

Can you run on water!

2 Kings 4^{42-end}; Psalm 145¹⁰⁻¹⁹; Ephesians 3^{14-end}; John 6¹⁻²¹

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we ask or imagine, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations. [Ephesians 3²⁰⁻²¹]

What limits your faith?

What do you think God can do?

What do you think that God can do for you?

What do you think that God can do through you?

When I first looked at the readings for today I thought that there was a clear connection between 2 Kings, the Psalm and the Gospel - they are all about God's miraculous superfluity of providing things to eat: Elisha. Like Jesus, trusted God to multiply food and the left-overs were more than the amount they started with.

At that point, I confess, that I thought the Epistle was misplaced - Paul being effulgent about what God in Christ does in and for the believer. What does that have to do with feeding people?

But when you take them all together they challenge the limits we put on faith itself. What matters is the sort of God you believe in.

For a God who can fill you and me **with all the fullness of God** providing a few snacks for the school of Prophets at Gilgal or the crowds listening to Jesus is but small change!

For a God who can do **far more than we can ever ask or imagine** walking on water 3 4 4 miles from the shore in the middle of a storm or propelling a ship to where it needed to be without human assistance isn't a big deal!

When is the last time you experienced or witnessed a miracle?

The greatest problem is that we are fairly disbelieving in how we live our lives - if God turned up (and we recognised his action) we would be as surprised as the disciples seeing Jesus walking towards them on the water!

Just one word of warning - beware what you ask for: God may take you at your word.

Allow me a personal story (forgive me if you have heard it before).

My twin sister was to marry - I confess that in my gentle and subtle way I had told her, when the engagement was announced, that he was wrong for her. When the wedding invitation arrived at College in London the date set was the weekend before exams. That, together with my dislike of the chap, meant I made the decision that I wouldn't go. The problem came when one of my much holier colleagues asked me if I had prayed about it. I hadn't. I remember it distinctly, going to the chapel on a Monday evening and saying to God that he would have to let me know if he wanted me to go (and the proof of that would be by providing the bus fare). It was going to cost £18.20 - a lot of money for a poor student in 1983. Next morning there was an envelope in my pigeon-hole, posted on the Saturday previous from Dorchester. I opened the envelope and it had come from a couple with whom I had lunch after preaching in their Church some six months before - they had no way of knowing about my circumstances. In the envelope was a cheque for £18.20 with a simple post-it note saying, 'we felt you needed this!' I went to the wedding! It didn't last!

Why did God answer me and yet appears silent to the prayers of others - I don't know: that is a matter of us letting go of the answer when we hand it to God. But I did have to do something that I didn't want to - a lesson learnt.

What matters today is not swapping stories about things in the past - they are only encouragements for greater things in the future. What matters is to ask ourselves if we have faith for today and the courage to allow God to answer.