

Worship at home – 18th July 2021
Key Scriptures: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Key Themes:

This week we explore the importance of balance in how we use our time.

Call to Worship:

God, our loving Father, who gently guides and leads us, restore our soul today as we come to worship you. Let us not hurry, but sit at your feet, gazing upon your lovely face.

Amen.

Hymn: 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
In 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 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.

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.

David J. Evans (b.1957)

Prayers: Adoration:

Jesus, our Shepherd, who makes us lie down in green pastures, who leads us beside still waters, who restores our souls; you anoint our heads with oil and our cup overflows.

We worship and adore you,

King of kings and Lord of lords.
Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Gracious God, you always make time for us; we are sorry that we don't always make time for you.

When we are rushing around being busy, sometimes even when we are doing your work, we forget about you.

We are sorry when we make our lives so full that there is no room left for you – no room to get away, to be in a quiet place with you.

Forgive us Lord, and help us not to hurry but to slow down, to make space for you to dwell within us. And in that dwelling place, may we seek what you want us to do and who you want us to spend time with. Help us to get the right balance, a right rhythm that is in tune with you.

Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness:

Even though we have gone astray, you are our Shepherd – the one who brings us back to the fold. We are assured of your forgiveness, and we are set free in the knowledge that you always make room for us.

Psalm 23

23 The LORD is my shepherd;

I have everything I need.

² He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

³ He gives me new strength.

He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.

⁴ Even if I go through the deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, LORD,
for you are with me.

Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.

⁵ You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honoured guest
and fill my cup to the brim.

⁶ I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live.

Reading: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

³⁰ The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. ³¹ There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while." ³² So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.

³³ Many people, however, saw them leave and knew at once who they were; so they went from all the towns and ran ahead by land and arrived at the place ahead of

Jesus and his disciples. ³⁴ When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw this large crowd, and his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

⁵³ They crossed the lake and came to land at Gennesaret, where they tied up the boat. ⁵⁴ As they left the boat, people recognized Jesus at once. ⁵⁵ So they ran throughout the whole region; and wherever they heard he was, they brought to him the sick lying on their mats. ⁵⁶ And everywhere Jesus went, to villages, towns, or farms, people would take their sick to the marketplaces and beg him to let the sick at least touch the edge of his cloak. And all who touched it were made well.

Meditation: The voice of the Shepherd

I am the voice of the Shepherd, the voice that calls the flock by name. The voice of care and protection, of rushing and resting, of the in between places, and mine is the voice that welcomes you home.

From the beginning of time, I spoke creation into being, I watched with sadness as my sheep choose to scatter, and walk alone. Then with gladness I gathered them back to myself, fostering relationships, and restoring all that was broken. I put my voice into prophets, priests and kings and enabled them to draw the truth from what they know.

They witnessed power crazed, corrupt Shepherds, high jacking God's people, and driving them as slaves into the ground. They put their own interests first, before the wants and needs of others. But this was not my way, and they in turn would know my displeasure and feel my anger. My people would see my fury but taste my forgiveness and love.

For my advocates also saw a lone shepherds standing on the hillside, building a fold for his precious sheep. Leading them to good and fertile pastures, where food was abundant, and where the little brook bubbled to form a clear pool of fresh water. He was their guide, and their protector. They trusted him and they knew his voice. He was there when the sun shone or when the skies turned black with rain clouds. He encouraged them to look to him and he would bring them rest out of rushing and calm out of chaos. Everything was under his good care, he was even willing to stand firm when predators attacked. With his body across the entrance, he separated the sheep from the wolves and he loved till the end.

I too would become a good shepherd, the people I had formed from dust would become like my sheep. Some would fall by the wayside, get caught in the thicket of life and lose their way. Some would turn out to be wolves in sheep's clothing, trying to distract and lead others astray. Yet, some would hear the voice of the Shepherd calling them by name, welcoming them into the fold and leading them home. A dwelling place where all could find rest, and all there be safely gathered in.

When trouble or danger approached the hired hand would, run for the hills and leave the sheep alone, but I am the Good Shepherd who is willing to lay down my life for these sheep. I promised to take care of them, to show them a life in all its fullness, a life of peace and love, where all were welcomed and held. I spoke of triumph, of

death distorted and victory won. Yet, they were not just empty words to me. I suffered, and died and rose again. I am the good shepherd who laid down my life for my friends and voice of the Shepherd can still be heard, calling your name, offering compassion, providing rest, resetting the balance, restoring peace, and establishing home.

Pause for thought:

- This week, the lectionary gives us two short readings that are often overlooked because they are the connecting verses between more prominent stories.
- The Sea of Galilee is rather like a huge Scottish Loch.
- If someone had access to a boat, it would be easy therefore to row or sail across to another place.
- Unfortunately, because of the hilly ground, anyone watching from the shore would also have a good view of your progress and could make a guess as to where you were going to land and so could make the journey on foot to greet you.
- This is what happened when Jesus took his disciples away to a quiet place to rest.
- The crowds got there before them.
- But Jesus has compassion for these people who are desperate to receive his teaching and guidance.
- However, he does take time to be alone when the crowds are gone – even sending his disciples away.
- The next time that the boat lands and Jesus walk on the shore, the same thing happens – many people rush to be near him and at him for healing.
- So what can we learn from these passages.
- Well, firstly, we need to take time to rest.
- During the Pandemic maybe our priorities have shifted a little.
- Maybe we have had more time to focus on God, to pray and deepen our relationship with him.
- Maybe we have had time to rebalance our rhythm of rushing and resting.
- And maybe we have not.
- If we have not then maybe this is something we should try to do, even Jesus needed time away from it all to rest and recuperate.
- I am of course talking to myself as I am to you all.
- Secondly, Jesus had compassion on the people that hounded him.
- He did not send them away, instead he loved them, cared for them and guided them as a shepherd takes care of his sheep.
- Therefore, I feel that this is what we need to do with each other and with those that do not have a relationship with Jesus.
- We are to love them, whether they are like us or not.
- Whether they like the same style of worship to us or not.
- Whether they stand in the same theological stable as us or not.
- Jesus had compassion and we should try to show that same compassion to one another.
- Jesus is our good shepherd, he wants us to find our resting place in him.
- He wants us to breathe in deeply so that our souls can be refreshed by him.

- Let us take time to breath.
- To drink in Jesus.
- To know that we are loved, cared for and valued as we are so that we can offer those same things to others.
- Amen.

Intercessions:

When we are lost, led astray by unwise and uncaring leaders or false promises and teaching:

Loving Shepherd of your sheep: guide us. (silence)

When we are hungry, for food, for love or because we have not fed upon you in our hearts:

Loving Shepherd of your sheep: feed us. (silence)

When we are ill or injured, in body, mind or spirit:

Loving Shepherd of your sheep: heal us. (silence)

When we are sorrowful, bereft of someone we love:

Loving Shepherd of your sheep: Comfort us. (silence)

When we are afraid, our lives darkened by thoughts of what we have to do or to endure:

Loving Shepherd of your sheep: encourage us. (Silence)

We ask that, as Jesu' heart went out to the crowds that sought him, so might our heart also be moved towards those around us:

We continue to pray for:

Sarah and Brain Margetts – Dalwood

Gill and Geoff Nicholas – Axminster.

Amen

Hymn: **Breathe**

[Jonny Diaz](#)

Alarm clock screaming bare feet hit the floor

It's off to the races everybody out the door

I'm feeling like I'm falling behind, it's a crazy life

Ninety miles an hour going fast as I can

Trying to push a little harder trying to get the upper hand

So much to do in so little time, it's a crazy life

It's ready, set, go it's another wild day

When the stress is on the rise in my heart I feel you say just

Breathe, just breathe

Come and rest at my feet

And be, just be
Chaos calls but all you really need
Is to just breathe
Third cup of joe just to get me through the day
Want to make the most of time but I feel it slip away
I wonder if there's something more to this crazy life
I'm busy, busy, busy, and it's no surprise to see
That I only have time for me, me, me
There's gotta be something more to this crazy life
I'm hanging on tight to another wild day
When it starts to fall apart in my heart I hear you say just
Breathe, just breathe
Come and rest at my feet
And be, just be
Chaos calls but all you really need
Is to take it in, fill your lungs
The peace of God that overcomes
Just breathe (just breathe)
Let your weary spirit rest
Lay down what's good and find what's best
Just breathe (just breathe)
Just breathe, just breathe
Come and rest at my feet
And be, just be
Chaos calls but all you really need
Is to just breathe
Just breathe

Songwriters: Tony Wood, Jonathan Lindley Smith, Jonny Diaz
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Blessing:

Go in peace.

May the whisper of God's wisdom go with you today and remain with you and those you love now and forever more.

Amen