



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

28th July 2024

Ninth Sunday after Trinity

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Gaynor, Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, David, Chris, Liz, Donna Bradley, George, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, Justin, Amanda, Tracey, Sue, Alison, Robin, Charlie, Tim, Dan, Jeff Betts, John Pickard, and Doris Pearson.

RIP

Rick Dunn, and Kath Moore

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

Lord God, we praise you that you are fully in control of all things. We pray you would protect Edwin, his family and those at the project. Keep them healthy and help them to thrive. We thank you that you know every hair on Edwin's head. You know exactly when he rises and when he falls. Watch over Edwin in every area of his life and keep him safe we pray, Amen.

Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading - 2 Kings 4.42-44

A man came from Baal-Shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, 'Give it to the people and let them eat.' But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred people?' So he repeated, 'Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, "They shall eat and have some left."' He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

Second Reading - Ephesians 3.14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church

and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading - John 6.1–21

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.' When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

Post Communion Prayer

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMENTARY ON THE READINGS

Like the earlier figures of Moses and Elisha, Jesus proclaims a message of God's abundance and power to save. John renders the feeding of the 5,000 story in a unique way. He combines elements of the Passover story in Exodus and the feeding miracle of Elisha (2 Kings 4) to portray Jesus as a powerful prophet.

This passage crafts its message through allusions to two Old Testament stories. Many ancient readers would have recognized an allusion to Elisha's feeding miracle, told in 2 Kings 4. Elisha served a large crowd from twenty barley loaves, and they had some left over. Andrew says, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" The servant of Elisha said, "How can I set this before 100 people? The parallels in the stories suggest that Jesus' actions should evoke the memory of the earlier prophet. The similarity to Elisha's story may be an important reason it would make sense for John to portray the crowd as recognizing Jesus' actions to be those of a prophet. "When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world'" Their acclamation suggests they interpret Jesus' actions as

similar to the great acts of the prophets.

The people's recognition shows considerable understanding. Some modern interpreters try to distance Jesus from the Old Testament prophets, claiming that Jesus isn't "just a prophet" but much more. Without denying that John sees Jesus as more than a prophet, it is important to recognize that John viewed prophets positively and characterized Jesus as a prophet to communicate to the reader about Jesus' identity. Like the prophets, Jesus was sent by God (for example John 5:23-24), performs signs (for example John 2:11, 23), and has knowledge that goes beyond human understanding (for example John 2:19; 2:24-25). What is more, the work of the prophets was very important because they communicated a divine perspective regarding human events. John characterizes Jesus in this way so that readers will appreciate his high standing as a prophet.

John also conveys Jesus' unique standing as a prophet by associating him with Moses as well as Elijah. Many of the details of these verses suggest a parallel to the Exodus story. Jesus goes up a mountain. The events are set at the time of Passover, the celebration of God's triumph in the Exodus story. The order of events: Passover meal, sea crossing, manna discourse, also might cause readers to perceive an allusion to the Exodus. By climbing the mountain and providing the meal, John situates Jesus as Moses, who facilitated the provision of food for Israel. Like Moses, Jesus does signs that lead the people to trust in him (John 2:12; 4:46-54; see also Exodus 4:1-17).

The people respond to Jesus positively, yet Jesus rejects their desire to make him king. This response conveys information about the kind of leader Jesus is. The subject of Jesus' kingship is taken up more fully in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, during which Jesus says, "my kingdom is not from this world" Jesus' prophetic status does not lead to the direct overthrow of human political systems, though he is still correctly identified as "king of the Jews" (for example John 19:14, 19).

Other elements of John's story add new information alongside the idea that Jesus is a prophet. The sea crossing story communicates Jesus' divine identity. When Jesus walks across the water toward the boat, the disciples are not confused about his identity, as they are in the Synoptic accounts, where they think Jesus is a ghost (for example Matthew 14:26-27; Mark 6:49-50). John states, "they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat". Although the disciples in each case are terrified, John suggests their fear is an appropriate response to a theophany, an experience of God, rather than a misperception of the walking figure.

Thus, when Jesus says, "I am; do not be afraid, it is I; do not be afraid", John's readers are prepared to associate the words "I am" with the divine name, I am who I am (see Exodus 3:14-15). The Greek words can mean either "I am," or "it is I." In Matthew and Mark, when the disciples do not perceive that it is Jesus, it makes more sense to interpret these same words to mean "it's me!" But John's readers already know it is Jesus, and his words instead seem consistent with the power Jesus displays in walking on the water, the power God also showed in the Exodus story in the crossing of the Red Sea. Through the story, John conveys that Jesus embodies the power of the God of Israel.

What difference does it make for modern readers to see these Old Testament allusions in the story of

Jesus? There are two important theological connections. First, understanding Jesus as a prophet like Moses or Elijah emphasizes continuity with Israel's past. Instead of demanding that Jesus be distinctive from the Jewish prophets, John paints a portrait of Jesus as one who steps into these important roles for the people of his present day. God is still the same God who sought Israel through the voices of the prophets, and now God seeks people through Jesus.

Second, the "life" Jesus brings is a life shaped by the ideas of the Exodus and Elisha stories. Just as God provided abundantly for Israel in a time of dire circumstances, so Jesus brings a similar kind of life in the midst of human need. Just as God brought Israel out of slavery into freedom, so Jesus also facilitates a similar transformation (see also John 8:31-32). As Elisha was known for his many miracles of provision and raising from the dead, so Jesus stands in the line of these prophets (see also John 11; compare with 2 Kings 4:32-37). As Elisha stood against the authority of unfaithful king Ahab, so Jesus speaks and acts with power among those who do not accept him. Preachers can assist hearers to understand themselves as recipients of these same gifts through relationship with Jesus' life-giving power.

Service Times and Venues

Thursdays 10:30am BCP communion at St Gregory's

	<i>Morning Services - St Gregory's, Bedale</i>	<i>Morning Services - St Mary's, St John's and Burrill</i>	<i>18:30 —Evensong</i>
28th July	9.15am St Gregory's #F	9:00am Burrill Mission Church #	St John's, Leeming*
		10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	
4th August	8.00am St Gregory's #	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St Gregory's*
	9.15am St Gregory's #F	11am St John's, Leeming #	
11th August	9.15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	Burrill*

Communion F Facebook *Conference Call

INFORMATION/REMINDER

Excepting Sunday mornings, our Conference facility is still active. Tel 03330110945 and enter when prompted
Room No.66307496# PIN 9498



Office Summer Hours

The office will be open one day a week over the summer holidays, but I will also be working from home on other days. The office will be open on Tuesday 6th August, Tuesday 13th August, Tuesday 20th August, and Friday 30th August. Normal hours will resume on Tuesday 3rd September. With blessings Sarah Ryder