

**Sheffield United Reformed Churches**  
**Team Ministry worship for individual or family**  
**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 at 10:30 am.**

**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

**Call to Worship**

God of Abraham and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bring you our praise today. Come now as we share our worship, in and through communion with you. As we journey, help us to love and serve you, free our hearts to worship and give us peace to hear your voice. Come one and all ... are welcome

**Opening Hymn      Beauty for Brokenness**

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,  
Lord, in your suffering world, this is our prayer.  
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase

*God of the poor, friend of the weak, give us compassion we pray  
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain,  
Come change our love, from a spark to a flame*

**Prayers of Approach and Thanksgiving**

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of this new day, the beauty which surrounds us, the world and all in it so wonderfully made. We come at your invitation, as your guests to the Feast of Life, assured of your warm welcome.

We come with our longing and our hunger for the bread of life that only you can give, the food that will satisfy our deepest needs and nourish us in body, mind and spirit. We come in the knowledge that you will never send us away empty.

Loving God, you look deep inside us, seeing not only our outer but our inner needs. Have compassion on us, we pray. Feed us today from your holy word, and we will be filled. Mighty God of miracles, we come before you. We imagine what it might have been like being part of a crowd of 5,000.

We fear the unknown path, the conflict and division. We fear the sacrifices we will be asked to make. Forgive when our faith seems weak and we are uncertain about the way you want us to go. Forgive us when we fail to speak out.

Forgive us our lack of trust in you. Remind us that you hold all things within your love and purpose. Reassure us that you hold us safely within the palm of your hand. Fill us with your peace, your calm, your hope. Bless us, renew us and strengthen us for the living of these days. We ask this through the power of your Holy Spirit.

We lift our prayers, with the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray... **Our Father...**



## Readings

**Genesis Chapter 32: 22- 31**

**Matthew Chapter 14: 13 -21**

**Romans Chapter 9: 1-5**

## Reflection

We focus on Jacob's amazing meeting with God and how being in the presence of God brings about change. Such change is not always what we might expect or even want. When Jacob met with the Angel, he was on his own. Being alone with God is a time where you get away from all the busyness of life and other to spend time with God. Sometimes you need to unplug from the noise of the world and spend time in God's presence. This time gives you a chance to rest and refresh your body, soul and spirit.

Alone time with God allow us to examine and strengthens our relationship with Him. It is a time of refreshment and renewal. Time alone with God always leave us energized. God uses such times to prepare us for the great work He has prepared ahead. A time alone with God gives us the opportunity to review and renew our strategies. Being alone with God allow us to express our deepest concerns. It is at such times that we refocus on what is truly important.

Spending time alone in God's presence will not come easy, we'll have to create it. There are times in our lives when we meet with God the responsibility is ours and we can't share things as the struggle is one which we need to face. Consider the fact that God meets with everyone, whatever their past history or their current situation ... God brings redemption.

Jacob did not realise that it was God at first. No doubt there are many time in our lives when we are in a situation and we don't realise that God is there with us. We are so caught up in all that is happening around us that we fail to see God. You have no doubt have heard it said in our current situation; "Where is God in this pandemic?" People often have many questions and doubts, then something happens when they encounter God, and they realise that God is there. Even through our doubts we can seek encounter with God, so that however much we know now, we can see more of God's greatness

Our scripture reading tells us that during the struggle, Jacob is left with a limp / scar. Scars are life's souvenirs. It serves as a link between what happened before the wound and now. It is a message not to make the same mistake again. A scar is a way of recalling where we've been and what we've been through. It is a sign of closure. God touched Jacob at the point of greatest supposed strength – Jacob's skill at manipulating things for his own advantage.

God took that away and replaced Jacob's strong physic, with God's own strength – BUT Jacob was left with a limp, perhaps to remind him not to revert to reliance on his own strength. At some point, Jacob must have realised that he could not win and that in doing so he held on to God and asked for a blessing. Do our struggles leave us with a mark? Our own suffering, bring us in line with where people are at and it gives a platform from which to see God at work? Do we ask God to bless us through the struggles?

The story unfolds where Jacob had the power to release God and God had the power to grant a blessing. Jacob was prepared to hold on, to risk everything, for God's blessing. Out of his blessing, he was given a new name. A name which changes his history and his future Jacob (now Israel) was a changed man after this experience. Names were much more than labels attached to people or places. Names contained a message or a story — they said something about the person and / or the place.

Jacob began the night afraid of Esau's arrival. But he ended the night with God's blessing and a new identity. He had discovered how to manage the situation with his brother, he had received God's forgiveness in his life and he knew that God had plans for him. Everyone needs a new beginning too. It doesn't matter what we've done. God is the Lord of 'new beginnings and transformations.

## **Communion**

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Anyone who comes to me I will never turn away.

Loving God, you are the great healer and provider and you delight in drawing people to your table, seeking and saving those who have isolated themselves through their actions or words. We pray for one another, as we gather virtually to share this meal, that we too would be people who are transformed by your love and presence in our lives.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Loving God, we bring our prayers of intercession for those who hunger, who are empty and in need at this time. We pray for those who have no bread, who go hungry this and every day, those whose harvests have failed, those beset by drought or flood, those driven from their land.

When you shared food amongst the multitude there was more than enough for all. Remind us that in this world of plenty there is indeed enough for all and teach us how to share.

We pray for those whose hunger is for peace, those in places of conflict, in communities torn by discord, those in relationships of abuse and violence. Nourish them with your own peace and comfort.

We pray for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and justice, for those in poverty and those in refugee camps where the pandemic will do the greatest harm.

We pray for those in need of security in a time of deep uncertainty – those facing the loss of their jobs, the ill and those with health fears, those suffering isolation and grief.

We pray for the carers and health workers doing all they can; for charities and organizations that intervene well; for researchers seeking medical solutions and for those in positions of influence that they may use their power for good.

Fill them, we pray, with strength, commitment and loving concern.

O Lord, we surrender fully to you today. Sometimes we resist yielding our will to you, direct our steps to our destiny. O Lord, change our heart and breathe your life into us, in Jesus name. Help us each day to surrender our life and heart to you.

We bring before you now those for whom we have special concern, we lift them up to you. We bring all our prayers in the name of the One who promises life in all its fullness, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen**

### **Hymn R&S 496**

Fight the good fight with all thy might; Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;  
lay hold on life, and it shall be thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace, lift up thine eyes, and seek his face;  
life with its way before us lies; Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

Faint not nor fear, his arm is near; he changeth not, and thou art dear;  
only believe, and thou shalt see that Christ is all in all to thee.

### **Benediction**

Ever-living God. Transform us into people with arms outstretched to share your life-giving nourishment to neighbours near and far.

May we go forward filled with the grace and generosity of God the Father, nurtured by the love of God the Son; and enriched by the power of God the Holy Spirit, this day and always