joined in prayer .

(If you are sharing this service in church I suggest you think about a physical way of joining people together – perhaps by passing a ball of wool round the people and each person holding it onto it. Followed by a short prayer.

O Lord as we are linked by holding onto this wool may the image remind us of our constant connection in Jesus. Amen)

Hymn - StF 676 Christ from whom all blessings flow

Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
perfecting the saints below,
hear us, who thy nature share,
who thy mystic body are.

Join us, in one spirit join,
let us still receive of thine;
still for more on thee we call,
thou who fillest all in all.

Closer knit to thee, our Head,
nourished, Lord, by thee, and fed,
let us daily growth receive,
more in Jesus Christ believe,

Never from thy service move,
needful to each other prove,
use the grace on each bestowed,
tempered by the art of God.

Love, like death, has all destroyed,
rendered all distinctions void;
names, and sects, and parties fall:
thou, O Christ, art all in all.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Our two images so far are ; **Jesus the bread of life and living in unity.** Our third passage is from the book of Ecclesiastes and is a passage that has meant a lot to me over the years and I wanted to share it today.

Reading Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 The Value of a Friend

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? ¹²And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes written at a time when people lived a nomadic life – moving around looking for food and shelter and God’s place to stay. Sleeping arrangements would often have felt like as if you ever camped with a group in the Brigades or the Scout and Guiding Association. You are kept warm by snuggling up to your friends.

But in any friendship a threefold cord is not easily broken – we are stronger together by offering support and care, with God, Father Son and Spirit being the third part of the cord.

The three fold cord image has often used in a blessing of partners promising themselves to each other.

But I believe that it can be also important for deep friendships that are united in Christ.

So this morning we have moved from Jesus the essential Bread for life, to unity to friendship. We need each other.

I invite you now to reflect on the song, “ You Raise me up”, by Josh Groban and as you listen can you hold before God with thanks the people who have been and are today friends that you know will not be broken.. united in Jesus the bread of life.

You Raise me up. Listen and pray.

Pray for them. Pray for those whose life is lonely with no friends. Pray with the rest of the Christian Church that we may be united in Christ and be witnesses to the way of God’s compassion, justice and love in today’s world. Amen.

You Raise Me Up Song by [Josh Groban](#)

[Al Josh Groban children choir frm Africa - You Raise Me Up \(youtube.com\)](#)

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened
be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until You come and sit awhile with me.

You raise me up, so I can stand on
mountains
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be

You raise me up, so I can stand on
mountains
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be.
You raise me up to more than I can be.

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
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours
Now and forever
Amen

Hymn - StF 663 I the Lord of sea and sky.

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.*

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, Lord.*

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, Lord.*

Daniel L. Schutte (b. 1947)

Blessing

So we go out into the world, having been fed by the bread of life and united in Jesus we go out in his name to make a difference. Amen