



# Sunday Reflection

## Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew  
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 1 August 2021

# Pentecost 10

As we start August, which for many is a month to pause for refreshment, we spend time with Jesus, who promises to satisfy all our hunger and thirst. We offer ourselves to him, the bread of life, in response to his call to do the work of God by believing in him.

## Reflection for this week's Gospel

**"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."** John 6:35

### An Illustration to set the scene

Carol was helping Imogen hang curtains.

"Can you pass me another ring," she asked, engrossed in what she was listening to on the radio.

She did so, but instead of a metal curtain ring, she passed her a gold engagement ring.

For a heartbeat she didn't realise what had happened.

"Thanks," she said, absent-mindedly taking the ring and trying to thread it through the loop in the top of the curtain.

When it wouldn't go, she looked down and suddenly understood the significance of the ring. In the next moment she was laughing and hugging her new fiancé.

“Phew,” said Carol, “I honestly thought for a moment you were going to turn me down.”

This is akin to what Jesus is describing at the beginning of today’s Gospel reading.

An engagement ring is so much more precious than a curtain ring – not just in terms of material value – the metal it’s made from or the jewels it contains – but because of the love and adoration it represents.

It’s as though someone were to use a love letter to light a fire.

Jesus challenges people to understand the significance of what he is really offering – so much more than food and drink for today.

What he offers, in fact, is everything that’s needed to provide and sustain eternal life.

## **Looking at the teaching of the Gospel**

John’s Gospel was written to introduce readers to Jesus, and to invite them to a response of faith.

This passage captures the heart of the Gospel: Jesus offers everything necessary for both earthly and eternal (heavenly) life.

Jesus has been pursued by those who received in the miraculous feeding of the crowd on a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

When they find him, he challenges them to think less of their stomachs than their souls, to focus less on the sign, more on its significance.

The people want to know how they can do what God wants (the “work of God”) in order to receive what Jesus tells them that God wants to give them (“eternal life”).

Jesus says clearly, as so often in John's Gospel, that it's all about how we respond to him.

In essence he's saying: *"If you believe in me, which means to follow me as a disciple, you will be doing what God wants."*

This is a simple yet a hard message to believe, and (*again as often happens in this Gospel*) the hearers deflect its challenge with a different question, this time about Moses.

Jesus explains that the manna was provided by God, not Moses – and so they should be concerned to serve God today, rather than thinking about their ancestors.

Accepting this explanation, the people ask Jesus to give them the *"true bread"*, and Jesus says, *"I am the bread of life."*

### **How can we reflect on the application to our lives?**

We are challenged to build our whole lives upon Jesus – but what does this look like in practice?

It can be easy to enjoy our lives as members of the Church for what it gives us today.

Yet Church is more than enjoying music, the opportunity to meet with friends, the intellectual stimulation of an enjoyable sermon, something that breaks up the weekend.

It is a gateway to our relationship with Jesus, who feeds and forms us through word and sacrament into his disciples, those who are living out eternal life today.

If we fail to meet the Jesus, who is at the heart of our worship, receive his love and respond, we are like Imogen, missing the significance of the ring she was passed, or the person who lights a fire with a love letter.

How do we do this? It's often useful to pause, perhaps especially in these summer weeks, to ponder how much of our life is shaped by our faith in Jesus.

We know we will be forgiven where we fall short of this ideal, and helped by the Spirit to conform all that we are and all that we do to the one whom we proclaim as Lord.

If we are truly being nourished by the bread of eternal life, we should see evidence of it in everything we think, say and do; and that will stay with us beyond this life into all eternity.

**“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” John 6:35**

Please share your response to this reflection to [Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](mailto:Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk) – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

**[www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](http://www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk)**