**PRINTED WORSHIP MATERIAL FOR SUNDAY 8th AUGUST 2021**

**Jesus The Bread of Life**

 **Compiled by Rev Nick Witham St. Ives Methodist Church**

**Opening Prayer**

Living One, as we turn our thoughts to you we acknowledge you as the source of life; we bless you for your goodness; and give thanks for your love. As we come to you in worship, lift our eyes from the horizon of our lives, and guide our thoughts and prayers that we may see you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly, today and every day. Amen.

**HYMN: To God Be The Glory (a right good sing – fill your lungs and go for it!): https://youtu.be/6xPAF0YlY5A**

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving**

We thank and praise you, Lord God, that despite our assumptions and judgements and the way we sometimes treat others, you never stop loving us. Bread of life, you are always with us. We praise you that as we draw near to you, you quench our thirst and satisfy our hunger, so that we never need hunger or thirst again. Thank you that you equip us and resource us with everything we need for this journey of life. We thank and praise you, Lord God. Amen

**Prayer of Confession**

When we make wrong assumptions about others and judge the way they live: forgive us Lord, for limiting people and possibilities.

When we don’t allow others to speak out and be the people you have called them to be: forgive us Lord, for limiting people and possibilities.

When we cast judgements on particular communities or neighbourhoods that are different from ours: forgive us Lord, for limiting people and possibilities.

Let us journey together towards holiness and healing, knowing that only God can sustain us and set us free.

Giver and sustainer of life, through the power of the cross we are forgiven people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, chosen by you who called us out of darkness into your marvellous light. Amen

**Readings:** John 6 v35, 41-51, Ephesians 4 v25 – 5v2

**HYMN: Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God:** <https://youtu.be/FFxZeY2D5tc>

**Message Based on the Gospel reading:**

Well imagine for a moment, your deepest longings, your dreams, your destiny……and then STOP……you see for Jesus in v35 says this…”I am the bread of life. Those who come to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty”. And do you know that that is an astonishing claim….for what he is saying that if we come to him…. then our deepest longings will be satisfied….that we will never be hungry…that we will never again find ourselves having to yearn for the deepest things that matter most. Want to explore that astonishing claim in 3 ways, to explore the WHO, WHAT , HOW.

1. **Exploring the claim – Who?**

Jesus is claiming in what he says to be God himself…..he say I AM the bread of life…….now if you were to turn to Exodus 3:14 when god asks Moses to go to the Israelites he says who shall I say has sent me…what is his name?....and God says to Moses tell them I AM has sent you.

So when Jesus here is saying I AM the bread of life, I am the living bread that has come down from heaven he is also claiming and wishing us to be certain that…what? He is God himself….he is saying I AM….and in John’s gospel there are 6 other occasions when Jesus uses an I AM saying.

So let us come and be assured of the authority of Jesus to come and speak about the ultimate questions of life, about what is true and right and will fulfil us and make us happy.

**2. Exploring the claim – the WHAT?**

What is Jesus claiming here – to be the bread of life and that anyone who comes to him will never be hungry and never be thirsty. He is claiming to be the primary source of all true nourishment – bread at that time was the staple food, it is still today. He is claiming that HE is the bread of life...the source of all true nourishment to the extent that any who come to him will never be left hungry again.

Now the world craves satisfaction and nourishment in a number of ways often measured in terms possessions or influence or popularity. But the astonishing claim here is that Jesus infers something that I think most people really know.....that those things are not the complete answer...that somehow and in someway these things are going to come up short. It is only Jesus who claims he has the answer to the longing of the human heart.

**3. Exploring the claim – the HOW**

How is it then that I might find Jesus in this way?

*i. Don’t just have a worldly view*

The Jews in v41-42 have their attention is firmly focused on the here and now…on the physical aspects of life and so they miss the point….when Jesus says that he is the bread of life, the bread that has come down from heaven…they start to grumble and say well how can he say that…we knew his Mother & Father….this is rubbish and they dismiss him. We need to lift our gaze and our wonder.…where is God working, what is he doing, what is he calling us to do? All too easy we get deflected into worldly thinking…sucked into consumerism and acquisition, sucked into the idea that our hard work alone is going to be enough.

*ii. Acknowledge that no amount of self-help is going to be enough*

Don’t think that we can gain knowledge of God by ourselves…rather we have to come and v45 listen and learn…we must acknowledge that if we come and listen and learn then God, will reveal himself to us…through reading the Bible….listen and learn with a Bible passage...pray for God to show himself to you!! BE OPEN TO HIM.

*iii. Don’t put off having a taste and see*

Have you ever gone round a supermarket and there are the samples of food to taste….why? because they want you to be taken by the taste of what you are trying so that you will come back for more…

Well let me tell you there is a special offer here in this passage, for Jesus in v51 says this… “I am the living bread that came down from heaven…If anyone eats of this bread, they will live forever”

So come and taste….see what Jesus has to offer, come to him, listen and learn…come with your dreams, come with your longing, come with your doubts and your fears, come with your questions and concerns, come with your sufferings and your anxieties, come with all that you have….don’t dismiss him as we all too easily focus on what is going on around us, don’t pass him by because you haven’t got time or you don’t like the look of it, come and listen, come and learn, come and see for yourself this astonishing claim of Jesus.

**HYMN: Just As I Am :** <https://youtu.be/enJ8JzW_A48>

**Prayer of Intercession**

Loving One, we lift our world to you.

We lift to you all those places where natural forces have caused devastation and hardship. Give wisdom, humility and courage to those in leadership as they seek to find solutions to the issues facing us and teach each one of us how we too can help.

We lift to you all those places where greed, lust for power and prejudice have been allowed to take root. Raise up leaders to fight injustice and hatred and teach each one of us how we too can help.

We lift to you all those who have suffered as a result of this pandemic both directly and indirectly. Give strength and understanding to all those working to combat it and teach each one of us how we too can help.

We lift to you all those known to us who are sick or in need, naming them here ….

May they know your healing in their lives and teach each one of us how we too can help.

We bring all these our prayers in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen

***The Lord’s Prayer***

*Our Father ……*

**HYMN: Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah:** <https://youtu.be/wT4n1hGjDDg>

**A prayer of blessing**

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and for ever.

Amen.