

David and the shew (holy) bread – 1 Sam 21 1-6 and Matt 12:1-8

In each lesson this term we have seen that the Old Testament is full of signposts pointing to Jesus. This reminds us that God planned right from the beginning that he Son would come and die to save those who believe in him. This week's story contains another sign picture.

One day Jesus and his disciples walked through a wheat field. As they walked the disciples had broken off some of the ripened wheat and crumbled the seeds so they could eat them and satisfy their hunger. This behaviour wouldn't have bothered anyone if it had not been God's holy day. Over the years the Jewish leaders had made up a whole string of laws (31 altogether) about what could and could not be done on God's day if one wanted to be right with God. They believed therefore that the disciples had disobeyed these rules when they reaped and ground the wheat to make a meal! As so they pounced on Jesus and accused him of not caring about God's laws although he pretended to be godly!

Jesus didn't try to argue with them about their rules. Instead he reminded them of what had happened when David and his friends had been hungry.

Saul hated David because he saw that God loved him. And so he set out to hunt him down and kill him. David had to stay out of sight but one day he was desperate for food for himself and his men. So he went to Ahimelek, the priest, and asked for help. The priest saw that this young man loved God deeply and perhaps knew that God had already chosen him to be the next king. Therefore he allowed him to take the holy bread from God's altar. This was supposed to be kept for the priests to eat but Ahimelek used what God had given him to help someone in need. This showed that he understood what God would want.

Jesus was claiming that he was like David and that the leaders should be like Ahimelek. The leaders couldn't answer him, but it didn't make them any less angry. They couldn't get past their anger to see that Jesus was actually God. If the leaders had remembered that God was holy and merciful, they would have pleased God much more than they did when they made a big show out of obeying their 31 laws. God values mercy and kindness. But the leaders

thought that Jesus had got it all wrong and they began to plan to get rid of him just as Saul had hunted for David.

