

## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Readings                    2 Samuel 11:1-15  
                                  John 6:1-21

### Reflection

There is a sense of déjà vu about today's readings as last Sunday we had Mark's version of the feeding of the 5000 and today we hear John's version. There are some subtle differences but I leave you to ponder on those. Today I want to talk about the motivation behind actions and we begin by taking a look at the story from Samuel.

The story of David's dealing with Uriah is an example of how one decision can propel us down a disastrous path. David was attracted to Bathsheba but she was a married woman. David was the king, he could have anything he chose and he chose Bathsheba, his army were off fighting but David had chosen to stay at home rather than accompanying them. If he had not perhaps this episode would never have happened!

When David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant he did his best to make it possible for Uriah to be seen as the father, but Uriah was a faithful leader in the army and would not neglect his post. Desperation drove David down the worst path and he had Uriah killed.

Psalms 14 (Psalms for a quantum world)

Some say there is no God,

and show no love in their actions.

Some love but still do not understand  
the oneness of humanity and creation.

The eternal presence, source of all being,  
knows all, is aware of all and unites all.

Why can we not understand this?

Why do we hurt one another?

Why do we live in fear?

In you there is only love,  
and love banishes fear.

In you is justice through oneness,  
in hurting others, we hurt ourselves.

When we acknowledge our oneness  
we find peace, seek justice and know love.

We are restored to wholeness,  
and our humanity flourishes,

Let us be one and rejoice.

This connects with both of our readings. It was fear which drove David down the path he took, fear of being discovered. It was possibly fear which influenced the disciples actions, fear of a hungry crowd turning on them, fear of being inadequate, and in the boat fear of the unknown. We can all be victims of those fears. The psalm reminds us that fear is the opposite of love and that it is fear which divides and love which unites. In hurting others we hurt ourselves, David carried the consequences of his fear with him for a long time, if not the rest of his life. Guilt is the product of fear.

However, in oneness we are encouraged to live differently and as Paul says in Ephesians 3, 'we have the power of God to help us'. In his prayer for the church at Ephesus, Paul says,

'I pray that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit... as you are being rooted and grounded in love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.'

To be strengthened in our inner being, is to be strengthened in our understanding, strengthened in our relationship with God and to be strengthened in our relationships with each other. In oneness we dwell in God, and can know the Power of Love, which is God. In oneness we begin to access the deep understanding that comes from knowing God, an understanding which goes beyond our current understanding and which implies growth and a change in our being. When we journey on the way of Jesus we are journeying to a new way of being as we become more and more 'resting in the power of love which is God'. The challenge is, how do we acknowledge our oneness in our life, and how do we live oneness?

The most obvious outward expression is to let go of fear, or at least to recognise when fear is driving our actions and seek to replace it with love. Fear makes us defensive, makes us want to fight our corner but that creates divisions. It happens at work, at home, and in church. Paul saw this in the church at Ephesus and if we are honest we see it in the church around us. Church is a journey together, a journey of growth and it should never be a static experience. To grow brings change, change it is not always comfortable, and often brings out fear. Fear divides and so often in our evolving we find ourselves taking sides. Change means letting go of the past and embracing a new way, a new understanding that leads us deeper into God and closer to each other, makes us more loving.

The disciples had to embrace the new reality that they could feed thousands, that they could walk on water. From the outside it seems impossible but in the Power of Love anything is possible when we believe in it and really want it. Oneness calls us towards three things, to find peace, to seek justice and to know love. Finding peace is about contentment, which comes with self awareness and being happy in your skin, not continually comparing what you have with what other's have, but resting in who you are. Seeking justice is about being aware of injustice, challenging injustice and being aware of need. It is about asking ourselves what can we do to make someone else's life better, what can we do to change a situation. Knowing love is to live life compassionately doing whatever you can to make a difference.

Story – The starfish. ([Listen here](#))

We can make a difference, every action affects someone else, when we live in oneness and act in love we are changing things for the better. When we turn back to our fear we create divisions and negatively affect the people around us. As church we are called to explore our oneness together, so as we move forward let us pledge to grow in our oneness and create a place of love and deepening understanding, living love and making a difference. Amen