



WORSHIP AT HOME – 17 OCTOBER 2021
21st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
WORSHIP LEADER Grant Gordon
SCRIPTURE READER Gordon Clephane

CALL TO WORSHIP
(BASED ON THE HYMN THE SERVANT KING)

We come to worship our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.

HYMN—O Jesus, I have promised CH4: 644 (words on page 7)

PRAYER of APPROACH, CONFESSION and THANKSGIVING

Creator God, the architect of the universe; out of chaos you fashioned order; we honour you, for all things are fearfully and wonderfully made. You created this world with all its lush greenery, its rivers, its mountains, its rich soil and roaring seas, the gentle beauty in the pastel sunrise, bringing us the new day and for this we praise you. You gave brightness to the moon and distance to the stars, this you did with wisdom and understanding and for this we praise you.

We thank you for the renewing quality of sleep, for the rhythm of work and rest, the lift of a friendly voice, the visit of a dear friend, the warmth of a child's trust and smile, the excitement of a shared purpose.

We thank you also for the faith that urges us to call you Father. Forgive us for often falling far short of knowing how rich we really are, by gauging our wealth by the wrong things, property owned, money amassed, and people impressed. Here us as we confess our ingratitude, our wastefulness, our arrogance, in believing that we have no need of you. Father may we be more respectful of other people's rights, and more aware of the suffering and poverty of millions whose problems are so much greater than ours.

We thank you for all that life is understood and transformed in your presence and power through Jesus Christ, and in the quiet now hear us as we confess our sins:

These our prayers we offer in the name of our Lord Jesus who taught his friends when they asked him to teach them to pray to say this:

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. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory for ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 10: 35—45 from the Message (read by Gordon Clephane)

The Highest Places of Honour

James and John, Zebedee's sons, came up to him. "Teacher, we have something we want you to do for us."

"What is it? I'll see what I can do."

"Arrange it," they said, "so that we will be awarded the highest places of honour in your glory—one of us at your right, the other at your left."

Jesus said, "You have no idea what you're asking. Are you capable of drinking the cup I drink, of being baptised in the baptism I'm about to be plunged into?"

"Sure," they said. "Why not?"

Jesus said, "Come to think of it, you *will* drink the cup I drink, and be baptised in my baptism. But as to awarding places of honour, that's not my business. There are other arrangements for that."

When the other ten heard of this conversation, they lost their tempers with James and John. Jesus got them together to settle things down. "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around," he said, "and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage."

HYMN—Take my life, Lord, let it be CH4: 502 (words on page 8)

SERMON

THE UPSIDE DOWN MESSAGE

Let us Pray. Breathe on us, O God, that we may be filled with your Spirit and led by your living word. Bless the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts. We ask this in your name. Amen.

The story from today's Gospel of James and John is one of the most challenging and disconcerting stories in the whole Bible because if James and John who knew Jesus personally couldn't incorporate his teachings into their lives how on earth are we to do so? How many of us are able to truly base our lives and actions on the divine definition of greatness—servanthood?



James and John were sons of Zebedee. We don't know much about Zebedee, except that he was a fisherman and that his sons left him alone to follow Jesus. Fishing was probably like most other things in that time; you made a living but had little else to show for it.

When they changed species to fish for people, I wonder if James and John set their sights on bigger rewards. What was all of this sacrifice going to get them? Today's scene is not just embarrassing, it's heart-breaking, because we've seen how James and John left their fishing business and their father to follow Jesus. We've seen that they have sacrificed a lot to continue with Jesus down this road of discipleship. But today we see that ugly question, rearing its self-centred head: what's in it for me?

So here we have these two disciples lobbying for the favourite positions of power; Jesus' right and left! Who gets to sit next to the Prime Minister in the House of Commons? It's not accidental; it's not done by alphabetical order! James and John want the top cabinet posts in Jesus' administration. They want to give orders, not take them; ask the questions, not answer them. It certainly looks like blind ambition on their part. They say to Jesus "It's nice to make the top twelve, Jesus, but we have higher aspirations than those other ten disciples. We would like to reserve a couple of the executive suites. Non-smoking please." How insensitive can you get?! It's insensitive to Jesus, but it's also cruel to other disciples.

The impudence and lack of understanding of James and John is beyond belief. How could two people who are so close to Jesus miss the boat so completely? Did they forget the encounter with the rich man that occurred just before their request? Or the encounter with the little children? And have they not heard Jesus' own prediction of what was soon to happen to him? In light of all of this, their request in applying for leadership positions is truly astounding.

And it angers their fellow disciples. But what seems to anger the other disciples is not so much that James and John have misunderstood Jesus' teachings—which could perhaps be justified—but that James and John went to Jesus requesting a place of power ahead of the rest of them. They do not seem to be acting out of righteous indignation; rather, it appears that they are jealous. And what follows in Jesus' loving response to them all, is one of the most memorable dialogues in the New Testament. In these eleven verses, Jesus emphasises the importance of humility and service. He insists that self-giving service is the only greatness recognised by God, and only those who give of themselves for others will be the big winners with God. In so many words, Jesus insists that we must climb down the ladder to greatness. In other words, instead of ambitiously seeking to climb the ladder and attain greatness, we must sacrificially serve others. Jesus reveals that he is the King of an upside-down kingdom. His rules go against the grain of what our world says.

By this point in his ministry Jesus probably knew that he would not survive the opposition of those whose vested interests he was questioning, but he had hoped that his mission would live on and grow. For that to happen his disciples had to understand his upside-down message. They had to have understood it. It must have seemed at that moment that the twelve were just like everyone else; they wanted the best for themselves! All of his sermons asked people to turn their expectations upside down and inside out—and here these two were, and here the twelve were, as if they had heard and understood nothing.

How should we think about these two who were so forward that they not only wanted to stand out from the crowd, they also wanted to stand ahead of the other disciples and have the highest positions of power and privilege that they believed Jesus could grant. Maybe they thought Jesus had an easy time talking, healing, and feeding. People often assume that a genius is someone who does things without much effort at all. It just happens. They forget that genius is ten percent inspiration, and ninety percent perspiration.

Should we regard them as being overly ambitious? Should we think less of them because they quite clearly seem to think too much of themselves? All of us have inside us somewhere James and John, all of us, in some part of our hearts and minds would rather be served than serve.

Following Jesus is not about power. Following Jesus is not about getting to be first in line for the best seats in the house. Following Jesus does not get us a seat at the head table at the heavenly banquet. Following Jesus is about servanthood. Faithfulness has its own rewards, but these rewards are not about wealth and power and honour.

Life has its ups and downs. And that's just as true for the great and the good as it is for most people. Indeed, history is littered with examples of the mighty and powerful falling spectacularly from grace. Even kings and queens haven't been immune, with several starting off their lives in the lap of luxury but ending them at the bottom of the pile.

From our school days we might remember Napoleon Bonaparte, one of the greatest military leaders of all time until his fall from grace at Waterloo in 1815. From the sporting world there is Lance Armstrong the former professional road racing cyclist who in 2012 was stripped of his seven consecutive Tour de France titles from 1999 to 2005 after a doping investigation and his admission to using performance enhancing drugs. Or there is the Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein found guilty of various sexual assaults in 2020. And I'm sure you can think of many other people who have fallen from grace and fallen hard.

All around us there are examples of the secular quest for greatness and its often-accompanying spectacular fall. The Credit Crunch of 2008 which affected so many people has been a huge example of how secular notions of power, wealth and greatness are so flimsy, so fragile, so built out of a 'confidence' that has no true foundation. The wealth that as Jesus says, will corrupt and decay.

Wherever we look in politics, business, charity the arts or the Church we face the problem of how to align the interests of leaders with the interests of the followers as well with the interest of the overall mission.

From the James and John story it is clear that what God wills for us is humility and service for others—not the grasping of power to ourselves. Not in lording it over others; not in demanding we get your own way; not in thinking of ourselves more highly than everyone else; not falling into the trap of pushing other people down because we feel the need to push ourselves up, but in being a servant. Not a doormat; not a person of no consequence; not a person who does not matter but a person who has helped stop hearts from breaking; who has fed the hungry and given water to the thirsty and used what power we have to make life better for the “least of these”.

Yes, we may become tired of all the people who ask us to care, we may become tired of the guilt we feel for feeling this way, and we may become tired of the fact that there is so much that needs caring for.

So, what are we to do? What are we do in the face of the needs of the world? What are we to do in the face of Christ's demand that we serve one another, that we care for one another? What are we to do in the face of the guilt trips that we either lay on ourselves or which get laid on us by others?

We are not to be like James and John, sons of Zebedee, seeking glory, or power, or self-advancement—or simply seeking to avoid the work of caring, rather we are to do what is right—we are called to truly care about others and to help them. This is what the good news of Jesus Christ is about in our daily lives: having a servant attitude—a servant who cares about his or her job and wants to do it right—and then does it. That is the way. That is my way, says Jesus. Be a servant says Jesus. Be a servant, says the Servant-King. So be it. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

God of all people and places, of all times and stories, we open our hearts to your world and all its people, bringing our hopes and our fears, and ready to be transformed in our thoughts and our actions.

We pray this morning for those for whom everything is dark and black, who see no light to walk towards, who feel that even the best of things has become shrouded. Lord may their darkness be light to you and may they see you shining before them.

We bring before you those for whom life is not at all easy through money problems or health problems or family problems or problems known only to you.

In this world of Covid we pray for vaccines across the whole globe. We pray for those who have been deeply affected by the Covid pandemic. We think of those who have lost loved ones; those whose jobs and income have disappeared; those who are fearful for what the future will bring for them and their families. We think of the lost opportunities, the changes in life direction, the unsettling of assumptions.

We pray for those affected by conflict or war who find themselves exiled from their homes, driven to further shore, who fail to find a place of welcome, Lord may your hand guide and lead them.

We pray for courage in our politicians and for directness and diversity from our leaders. We pray for our economy to emerge fairer and greener from the pandemic. In this world where lies are told we pray for truthfulness and kindness on social media and for humility and courage in our press.

Lord, the earth is part of your beautiful creation and so we pray for wisdom and guidance for those leading discussions at the forthcoming COP26 global climate change conference in Glasgow. We bring before you our leaders involved in momentous decisions; also those whose lives are most blighted by climate injustice, often the poorest and most marginalised and we ask that the voices of those most deeply impacted by climate injustice is heard over these coming weeks. We pray also for those working on behalf of the Church in relation to COP26, including a chaplaincy provision offered through Glasgow Cathedral.

Gracious and loving God we all have people and situations that are a concern to us, in the silence we bring them before you now ...

Into your loving hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abundant grace and mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Amen.

Our final Hymn is a very beautiful recording of **Brother, sister, let me serve you** performed by the Northumbria Community Music Group and to be found in **CH4** as **Hymn No 694**.
(words on page 9)

BLESSING

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself; the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service; and the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and evermore.

Amen

Kirk Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Easter Smart—Tel: 449 4719 email: esmart@churchofscotland.org.uk

Family worker: Heather Merriman email: Familyworker_JVP@outlook.com

Pastoral Coordinator: Gordon Clephane—449 2313

Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141

email currie_kirk@btconnect.com> if you need anything.

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

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

CH4 644 - O JESUS, I HAVE PROMISED

1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be now and always near me,
my Master and my friend:
I shall not fear the battle
if you art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou will be my guide.

2 Oh, let me feel you near me;
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me, and within;
but, Jesus, draw still nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

3 Oh, let me hear you speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
Oh, speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
true guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, you hast promised
to all who follow you,
that where thou art in glory
your servant shall be too;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
now give me grace to follow,
my Master and my friend.

CH4 502

TAKE MY LIFE, LORD, LET IT BE

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord to Thee;
take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless
praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love;
take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing, always, only, for my King;
take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine:
take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store:
take myself, and I will be ever, only, all, for Thee.

CH4 694

BROTHER, SISTER, LET ME SERVE YOU

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.



Currie Kirk Guild

First of all it was lovely to see so many of you at the Rededication Service and I hope that those of you who watched *via* Youtube enjoyed it as much as we did.

There is a great deal happening in the next few weeks. This Tuesday, 19 October, we are meeting at 2pm when Lucy Colman will be speaking about “Home for Good” which is our chosen project for this session.

On Saturday 23 October from 10—12 we will be holding a slimmed down coffee morning to raise funds for “Home for Good”. Due to limited numbers I would ask you to buy tickets only if you intend to be there. Otherwise a donation will be gratefully accepted. Tickets cost £3 and will be available after church this Sunday and at the Guild meeting next Tuesday.

There will be no home baking due to CofS covid guidance. There will be a tombola for which donations would be gratefully received. Please bring them to the Guild next Tuesday. Hopefully we will be raffling one of Peter Sawkins’ cakes as well as a copy of his book. There may even be quiz sheets to purchase.

On Tuesday 2 November we will be meeting at 10 am when our speaker will be Jane Walker on “Origins of Community Nursing”.

As always, if you require any further information, please phone 466-3472 or email elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk

Louise Lamont Guild President

Please get in touch with Gordon if you are able to help with transporting those who require help to get to Church. Tel: 449 2313.

It would be greatly appreciated.

Fresh Start

We are collecting items once again:

Dishes and Cutlery
Tea towels and cleaning materials.
Pots, pans and utensils
Curtains, bed linen and Towels



No duvets , cups and saucers or bric-a-brac please.

I can pick items up from your home or you can take them to the Gibson Craig .

Please contact Christine Wilson 538 2567
or Nina 451 5141 to arrange.

NO BOOKING REQUIRED FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU ON SUNDAY

Current regulations require:

- ◆ face masks must still be worn.
- ◆ worship still requires that we stick to the one-metre social distance rule.
- ◆ There will be sanitizing stations.

URGENT

The Kirk is urgently in need of CLEANERS. Can you join the rota? Please give it your urgent attention. The more cleaners that volunteer the less onerous the task.

The Kirk is also having a deep clean by professionals which should make the work-load lighter.



All equipment is provided.

**Please get in touch with Agnes on 449 5822
if you are able to “lend a hand”**



SUNDAY SERMON SHEETS

Please note that as from this Sunday 17 October the Sermon Sheets will no longer be produced.

The Service will be available on YouTube.

If you are unable to access YouTube please contact Nina who will arrange for a CD disc to be delivered.

If you require a CD player the church will provide one—contact Gordon or Nina.

2021 Shoebox Appeal

We are going ahead with our annual Shoebox project which brings joy to many in need at Christmas throughout Eastern Europe. Similar to last year, if you do not have a box then a shoe bag can be used (12" by 15"). If you'd like a leaflet there are some outside the office, some in the Gibson Craig Halls, contact Nina in the office or any member of MOF—Heather Merriman, Viola MacPhail, Christine Wilson, June Deuchars, John Macaulay, Hamish Leal, Catherine Clephane, or Shona Moyes.

The essential items are toothbrush and toothpaste, underwear, soap, sweets, toy/gift, scarf, hat and gloves. Other items can be added to complete the box/bag depending on who you choose to complete the gifts for.

Please remember to wrap the lid and the box separately to allow Customs to make any necessary checks. The deadline for handing these boxes in is **Sunday 24th October**. Please contact any of the above people if you are unable to hand in to the office.

Thanks,
Fiona Pigott

The Kirk News

The Kirk News—comes out of lockdown!

Articles for the December/January issue of the Kirk News should be in the hands of the Editor by FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER. isobelwebber@btinternet.com or hand a written copy into the Kirk Office.

Please let Nina know if you are able to continue with your distribution list.

Also if you are able to help distribute the Christmas Card.

Many thanks.