

Salford Methodist Circuit



I Am The Bread Of Life – 1st August 2021
Rev Kim Ratcliffe

Good morning from the Salford Methodist Circuit, it's good to be here with you this morning on the 1st of August 2021. Can you believe it is August already?! But it is, so let's have our call to worship.

Come let us worship.
Let us worship God who made us
We are meant to be together to
Sing God's Praises
We God give thanks with a grateful heart.

Hymn: Give thanks with a grateful heart

*Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One;
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One;
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ, his Son.*

*And now let the weak say, 'I am strong,'
let the poor say, 'I am rich,'
because of what the Lord has done for us;
And now let the weak say, 'I am strong,'
let the poor say, 'I am rich,'
because of what the Lord has done for us;*

Give Thanks]]]

Let us come before God in prayer, let us pray:

We adore you Lord
Even although we cannot see you
You somehow draw us near to you.
We are separate yet we know that we are together with you
We ask you Lord to accept our prayers today,
Accept our worship today as we bring it to you.
It can only show how much love we have for you.
Thank you for caring for us as individuals and together.
We can at times be such a grumpy and grumbling lot
And yet you still love us even then.
Forgive us Lord for our faults and embrace us with

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Your Holy Spirit that we can be freed from those faults
and lead lives from this day forth with only love for you
and to share that love with everyone that we meet.

In Jesus' name we pray this.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 11 : 26 - 12 : 13a.

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

"Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."



Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

"This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

Thanks be to God for that word.

Hymn: 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,*

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*as your will unfolds in my life
in living every day
by the power of your love.
Hold me close...*

Bible 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, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. 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?"

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

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

And Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, 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 he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "from now on, give us this bread."

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

Amen

Hymn: 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.*

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*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...*

Once upon a time, we were led to believe that the popular thought in society is that men cannot multi-task, that doing two and three things at a time just wasn't, supposedly, in their genes. And I have always begged to differ from this thought and idea having lived in a house full of men for a good number of years, and they can do so many tasks at a time, as many of you will as well.

And here in David, we see David the multi- tasker. David was a shepherd, a poet, a giant killer, a king and, of course, an ancestor of Jesus. David proved that he could multi- task.

But of course, there was another side to the nature of David amongst all of these good roles he had, he was also a betrayer, a liar, an adulterer and a murderer, which reminds us only too well that we too have our failures in our lives, perhaps not to the extreme that David went wrong, but we have gone wrong in our lives none the less.

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But one thing about David is he never stopped having faith in God and knew that the nature of God was to forgive. Give David his dues, he was able to summon up the strength enough to confess. I think that this is most definitely something that we do not do enough of – confessing. How difficult is it to come before God with our heads bowed down and to tell God that we have done something wrong? It's not easy is it? Just think about that for a moment

But how awful the story we read today in 2 Samuel. What David did was absolutely dreadful. We know only too well throughout history what horridness comes from soldiers entering into areas of conflict – and if this story was happening today it would be like one of our army leaders sending one of his troops out there to the front line knowing that he or she would be almost up amongst a firing squad, there would be no hope. What an awful thing David to do. When it had been felt that there has been a need for troops to go out to war from our country, we want them to keep them as safe as they possibly can.

David's anger at Nathan is a human reaction – normally if the person we are portraying isn't a true likeness to ourselves, and if it's not displaying the loving character that people know you by then it is embarrassing, you are covering up who you really are. You have been found out and the world around you know the real you! Friends may stand by you, but it is bound to change some of even the closest relationships. David was confronted with the bad side of his nature and he didn't like it. What was seen on the outside wasn't real and genuine on the inside.

But our God is a loving God and even the worst person in the world can ask for forgiveness.

David had obviously been nurturing his soul with the wrong nutrients, the world was feeding him at this time in his life and what he had done certainly wasn't from what God had been feeding him.

When we look to Jesus, we can see only good, because he was doing what God wanted him to do, not what the world wanted him to do, and he had seen just as much as anyone else had and still remained pure.

Bread is of course the focal point in our Gospel reading of John. Oh, my goodness, I just love bread – even the making of it does something to you. You get all of your ingredients together and your away, I love the kneading part of the process – it's all squelchy and messy and then somehow it just all comes together. Or at least it's supposed to!

Jesus appeared on the outside like us and on the inside, he showed all of the qualities that God wants us to have. If we are prepared to come to Jesus and take the simple step of truly believing in Him then we will be in no danger of malnutrition; we will feed be fed His very word.

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We cannot live our lives to the full without us seeing that it is Jesus who gives his life for you and for me – for the whole of the world.

The people of Jesus' time were and we today need to be encouraged to see Jesus as the bread of life. If Aleck and I are going to have some homemade soup for our evening meal, I always get some, well what I say is, 'nice bread, special bread' in but if I didn't break open the bread from the crust, then what use is it to us. It would just sit there and look nice and smell nice, but to get the fullness from it I need to break it, break into it beyond the crust to get the full benefit from it. And I think that the same can be said for Jesus, we can sit and look at images of Jesus and even have our own image of Jesus in our mind but until we can experience Jesus and place him straight into our hearts and our bellies, then we are not reaping what he has freely given to us – eternal life. We get the strength that we need for life, we get shown our flawed parts but when we can see even these we are shown the way to change.

When we look to Jesus we can see the good qualities through and through and I would challenge you to find fault or a flaw within Jesus' nature.

Jesus IS the bread of life. He IS where we get our nourishment from. He IS our saviour – he IS our God – Praise be to God and we need to at least try to be like him. In everything that you do this week, I ask that you think to yourself 'What would Jesus do?' and if you do see some of the goodness of Jesus in what you are doing then say 'Alleluiah Praise our Lord'
Amen.

Prayers

I ask your prayers for God's family throughout the world
For all who bear responsibility among his people,
For all ministers of the word and sacraments,
And for all who gather in his name here in the Salford Methodist Circuit and areas around and further afield.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

I ask your prayers for the peace of the world,
For the rulers of all nations,
For government in accordance with God's holy will,
And for a just and proper use of the natural resources of the world.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

I ask your prayers for the concerns and activities of this circuit and every congregation who is represented here today.

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We pray for each church, throughout the world,
Each church throughout the universe.
We pray for people of all faiths and people with no faith.
We pray for the people who live within our neighbourhoods,
And we pray for ourselves, and our families, our friends.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

I ask your prayers for all in sorrow, need, anxiety or sickness,
I pray for those who are neglected, the persecuted and the lonely,
And for those in any need or trouble.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Let us praise God for those in every generation in who Christ has been
honoured, and pray that we also be inspired by their example.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Almighty God, to whom our need are known before we ask, help us to ask only
what accords with your will and those good things which we dare not or in our
blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son, Christ our Lord.

Amen

Hymn: Jesus is Lord, creations voice proclaims it

*Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!*

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

*Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding -
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.
Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

*Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.*

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*Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.
Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

Well, we've come to the end of our service and I would like to thank you for joining us this Sunday, the 1st of August 2021. This will be my final online service and I wish you every blessing as we go our separate ways.

May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Remain with each one of us today and always.

Amen, thanks be to God.

CCL: 30925

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