

**Lectionary readings: Jonah 3: 10 - 4: 11; Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-45; Philippians 1: 21-30; Matthew 20: 1-16**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Jonah 3-4:** Jonah said, *'I knew you were sheer grace and mercy ... rich in love...'* But this is not the kind of God Jonah wants. He wants a God who will destroy the people of Nineveh. He wants a God made in his own image. But God will not be manipulated by anyone; He always acts out of who He truly is. We are so like Jonah: we have created a god in our own image. We're constantly being invited to reflect on our image of God and constantly reminded of the amazing generosity with which God acts. So let's give thought this week to how we see God and ask for grace to act with the same extravagant generosity to others as God does to us.
- **Psalm 105:** The Psalmist is urging us to give thanks to the Lord and sing God's praises, telling everyone about His miracles. By the way, what miracles have you experienced recently? That might be good for us to reflect on this week. An attitude of gratitude makes a huge difference to life. Let's cultivate such an attitude as we go through this week; when tempted to grumble or complain, or criticise, let's instead find something to give thanks for. v4 in Psalms for Praying: *'Seek the One who is life, your strength; walk harmoniously in Love's Presence.'* This week let's walk in the presence of the One who is Love, so that we become Love to others.
- **Philippians 1:** *'Live in such a way that you are a credit to the message of Christ,'* Paul says. (The Message v27) It might be good for us to reflect on what this means. Paul also calls us to unity and to share the same vision.

This is relevant to all of us, whatever church we belong to. It doesn't mean we all have to believe the same things; but let's be one in our commitment to Jesus Christ and to one another. And let's re-ignite the vision of what we are about as the Christian church in our community.

- **Matthew 20:** Once again, we are face to face with our God, a God of grace, a God whose love is all-inclusive. We find it difficult to believe in a God like this. We, like the workers who were hired first, would have been filled with righteous indignation, boiling over with resentment at the unfairness of it all. God is a generous God, extravagantly generous, pouring out His love on all, deserving and undeserving. But the truth is that we are all undeserving, and yet God goes on pouring out His love and grace on us, lavishing His gifts of love and joy and peace and kindness. We need to smash the image we have of God and open ourselves more and more to the mystery of God's love, a love we will never be able to plumb the depths of. And, of course, when we realise how God treats us - with infinite grace and compassion - we have to go out and do likewise. Perhaps that's what frightens us!

**A prayer**

Lord, Your generosity knows no bounds. You are holding out to each one of us every moment Your gifts of goodness, love, forgiveness, kindness, joy, peace, compassion and so much more. And You are inviting each one of us to become like You in generosity, going out towards others with all the gifts You have shared with us. May we this week become a little more like You as we open ourselves to You to receive all You want to give us and then selflessly give ourselves to those around us in Christlike love. Amen.