

# RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

## 2 August 2020

reaction of the disciples was to suggest sending the people away to get food. There was nothing else that they could suggest. They couldn't see a large-scale solution to the crisis facing them.

**The Teacher's Perspective.** Every good teacher will of course turn a challenging situation into a learning opportunity. Jesus has already shown compassion on the crowd, healing the sick, but simply says to his disciples, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' So what are they going to do?

**Dilemma.** There are a lot of people. The task of feeding them will be huge. All those hungry mouths. Where to start? With the weakest and most vulnerable? With the children? What to do? The disciples see the size of the problem, and answer Jesus, 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.'

**Solution.** In an instant the perspective changes. No longer seeing the faces of the multitude, attention now turns to the resources at hand. Pastors and Counsellors who use the 'solutions centred' coaching method will know this technique well, encouraging their clients to acknowledge the resources they already have in order to find solutions.

**Resources.** If you have watched [The Chosen](#) (which I highly recommend) you may also have looked at [The Chosen YouTube Channel](#), which contains all sorts of background videos. Dallas Jen-

kins, the writer and producer, has this saying which he repeats over and over when faced with such an enormous task: 'I don't have to feed the crowd; I just have to provide the loaves and the fish.' This is an amazingly effective way to put things into a right perspective.

**In the Hands of Jesus.** When we forget what we don't have or what we cannot do, and instead focus on what we do have and on what we can do, an amazing change takes place. When we give all that over to Jesus, he takes it, consecrates it, and uses it for his bigger purposes. In this case, once the offering of bread and fish is blessed and divided, it becomes enough to feed an enormous number of people. After all, it was Jesus himself who said that 'I will build my church.' (Matthew 16:18) It is frustrating when God's people don't acknowledge what they already have and can be doing (Romans 9:1-5); but in the hands of Jesus the impossible becomes possible, to the glory of God.

### SUGGESTED SONG

Now Thank We All Our God  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s99dNPKYtHk>

### BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

References to mustard seeds, and yeast, and pearls last week were a powerful reminder of how effective and influential some of the smallest things can really be. I remember as a student engaging with Schumacher's book 'Small Is Beautiful', published in 1973 at a time of global crisis, in which he argued strongly for microeconomic policies in resistance to rapid globalisation. During the same period Prince Charles was beginning to critique the arts and architecture, arguing for a smaller human-scale philosophy of design and planning, against the rapid rise of tower blocks and monolithic skyscrapers. It strikes me that there is much to be gained from reflecting on the seeds and the cells from which life grows, on the bricks and the stones from which structures are built.

At the same time when I was a student in the 1980s churches began thinking about things in smaller scale too, particularly as so many churches were rapidly declining. This was the era of the cell church movement, when house churches (that have long since become larger organisations) were planted, and house groups or home groups became a way of life for many churches. Those church-

es that began with a small-group ethos were more successful; regular churches forming home groups were more hit and miss, depending on the composition of the groups and the commitment of church members to make them work. Once we got to the 1990s it had become apparent that small groups were the life-blood of church health, and global research such as Christian Schwarz's NCD had ascertained that high-quality holistic small groups are a necessary characteristic of healthy growing churches. Roll on 20 years and a majority of church members still seem to resist being part of such a small group even though they are essential for personal Christian fellowship and growth, and the development of the church as a whole.

Do tell me if I am wrong, but it strikes me that in Covid-19 battered 2020 we cannot carry on doing things on a large scale as we have insisted on for so long, and that our energies might be better spent on thinking smaller scale again. Restrictions and regulations allow us to meet in small groups. Surely the time has come to reimagine church and reorganise as a fellowship of small groups, for friendship, pastoral care, encouraging one another, and meeting the many challenges we face in today's real world.

Our Zoom Sunday Morning Fellowship Meeting is at 10.30am and our Monday Prayer Meeting at 7.00pm. If you are able to join us, you will be welcome. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs. There are other helpful links at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

## PRAY FOR RYDE 2020

Launched on 1 July 2020, the themes for prayer are being published daily. Go to [prayforryde.org](http://prayforryde.org) for more information, videos and the link to the daily 7pm Zoom prayer meeting. For those who cannot access the website, here are last week's themes: 26 July, Church & Abbey Communities; 27 July, Foodbanks; 28 July, Crematorium & Cemetery Workers; 29 July, Funeral Directors; 30 July, Farmers & Growers; 31 July, Council Parks & Gardens; 1 August, Refuse Collectors & Recycling Staff. We will update the list here each week until 23 September.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest fare. (Isaiah 55:1-2)

## BIBLE READINGS

[Isaiah 55:1-5](#)

[Matthew 14:13-21](#)

[Romans 9:1-5](#)

## SUGGESTED SONGS

All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2mkjSnpsbw>

Lord I Need You  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuvfMDhTyMA>

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you this day for the beginning of a new month and a reminder that with you there are always new beginnings, new starts, new opportunities. Thank you that we can look at afresh at this new day and the days ahead with eyes open to fresh possibilities. Thank you that you have been faithful in the past, and thank you that you have promised to remain faithful to your people. We are sorry if we have held onto old ways of seeing and doing things. Help us to let go and to live our lives in the present. Help us to navigate and safely travel the new path that stretches before us. Show us how you want us to live in the present moment, and show us what you want us to do now, for the building up and encouraging of your church and for the sake of the world you made and love. Amen.

## TO PONDER

Since 22 March we have provided many ways for us to continue engaging in church life, including: 1) weekly service sheets; 2) 7/52 weekly news; 3) weekly online Sunday Morning Fellowship Meeting; 4) weekly online Monday Prayer Meeting; 5) a regularly updated Website and Facebook page; 6) Minister & Deacons available by phone for pastoral & friendly conversations, with essential or emergency visits (with safe distancing) only; 7) we initiated and resource the 2020 Pray For Ryde daily prayer videos and online prayer meeting, involving other Ryde churches; 8) the Minister, Church Secretary, Treasurer and Deacons/Trustees continue to manage the church's important responsibilities; and in addition, 9) the Open The Book team continues to video Bible stories for Dover Park School and provide a regular Bible story tableau in the GSC window; 10) a few people have opened their gardens to invite church friends to tea or met up for socially distanced walks. There will no doubt be other things I have missed. Forgetting what we cannot do at this time, we are actually providing quite a lot—and some people are very busy. How might the life of our church be nurtured in small ways that make a big difference? How might our participation be an encouragement to others? If 'Small is Beautiful', what small things can I do that will inspire others?

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Immanuel (Psalm of Isolation) – Andy Flannagan  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=U3Zr-7dJyJ0&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=U3Zr-7dJyJ0&feature=emb_logo)

No Longer Slaves  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8TkUMJtK5k>

## MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

**A Familiar Story.** Our gospel story this morning is very familiar: the feeding of the 5,000+! Familiarity can sometimes lead us to miss things or take them for granted. That's why I have enjoyed watching [The Chosen](#) during this time, and why I have recommended it on previous occasions. Seeing the stories acted out dramatically helps bring them alive in new and exciting ways. (That is also, incidentally, why Open The Book is so popular and successful.) We can see things we might have missed, or through fresh eyes. One of the lines from the show, which has become a powerful strapline, is this: 'Get used to different!' The Gospel is certainly different. The days we are living through right now are completely different from what we have experienced before. And it is important as we reflect and respond to Scripture to see things differently.

**The Disciples' Perspective.** Seeing such a large crowd, miles from anywhere, late in the day, and getting hungry, the