

## Sunday 2nd August: Trinity 8

### 'Being alone with God'

I pray for all those in authority especially those whose task it is to keep us safe. I pray also for all those who are tempted, for reasons of their own, to ignore advice so that it put others in danger.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer. Amen

### We finish as we started by words from the Psalms:

#### Psalm 145:

<sup>8</sup>The Lord is gracious and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord is loving to everyone and his mercy is over all his creatures.

<sup>15</sup>The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

<sup>16</sup>The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them food in due season.

<sup>17</sup>You open wide your hand and fill all things living with plenty.

<sup>18</sup>The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving in all his works.

<sup>19</sup>The Lord is near to those who call upon him; to all who call upon him faithfully.

<sup>20</sup>He fulfils the desire of those who fear him; he hears their cries and saves them.

<sup>21</sup>The Lord watches over those who love him but all the wicked he shall destroy.

<sup>22</sup>My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh praise his holy name for ever.

### Let us finish by saying the Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for evermore. Amen



Psalm 46 says: 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Psalm 17 says: 'I call upon you O God, for you will answer me: incline your ear to me and listen to my words.'

Hymn 1: Be still for the presence of the Lord.

Be still for the presence of the Lord  
The holy one is here.  
Come bow before him now  
With reverence and fear.  
In him no sin is found  
We stand on holy ground.  
Be still for the presence of the Lord  
The holy one is here.

Be still for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place.  
He comes to cleanse and heal  
To minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him  
In faith receive from him.  
Be still for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place.

Be still for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around.  
He burns with holy fire  
With splendour he is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight  
Our radiant king of light.  
Be still for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around .

## Reading 1: Genesis 32: 22-31

### Jacob Wrestles With God

<sup>22</sup> That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." <sup>27</sup> The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. <sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." <sup>29</sup> Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." <sup>31</sup> The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. <sup>32</sup> Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

We don't know why Jacob wrestled with God, it could have been that he had things on his conscience so we make our own **Confession** where we tell God we are sorry for distancing ourselves from him by what we have done, thought or not done.

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart:

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## Let us Pray

One night I had a dream...

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord, and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; One belonged to me, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of my life flashed before us, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of my life, There was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about it.

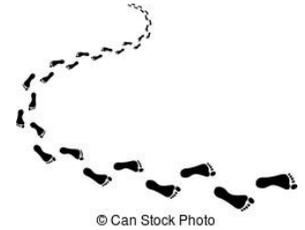
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, You would walk with me all the way; but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, There is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why in times when I needed you the most, you should leave me.

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you, and I would never, never leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you.

**Holy Father**, thank you for carrying me when I most needed your help. I recall when I sought you out when .... For the help your provided, thank you.

I pray now for those known to me who are in need of your support. In particular I pray for .....

I give thanks for all the support services and those who have volunteered during this pandemic. In particular I give thanks for ...



## Hymn 2; My song is love unknown.

My song is love unknown,  
My Saviour's love to me;  
Love to the loveless shown,  
That they might lovely be.  
O who am I,  
That for my sake  
My Lord should take  
Frail flesh, and die?

They rise and needs will have  
My dear Lord made away;  
A murderer they save,  
The Prince of life they slay.  
Yet cheerful He  
To suffering goes,  
That He His foes  
From thence might free.

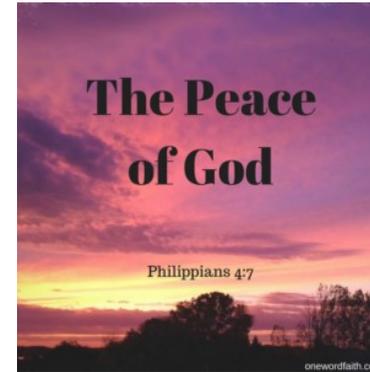
He came from His blest throne  
Salvation to bestow;  
But men made strange, and none  
The longed-for Christ would know:  
But oh, my Friend,  
My Friend indeed,  
Who at my need  
His life did spend.

In life, no house, no home  
My Lord on earth might have;  
In death, no friendly tomb,  
But what a stranger gave.  
What may I say?  
Heav'n was His home;  
But mine the tomb  
Wherein He lay.

Sometimes they strew His way,  
And His sweet praises sing;  
Resounding all the day  
Hosannas to their King:  
Then "Crucify!"  
Is all their breath,  
And for His death  
They thirst and cry.

Here might I stay and sing,  
No story so divine;  
Never was love, dear King,  
Never was grief like Thine.  
This is my Friend,  
In whose sweet praise  
I all my days  
Could gladly spend

Knowing that if we are truly sorry for what we have done wrong then we are forgiven let us take time to reflect on God's wonderful grace and relax in God's presence.



Our second reading is from Matthew's Gospel and it tells of the Feeding of the 5000. However, note particularly the beginning of the passage where it tells us that Jesus went to be alone.

### Matthew 14: 13-21

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

<sup>15</sup> As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup> "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

<sup>18</sup> “Bring them here to me,” he said. <sup>19</sup> And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>21</sup> The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

### Reflection

Today, I want to concentrate on being able to seek out places where we can be with God. Worship is about belief: why would you worship something you don't believe in? For some, worship comes more easily when they are in a special place, often their church. For others, the venue is not so important but they may want to be on their own so that they can concentrate on what they are doing. They may seek silence, or put on some favourite music or even look at a painting; what you do is particular to you.

The gospel reading this morning is so familiar that we may overlook the first sentence. “Now when Jesus heard this he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place, **by himself**”. It is this idea that Jesus wanted to be by himself that I want to concentrate on.

The other day I was talking to a local newspaper reporter at Dixton and then we went outside to take some pictures. We were near the river and looking towards the church and I mentioned that there had been a site of worship here for probably 1500 years and there was a sort of expression on his face that was almost reverential. I pointed out that the church was originally dedicated to the Celtic Saint Tadioc who was a contemporary of St. Dubricius and St. David and the enormity of the history of this place seemed to dawn on him. I told him that many people describe Dixton as a ‘thin place’ where heaven and Earth are very close and he said he could

appreciate why they said this. I mention this because Dixton is one of those places which people come across and then come back to and comment in the Visitor Book that they find it a very spiritual place, very peaceful. I say all this because there are places where you can ‘just be’, these ‘thin places’ and know that you are really in God's presence.

Jesus is recorded as needing time to be alone with God. After he was baptised by John he took himself off into the Wilderness to be alone with his Father. Such times are very precious and we all need them. Sometimes there are issues we need to sort out, sometimes we just need refreshment.

In the Old Testament lesson this morning we read the story of how Jacob wrestled all night with a stranger. He was alone, having sent his wives and children on in front of him. We understand that the stranger was God and it would seem that Jacob needed to spend time by himself to be with God. What problem Jacob wrestled with we do not know but we do know that the outcome was satisfactory as Jacob named the place Penuel, of ‘the face of God’.

Every now and then we all have a problem that we cannot resolve by ourselves and this is where the certainty of knowing the truth of God then the message of the gospel is what makes us, as Christians, return time after time to worship God in a place in which we feel safe and, very importantly, comfortable.

If we now return to the gospel reading we see what happens when we allow God to be with us, when we listen to Him: God feeds us abundantly. (Recall that the rest of the reading was the ‘Feeding of the 5,000’.) When we turn to God and listen to what we are told our problems can be solved and we are looked after in a way which beyond our expectations.

So, take time to seek God, allow yourself time to be with God and you too will be fed abundantly.