

**Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit**  
**Service at Home – Sunday 28th July**  
Prepared by Pat Fry

This morning's lectionary readings are two much loved passages: the story of the feeding of the 5000, and a beautiful prayer from Paul for the people he is writing to. Whilst the lectionary is from John 6 (it's a powerful chapter which the lectionary spends four weeks exploring), I have chosen to use Mark's account as he is such a vivid story teller.

**Preparation**

As you prepare to worship, take a few slow deep breaths.

Picture somewhere beautiful.

As you breathe out visualise letting go of the worries and the niggles that are troubling you,

As you breathe in let a sense of the presence of God come into that space.

**Hymn 102: For the beauty of the earth**

<https://youtu.be/PTOfSKXkRa0>

John Rutter's arrangement, beautiful to listen to, could not find a good singalong version

For the beauty of the earth,  
for the beauty of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies:

*Gracious God, to you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flower,  
sun and moon and stars of night:

*Gracious God,.....*

For the joy of ear and eye,  
for the heart and mind's delight,  
for the mystic harmony  
linking sense to sound and sight:

*Gracious God.....*

For the joy of human love ,  
brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild:  
*Gracious God.....*

For each perfect gift and sign  
to our race so freely given,  
graces human and divine,  
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:  
*Gracious God, to you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

*F.S.Pierpoint 1835-1917*

**Introduction**

I have been following daily devotions based on a book by Dag Hammarskjöld. The older ones among you may remember he was Secretary General of the United Nations during the late 1950s, until his tragic death in a plane crash on his way to conduct peace negotiations in the civil war in Congo. He is remembered as a brilliant administrator and diplomat, who put enormous energy into working for peace. The one book he left is not a self-congratulatory account of his dealings with world leaders, but a journal of his faith journey as he tried to live out his Christian faith; not written for publication, but left with a note to his friends instructing them to publish it if they thought it would be helpful, and we begin with a thought from that book "Waymarkers":\*

"Humility at the smallest flower above the tree line opens the way up the mountain." A sense of wonder at small things can lead us on to a deeper sense of awe and wonder, and energise us to keep going.

**Prayer of thanksgiving**

Take time to recall one thing you have enjoyed this week on your own – may be a book, a television programme, a piece of music

Take time to recall something you have enjoyed with someone else may be a

special occasion, may be just a chance encounter, a phone call, or a joke.

Take time to recall something you have achieved, maybe a meal that turned out well, a cupboard tidied, a letter written, a puzzle completed.

And pause to give thanks to God, the source of all things good.

### **Gospel reading**

The lectionary is from John 6 (it's a powerful chapter which the lectionary spends four weeks exploring, I have chosen to use Mark's account of the same story as he is such a vivid story teller

Reading: Mark 6: 30-46

This a much loved story, a story many of us heard as small children, a story we can identify with. After a very busy time preaching to the crowds, healing many sick people Jesus and his disciples had slipped away by boat across the lake for much needed rest and relaxation, a chance to recharge the batteries, but the crowds were so excited, so thrilled by what Jesus was saying and doing, they set off around the lake to find him. It would have been a long and tiring walk in hot weather. And Jesus responds to their need; for the crowd a day of intense excitement, of rising hope that this man might be the leader they have been waiting for, an exhausting day. They lost all sense of time. It's the disciples who first recognise they have a problem; without food many of these people would not have the energy to get home before dark. Jesus response is, find out what there is from the people, but all they are offered is one boy's packed lunch. Yet Jesus tells them to organise the people to sit down in groups ready to eat. As He said the blessing, and broke the bread, the miracle occurred. Did the loaves magically multiply? Or did everyone respond by sharing what they had brought? Whichever way you think about it, either is miraculous.

And there is a clear message: We are all called to share what we can, when we can. The smallest offering generously given in faith has potential beyond our expectation. As a lovely new hymn in Singing the Faith puts it:

Though we live quietly,  
with no authority,  
yet feeble faith in us may show your  
goodness;  
and though we may not see  
how crucial it may be  
our faltering love may show your loving  
kindness. *665 Alan Gaunt b.1935*

### **Hymn 668: Teach me my God and King**

<https://7G0MtBLtLrQ>

Teach me my God and King  
in all things thee to see,  
and what I do in anything,  
to do it as for thee.

A man that looks on glass  
on it may stay his eye,  
or if he pleaseth through it pass,  
and then the heaven espy.

All may of thee partake,  
nothing can be so mean,  
which with this tincture "for thy sake"  
does not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
makes drudgery divine:  
who sweeps a room as for thy laws  
makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone  
that turneth all to gold  
for that which God doth touch and own  
cannot for less be told.

*George Herbert 1593-1633*

### **Introduction to reading**

Our second reading is from Paul's letter to the young church in Ephesus.

Paul has written at length about the amazing love and grace of God, through Jesus, available to all regardless of race or background,

This is summed up in Ephesians 2:19-22

“You are no longer outsiders in God’s world; you are fellow citizens with all the friends of Jesus everywhere; you are members of God’s family... God’s family is like a building; Jesus is the keystone; inspired preachers among us. and the first close friends of Jesus (like Andrew and Peter) laid the foundations; you are the stones. Jesus holds God’s family together and helps it grow; but he needs you, as the keystone needs the stones that make the wall.

(New World: Heart of the New Testament in Plain English. Alan Dale)

Paul then prays for these new Christians. Read it as a prayer for all Christians, for all time; read it as a prayer for you.

### **Reading: Ephesians 3:14-20**

#### **Reflection**

Three word pictures from Dag Hammarskjöld’s book illustrate this:\*

1. He saw us as being like sails. We cannot control the wind, but we can catch the wind, and allow it to direct us, relying on its strength.
2. He saw us a being like lenses. The lens is shone through, it can focus the light. The lens does not draw attention to itself; its function is to enable the light, to work where it is needed. If we just work for our own good, the light cannot shine through.
3. Holding out a glass waiting to be filled. If each morning we could each hold out our life like an empty glass inviting God’s Spirit to fill it, receiving from God, as at Communion, then God’s Spirit can work through us; we are called to pour out that gift to others, making space to receive again .

### **A personal Prayer**

It’s Sunday again.  
Here I am, Dear Lord,  
a chipped and worn clay pot  
waiting to receive your treasure.  
Dare I believe You had a hand  
in shaping my life?

My genetic inheritance,  
my family, my childhood  
all played their part  
in making me who I am,  
one of your clay pots,  
now burnished, battered and bruised  
by life’s varied experiences.

Don’t let me be smug when I see life as  
half- full,  
nor downhearted when it seems half  
empty.

Rather let me come, ready,  
glad of space to receive from your Spirit.  
Then through the week ahead  
let me pour out  
the love and strength and hope  
you have given ,  
in my actions and encounters,  
making space to receive gladly  
from You again. Amen (P.F)

### **Prayer for others**

Gracious God, there is nothing we can tell  
you about the problems of the world You  
do not already know.  
But Jesus taught us to bring our concerns  
to You, as to a loving parent.  
So I come in prayer.

There’s so much in the international news  
that troubles me.....;  
There’s so many troubling issues much  
nearer to home.....;  
There are people I know well going through  
difficult times.....;

So I bring to You:  
my longing for world peace;  
my desire for a community where all  
are valued and can flourish;  
my concern for my friends and family;

my own need for peace of mind and a stronger faith.

And I lift these prayers together as I say the words that Jesus taught us:

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **Hymn 82 : How Great Thou art** **<https://youtu.be/kSfTnv9NvV8?si=PoDny1e4BfD1nN-3>**

This hymn is based on a song with an interesting history. The first two verses were originally a Swedish song based on Psalm 8. An English missionary in the Ukraine, Stuart Hine, heard it sung in Russian there, translated it into English and added a third verse. Later he was talking to Russian refugees in England after the Second World War, and added the fourth, based on their thoughts. This year, to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Matt Redman was invited to add an additional verse.

(see full article by Dorothy Lusmore in Yours: June 2024, at UCW.org.uk/ Yours )

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hand has made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe  
displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!  
displayed:*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades  
I wander  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

*Then sings my soul.....*

And when I think, that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die., I scarce can take it in  
that on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing  
he bled and died to take away my sin:  
*Then sings my soul.....*

When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation  
and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart;  
then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim my God how great thou art!

*Then sings my soul.....*

Until that day, when Jesus bids us welcome,  
And as we walk this warring, broken world,  
Your kingdom come, deliver us from evil.  
And we'll proclaim," Our God, how great thou art!  
With hope we'll sing Our God , how great thou art!"

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!  
displayed:*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!*

*Stuart Hine 1899-1989, v5 Matt Redman*

May we persevere in faith,  
may we continue in hope,  
may we act and speak with love,  
may we know the presence of God's Spirit wherever we are.  
by the grace of God,  
our Creator, Saviour and Comforter  
Amen. Christian Aid (adapted)

\*from "Waymarkers" by Dag Hammerskjold Adapted from URC Daily Devotions during June by Stephen Dawson

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