

SERMON 18A 2026.

Over recent weeks we have heard lots of parables, lots of teaching from Jesus, many parables of the Kingdom, from the parable of the sower, to the parables of the treasure in a field and the pearl of great price etc. Lots of wonderful teaching telling people about the importance of listening to the word of God, to treasure it more than anything else, to listen to and respond to it. Things though change in today's Gospel because Jesus seeks quiet time, he needed a rest, he hears the news of the death of John the Baptist, no doubt upset by it he seeks quiet, maybe realising even more clearly that he will face the same fate. It's a very human story, Jesus feeling grief and fatigue like any human being, it reminds us that in spite of all the wonderful things he said and did he was a fully human being. Yet his plans are foiled, the people are so desperate for him, that they seek him out, and in the compassion he feels for them he sets himself to teach them once again.

Was it only by chance that he goes onto to work the miracle of feeding the 5000, he preaches for too long and all of a sudden it gets dark and the crowds have nowhere to go, or did he secretly plan it. Whatever he works one of his greatest miracles, in fact the only miracle to be recorded in all 4 Gospels, he feeds so many with so little. There is so much that can be said about the miracle, it shows the compassion of Jesus, the love and care he had for people, it showed that in Jesus there was more than just a man, it was a sign of his godly power, his divinity. It might have made many people think of Moses, and of how he, helped feed the Hebrews in the desert with the manna the bread from heaven, so perhaps Jesus is meant to be the new Moses, the new saviour. We can see it as telling us something about the Eucharist, a sort of link to what he would do at the last supper.

But perhaps more than anything else this miracle has a very simple message-the love of God for us, the abundant love of God for us, as Jesus came to the aid of those tired and hungry people, so he can and will come to our aid when we need him. And that love is shown most of all in Jesus Christ, because he is the son of God himself, he is the very love of God become man, why, for us, for our benefit. That was what we heard in the words from Isaiah, words so well fulfilled in Jesus, that in him all those who are thirsty and hungry will be satisfied, but not just physical hunger, but spiritual thirst as well. St. Paul spoke so clearly of this today, that all we need is there for us in Jesus, with him nothing can truly hurt us, nothing on this earth should make us afraid because Jesus is there for us, because he is the love of God made visible, made physical. The miracle of the feeding of the 5000 teaches us all this, God is there for us in Jesus and just as he fed those hungry people, he will also feed us, not just with physical food, but food for the soul, food that comforts us, that protects us and that guides us, and what is that food, the very bread of life, the body of Christ that will be made present on the altar behind me. Let us put our trust in that, and in him, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.