

# God cares!

The sermon preached by the Rev Dr Michael Paterson  
at the St Margaret's Eucharist on 18 July 2021 (Pentecost 8)

The readings were Jeremiah 23.1-6; Ephesians 2.11-22; Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

Today's readings have fundamentally one message: God cares!

In Jeremiah, God cares that his people have been abandoned; God cares that his people lack leadership; God cares that his people need a shepherd.

In Ephesians we find that that Jews have no monopoly on God; that Gentile Lives Matter; and that the world's outsiders are God's insiders.

And in Mark we hear that, even on what was meant to be a day off, Jesus is moved with gut-churning compassion for the crowd and feeds them and heals them and meets them in their need.



Icon of Christ the healer

But today's Gospel doesn't just make the theological statement that 'God cares', it also makes the political statement that 'the people knew and believed He cares', and that's political, because it tells us where true leadership lies, whose message the people follow, and how that message changes how people live and act.

If the message that 'God cares' wasn't changing their lives:

- why would the people be traipsing all over the region to listen to his teaching?
- why would they be missing their tea and going hungry at his flash mob rallies?
- and why would they be pressing forward to touch the fringe of his garment?

God cares! And the people know it!

Friends, this isn't the sermon I wrote on Monday for today. That went in the bin as the news unfolded this week.

The stories of migrants reaching the shores of Europe only to have their boats pushed back into the treacherous waters and having bullets fired at them. God cares, but do they know it?

And then, in the past couple of days, watching those devastating floods in Europe drowning lives and homes and hopes just as they were finally emerging from Covid. God cares, but do they know it?

In migrant camps around the world, in churches in flood-stricken towns, and in every place where there is conflict and persecution, these very same readings we have heard will be read today.

'God cares' – the preacher will say – but will the people know it? Will they trust it? Will they believe it?





There's an old chorus<sup>1</sup> based on today's Gospel which runs:

'Reach out and touch the Lord  
as He goes by;  
you'll find He's not too busy  
to hear your heart's cry.  
He's passing by this moment  
your needs to supply;  
reach out and touch the Lord  
as He goes by.'

Friends, God cares! God cares about the migrants. God cares about the flood victims. And God cares about whatever you and I are having to face in our own lives right now, whether it's chronic pain, troubles in our relationships, depression, loneliness, addiction.

God cares. But do we know it? Do we believe it?

Today, at this altar, God shows us he cares. He breaks bread for us and offers to feed us. Today in our worship God pours out his Spirit upon us and offers to heal us. The question is: Do we trust it? Do we believe it?

May God have mercy on us this week. May he give us the faith to believe he cares. And may he give us the courage to reach out to others to let them know 'God cares!'

Amen.

<sup>1</sup> You'll find this version of Bill Harmon's chorus in *Mission Praise* 569