



Worship at Home—31 January 2021

Rev Easter Smart



Opening Call To Worship

We are people created to praise God!
We worship the God who has said, "Yes!" to humanity in Jesus Christ
God has made this day
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Glory be to God, Creator Christ, Spirit of Holiness,
Giver of all good gifts.
Let us worship the Living God

Prayer

Almighty God, through many and various ways you come to us.
You have reached out to us in Jesus Christ, you have touched us with your Spirit; and we have turned toward you,
seeking to love as we are loved.
Clear our minds and capture our hearts today
As we reflect together
On the gifts of new life granted to us through faith in Jesus

We want to be righteous in your sight O God
But we confess we sometimes find it tough to be Your Disciples
In a chaotic world where crisis continue.
There is much anxiety and doubt
Sadness, isolation and stress
Due to the lockdown and losses of a Pandemic time
Rescue us Lord in our times of wavering and fear
Grant us anew a real and vibrant confidence
in your promises which never fail.

Remind us that your power over sin and death offers ever new possibilities
For living victoriously day by day.
And so let us lay claim to your promises of forgiveness and mercy
Pour out your Comfort upon us that your Spirit
May refresh our thirsty souls with the water of life
And lift us to know ever more deeply
The strength and sustenance of your love
Revealed to us through Jesus, the Lord of Life who taught us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

SCRIPTURES

Mark 1: 21-28

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.



Heather has included a little video for this Sunday linked to the Bible passage. The link is:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/GSxcegzTVAYi9mhj7>

The text is set out below if you are unable to log on.

“Where would you look if you disagreed about the spelling of a word? Or if you had a pain inside your body? Who would you turn to if your car was misbehaving?”

Our answers might seem easy and straightforward – we would look in a dictionary, go to a doctor and take our car to a garage; but which dictionary is the most reliable? Which doctor? Can you wait for a GP appointment or do you need to go to A&E? Which garage is best? How do you decide? Who do you trust to have knowledge and power to help you in situations like these?

Today’s Bible reading from Mark is about Jesus’ authority. Authority is the power to give orders or make decisions; the right to direct or control something or someone. In today’s story we see that Jesus has authority. He has the right to speak about God’s word and explain what it means. He has the power to give orders to the spirit inside the man and command it to leave. Who has authority over your life? Who gets to make decisions for you or control what you do? You, your parents, teachers, political leaders, your best friend, God? Who gets to decide when you go to bed, or what you can or cannot do? Is it the same person in every situation?

Often authority is seen as a negative thing, we want to fight against it. We don’t want to give up our right to make decisions for ourselves. We want to choose when we go to bed, or if we’re allowed to see our friends. And we can probably all think of people who have used their position of authority and power selfishly, with a negative impact. But what about those people who don’t abuse their authority but instead use it to be a positive influence on those around them?

Like Jesus. Jesus was God. He had all power and authority over everything and could have done whatever he liked. But he was humble and gentle and invited people to follow him out of choice rather than force.

The people in the synagogue that day were amazed at Jesus’ words and actions. Through what Jesus says and does we see what God is like and how he wants us to live. Jesus was God but he became human and allowed God to have control over his life. And he invites us to do the same. To welcome God’s authority in our lives. That’s not to say we can’t make decisions for ourselves, but we allow what we know of God and his desires to influence our decisions. We look to Jesus as our role model and do our best to imitate him. In doing so we live the way God wants us to and perhaps we’ll become a positive influence and authority over others. Not for our own glory, but to point to God and lead them to follow him too.

Here’s a challenge for this week – how can we be obedient to those in authority over us? And how can we be an example to others of how we should live?”

Easter’s Meditation

Mark’s Gospel begins with a great sense of urgency. Mark wants us to grasp the immediacy and importance of the Good News. And so he describes these moments where Jesus teaches, Jesus heals, Jesus acts to show us who Jesus is. This is still the season of Epiphany when we celebrate God’s self-revelation to the world in Jesus.

Heather has beautifully explained that Jesus taught as someone with authority like no other. They were amazed at his teaching and his authority. Throughout Mark’s Gospel people would ask, “By what authority does he do these things?” and of course the answer is that his authority comes from God. He gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him. Even the wind and the waves obey him. This was authority and power like no other.

The people of Israel were used to authority and power. They knew the authority of Herod the King who used military might and ruthless cruelty to sustain power. They knew the authority of the Roman Empire whose overlords taxed them and threatened persecution or even execution. They knew the authority of the rulers of the Temple. The educated Pharisees and Sadducees who used the scriptures and laws to exercise authority over people, confining

them to layer upon layer of suspicion, prejudice and class division. They got to decide who was acceptable or not, who was clean or unclean ... who was worthy to worship in the temple and who was untouchable.

Then Jesus came and all that he did seem to fly in the face of all of these earthly authorities. He did not need to rely on physical force or financial control. His power did not control people. It did not threaten or exclude or frighten. My friend told me recently about a king who was only twelve inches tall. He wasn't much of a king but he still made a good ruler!

Jesus' own power was asserted in his teachings and in his ability to free people from exclusion, to free them from sin. And as Mark's gospel says many times, the people were amazed. Jesus power was different from every form of earthly power anyone had ever imagined. This is still the season of Epiphany which means revelation. When Jesus spoke or taught or healed, he was revealing the truth and the wisdom of God, He was proclaiming the sovereign power of God. His power is legitimate. It doesn't depend on the rule of earthly law, not on popularity, nor any human affirmation or domination.

We know that trusting people who have authority can be tough. This week was the Holocaust Memorial Day when we remember the cruel abuses of totalitarian Nazi regime. Even since the 1940's, many authoritarian regimes have imprisoned or murdered innocent people and as followers of Jesus, we are called to stand with those who suffer and to fight against all forms of injustice.

We may think that society has come such a long way to protect the rights of human beings. Certainly the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights was one of the great ideals of the last Century. We trust that in our democratic countries we have laws and checks and balances to bring stability and to try to keep abuses of power and bay. Interestingly, the word 'democracy' has its origins in the Greek language. It combines two shorter words: 'demos' meaning people or citizens with the word Kratos which means power.

The Church of Jesus Christ, however is not merely a human democracy although the Principles of Presbyterianism have had a huge influence. Our Church is called to use its authority to serve God. Even the Kirk has not always used its authority wisely or well. We remember the inquisition, the witch trials and other times when the church colluded with oppressive powers instead of resisting them.

Last week was of Course Burns' Night. Burns had the ability to use poetry and humour to attack the abuses of power and authority in his day. His writings cleverly reveal that he detested some of the two faced attitudes of the dour Calvinist elders of the Church of Scotland. His long poem Holy Willie's prayer pokes fun and ridicule at the self-justified pomposity and bigotry of an elder named Willie Fisher.

When Jesus taught, when he healed and took the oppressed or vulnerable into his arms and blessed them, his light and his love could overshadow all other poor examples of power and influence. His was a power which would seek out the poor and the down trodden, the voiceless and those deprived and welcome all people who would come to him as God's children.

I am reminded of some words from former Moderator, Right Reverend Andrew McLellan who gave a meditation on John 14: 6 with Jesus own Claim, "I am the way."

McLellan reminds us Jesus didn't say Christianity is the way. He didn't say the Church of Scotland is the way. He said "I am the way."

Jesus did not say, "I am the destination." Or "I will be the way." He didn't say, "I will show you the way." When we recognise that he didn't just come to show us or advise us. He has Divine authority when he says to us, "I am the way to life with God. "I came to be for you the way to God. So that with me and through me and in me you will find, life and light, hope and peace. For I in my broken body can reconcile everyone and anyone to God."

The people who met Jesus were amazed at his authority because it was unlike any other because it comes from God. That power is not rooted in might or wealth, cruelty, or control but in a very powerful love, a selfless sacrificial love.

PASTORAL PRAYER

O gracious God,
We praise and glorify You for our adoption as Your children
For the experience of Your love and Your interest in our lives
Our confidence that You guard our lives and You will guide us in future.
In these moments we bring before You, O God,
Those in need of Your active creative love

We pray for those on the threshold of death
May they experience the true life that can be found only in You and,
in the last days, may their time may be lived out with dignity and peace.

Bless all who are bereaved,
Those who have recently just lost someone they love
and those who ache after many long lonely days,
may those who mourn receive comfort,
support and understanding
and begin to find healing and hope.

We pray for those fighting through an illness
Those coping with long term ill health
Watch over all who love and care for them
and support them through the community of faith,
with active love, care and prayer

We pray for those who face danger and even death
for the causes of justice, peace, and reconciliation
in this divided and distraught world.
We pray for refugees and for those who bravely work to rescue others
And fight against injustice, to help humanity
Lord may you bring hope and help to those who find life unbearable.

We pray for those who have lost jobs
For those struggling to feed a family
Or cope with demands of home school. Lord God
Comfort all who cry out silently,
for hope and encouragement,
Sustain them today in the days ahead

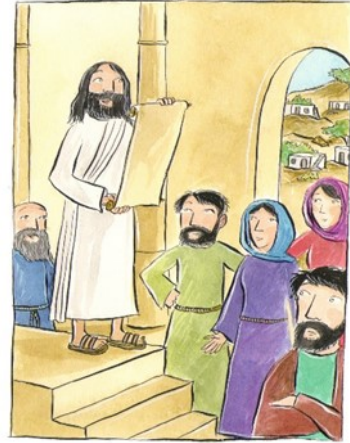
Lord God bless our congregation and the wider church family
Bless us all in these strange days.
Uplift us each and every day with your presence
Renew in us daily the knowledge that we can trust You
and rest easily in Your love,
knowing that nothing in life or death, in the heights or depths
can separate us from Your care and love,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen

Making an impression

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Loving God, we gather in the name of Jesus, to learn how to follow more closely in his footsteps. Thank you that everything you say is true, help us to trust your words and put our faith into action. Draw near to us today, show us your power and love. Amen.



Question...



Who or what has authority over you?
Try to write or draw a list of what you come up with.
Do they have power over you in every situation?

Challenge...

On separate bits of paper write the following roles: police officer, judge, the Queen, teacher, best friend, brother/sister, politician, church leader.

Can you rank these people in order of importance? Who's at the top and the bottom and why? Is it easy to agree on an order?



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Mark 1:21-28. You can read them in a Bible or find them here.

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage. As you read, try to draw some emojis of how different people were feeling throughout the story: amazed, excited, angry, etc.

Talk together...



- * What does the word 'authority' make you think of?
- * The dictionary describes authority as "the power or right to give orders, make decisions and enforce obedience". Can you think of any examples of people using authority well or badly?
- * How does today's story show Jesus' authority?
- * How was Jesus different from the other teachers?
- * Why did Jesus have power over the spirit inside the man?
- * What makes a good leader?
- * Is Jesus a good leader? (Try to give some reasons for your answer!)
- * One thing that makes someone a good leader is that others want to follow them. Jesus calls us to follow him, to learn from him and be like him. How could we do that day by day?

Play together...

Who is the leader? Sit in a circle. Choose one person to leave the room or close their eyes. While they do that pick someone else to be the "leader" whose actions everyone else will copy.

Start following the leader then invite the guesser to come back in/open their eyes and stand in the middle of the circle. They have to guess who the leader is; they have 3 attempts. The leader should change actions every 5-10 seconds so the guesser has a chance to work it out! Is it always obvious to recognise the leader?

Do something...

By Jesus' teaching and his actions, he revealed that he was the son of God. As Christians our words and actions should match up to show what we believe and who we believe in. Often Jesus stood up for those who had very little authority and who were overlooked by society. Who are the people like that in our world today? How could we be like Jesus and help them have a voice or be supported?

Pray together...

Look back at your list of people who have authority over you. What could you pray for each person?

You may want to use this prayer to help you:
Almighty God, you are king over all. All authority in heaven and earth belongs to you.

We thank you for the example Jesus gave us of how to follow you.

We also have earthly leaders who have authority over us, we pray for them. Give them wisdom to lead well. Bless them and guide them. Help us to be obedient and respectful to those in authority. Amen.

This week show your gratitude to someone who has a good influence over you. Make time to say thanks in a some way.

Praise together...



[King of me](#) by Rend Co. Kids

[He is Lord](#) by Elevation Worship

Sunday Club is taking place on Zoom this term. Fortnightly beginning on Sunday 24th January at 4.30pm. We'll have a Bible story, games and activities together for around 45 minutes. If your child would like to join in then contact Heather at familyworker_jvp@outlook.com for details.



Currie Kirk Guild

On Wednesday afternoon this week we held an informal “Coffee, tea and chat” for anyone who just wanted to see others and have a good old natter. Lo and behold 17 of us got together and spent an enjoyable hour catching up with everybody’s news not that any of us have been anywhere exciting. Please think about joining us for the next one.

Our next formal Guild meeting is this Tuesday 2nd February at 10am when our speaker is Tom Baldwin from Life and Work. I am sure it will be very interesting.

Thanks to all those who have donated money for the foodbank – still happy to receive any more and I will get it to Angela as soon as possible.

If you want to join in any Guild meetings or chats, please email me at elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk and I will send you the link. You don’t have to be a Guild member.

Meanwhile stay safe, look after yourselves and each other.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Kirk Contacts

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Dear Friends, please get in touch with Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141

[email currie_kirk@btconnect.com](mailto:email.currie_kirk@btconnect.com)> if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

All Easter’s sermons can be found on the Kirk’s website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk