



Worship at Home—20 June 2021

Call to Worship

God of big and God of small,
God of short and God of tall,
God who calls and uses all,
In worship make us one.
Alleluia, alleluia, praise be to your name.

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

God, we thank you
that as we gather in worship today,
you make space for each of us.
You call us and you equip us.
You love us and you welcome us.
You invite us to worship you,
knowing who and what we are,
assuring us that there is room for us
in your house, among your people,
and a place for us in your kingdom.

Give us security in your love
and your calling
so that we will always be able
to make room for others,
to appreciate their gifts
may be more useful or creative than ours.

God who embraces us in welcome,
as we experience your forgiveness
may we grow in confidence of your love
so that our arms open wider
to embrace others in your name.

In Jesus' name we 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

Scripture Reading—Mark 4: 35-41—Jim Ure

Jesus Stills a Storm

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'



Father's Day—Heather

Today is Father's Day and so we wanted to acknowledge that in some way, the same as we recognise Mother's Day in March. Not only to celebrate earthly father figures, but God as our heavenly father. What do you think of when you hear the word 'father' or 'dad'? Is it a positive or negative thing for you? I realise that for some people, today might be a difficult day for many reasons—we acknowledge that. Whatever your experience of earthly father figures, we want to remember and be assured that God is a good father, one we can depend on, and we want to focus on that for the next few minutes.



If you were to describe what a father should be like, what would you say?

A good father provides for his children, loves them completely, teaches them right from wrong, is a role model leading by example, spends time with his children, is supportive and protects his family.

How many of those characteristics could we apply to God? I think all of them; and perhaps there are others that apply to God that we can't apply to earthly fathers. We are made in the image of God, and yet whether we are father, mother, son, daughter or anything else, all of us fall short of the perfection of who God is at some stage.

But God never fails us, and his love is unconditional.

In today's story from Mark, we read of the disciples being terrified on a boat in the middle of the storm. They cry out to Jesus saying, "Don't you care?" Jesus' response is to calm the storm, to bring peace to the situation and to remind the disciples that they should trust him and have faith, he is more powerful than the storm.

Jesus is God in human form, he is God in a way we can see. Jesus reflects the image of Father God to the disciples—he protects them, teaches them, loves them unconditionally. Instead of getting angry or upset or disappointed that they didn't seem to trust him, Jesus reacts out of love and care for his disciples.

Isaiah 41:13 says, *"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, "Do not fear; I will help you.""*

When we face stormy situations, God our Father says, I'm here with you, don't be afraid, take my hand and we'll walk through it together.

So, whether your earthly father figure is good or not, whether he is present or not, God is the one we can always depend on for security, protection, encouragement and love.

Father of all, we thank you for your loving kindness and care for us.

Thank you for giving us families, to mirror your love and to teach us to love others.

We thank you especially today for our fathers and all that they do for us.

Bless them and uphold them, that they may be shining examples of fatherhood and reflect your love to their children.

Give them love, wisdom, patience, courage and strength.

We thank you for being our perfect Father, the one we can always depend on and who loves us unconditionally.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SERMON

Well this is Father's Day when we offer to God our gratitude for our earthly fathers, and father-figures as well as to God, our heavenly Father. It is important sometimes to step back and reflect and remember all the good things our Father's have given us and done for us. It doesn't always end when we grow up. I feel very very lucky to be here with Dad, helping around the house and helping him get about without putting any weight on his foot. The two things his foot cannot have are weight and water. Until his stitches heal and the ankle bone sets a little, for the next while at least. As independent as he is, he is having to adjust to a new regime. But he is still Dad, listening and laughing as ever.

There was a cartoon on Facebook with a Father and a son in a canoe about to go over a steep water fall. The father has grabbed hold of an over-hanging branch with both hands while his feet are holding onto the canoe with his son. The caption underneath reads, "Rule number one: Don't panic"

Panic, according to the dictionary is a sudden and over-powering fright. The word is derived from Pan, the mythological god of the woods, who had a reputation for generating panic or fear in unsuspecting humans.

BYRON is my friend, who is a Methodist Minister near here. He was helping to interview Camp Counsellors. Summer Camps are a big thing over here. One chap they interviewed was very old school. When it came to the interview question, "what methods would you use to discipline badly behaved campers." He replied, "well, I find leaving kids overnight in a dark creepy wood is an effective form of punishment." Well, needless to say they didn't hire that chap.

Most of us at some time or another have experienced a feeling of panic. Once, whilst driving with Darren in Mallorca around hair bends and to the right of the car where I was sitting was a steep drop to one's death if the car went off the road. There were no rails. I said to Darren. Stop the Car. I had to get out. I would rather walk. I could feel the palpitations. They say don't look down. Well, I had looked down. That was enough.

Just last week, after one of Dad's hospital check-ups the air was hot and sticky and as we were driving home the sky seemed to turn black. The wind started to blow and branches were flying off trees. Then the heavens opened, literally it was as if a tap had been turned on. I could see nothing ahead for the water pouring down, other than the vague sight of the emergency flashing lights of a truck in front and the road quickly became a river. There was a flash flood and at times we were driving through three feet of water. I was so glad to have Dad in the car. He knew the route. He knew of a small parking lot nearby where we could pull in. We just had to wait. So even with a broken ankle, Dad was able to help me not to panic.

Today's scripture is a story of a storm. This time it was the disciples who panicked. It was the end of a long, but great day on the western shores of Galilee. Jesus had been teaching and healing and the throngs following him were deeply moved by these sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God . . . now, Jesus instructed his disciples to sail over to the other side. This was significant because the Eastern shore of the sea of Galilee was gentile territory. He wanted to take his ministry further . . . but he is very understandably tired after his long exhausting day. And so Jesus decided to take a nap in the boat. Sometimes we forget that Jesus was human just like we are and he gets tired too.

Just like my drive with Dad, the suddenness and ferocity of the storm on the Galilean sea was exceptional. Even though many of the disciples were experienced sailors, they knew this wild squall was a dangerous situation. As the wind whirled and the and the waves swelled, they looked over at Jesus sleeping in the stern of the boat as if nothing was going on. They panicked. They knew this might be life or death. One big swell more and the boat could capsize. Fearful and screaming for help, they shouted, to Jesus, "Don't you care if we perish?"

What were they to do if the son of God went to sleep in their time of catastrophe? Panic. They panicked. There is humour in this story . . . Jesus seems most annoyed that his nap has been interrupted. He rebukes the wind, "Be Still, Be Calm. Peace. Be still." We have the impression that he is just as much rebuking the disciples as the wind and the sea.

In many ways this story is not just about an experience. It is an allegory through which Jesus teaches us and gives us tools to get through life. It is clear that Jesus was not simply calming the waves and the sea. Most of what he did in that moment was to . . . calm the minds of his boat companions. The biggest storm that evening was not raging just on the wind and water, but in the hearts and minds of the disciples.

It is easy to put ourselves in their place. We can sense their fear. It was paralyzing. This is what fear often does, it sends us into a spiral of panic. I am told by friends who suffer from severe anxiety that sometimes fear induces a panic attack, in fact sometimes just being afraid of having a panic attack

causes more one. Fear is a natural instinct to danger. Our bodies have developed a flight or flee instinct. Our heart races in case we need to run. Our adrenalin floods our bodies heightening our awareness, making us breathe faster . . . panic can be physical as well as mental. Whatever it was, those disciples were paralyzed by the fear.

Jesus places an idea into our lives. Something that can help us cope with life's storms, its billows and troughs, highs and lows. Jesus spoke to them as he speaks to us: trust God in the storms of life. Try to trust the Divine power of FAITH, over the human Power of FEAR. In times of crisis, it is natural to be afraid and anxious but these are the precise times when we must put our faith in God to work. Many of the early followers of Jesus endured persecution, imprisonment, and even martyrdom, yet somehow their faith enabled them to endure their trials and tribulations.

Someone sent Dad a lovely Card that reads:

"The most beautiful stones have been polished by lifes strongest storms . . . you'll get through this and come out even stronger than you were before."

I know that storms of life are a plenty. This Sunday is not only Father's Day. The Church of Scotland asks us on 20th June to commemorate Sanctuary Day. This is a day to celebrate and give thanks for fathers and role models, but also a day to remember fathers and mothers with their children trying to flee danger and persecution. Sanctuary Sunday encourages us as Christians to pray for refugees and asylum seekers . . . their safety in the United Kingdom has become so political.

As you know, many refugees and migrants are still trying to cross the English Channel. There are opportunists who take their money and put them into unsafe boats so that a storm, even a large wave might cost lives. Parents dream dreams for their children to find safety and welfare away from oppression, violence and suppression. Sometimes in trying to flee to safety they face worse storms. Abuse, extortion, slavery, death. And so we pray today, this Sanctuary Sunday not only for fathers but for refugees and asylum seekers too. They are also families. For these people the storms they flee are often international conflict, military coups, tribal warfare, corrupt, cruel, regimes, even genocide. As a result, ordinary people like you and me, can be separated from loved ones for long periods of time. Today as we remember our fathers and mothers who raised us and kept us safe, we also remember too God's love, those fathers and mothers who feel they cannot keep their children safe.

It is good to see that the democratic nations within Europe, the UK and the USA have been meeting to try to work out safer and better solutions to the worlds crises and storms.

Many storms are currently due to climate change too: Tornados, Cyclones, Hurricanes, Typhoons. Almost like a father naming a new-born child, we go through the alphabet of storm names quicker than we can think. And so let us pray to God that our nations and leaders, can find solutions that save lives.

I wonder what storms you have experienced in your lives? It doesn't take a lot to feel fear. One day we may think we are bobbing along nicely, life is plain sailing. Then without warning we can face a storm: a diagnosis, a bereavement, cancer treatments, broken bones. Covid has brought its own storms to many lives; storms of anxiety and isolation, job uncertainty, business closures, redundancies, financial hardships . . . even those who have over come Covid itself often endure a storm of long-term health problems. It might be easy to think God is asleep, just as Jesus was asleep in that boat. Where is God in all this Pandemic? If God loves us, why can't we meet and worship and sing in church? It has been a hard old stormy year.

As Christians the best tool we can have in stormy times is prayer. Yes there are self-help guides and a great amount of medical advice that is helpful. But prayer takes us into the Spiritual realm where, no matter the storm, we are at home with God. Following the Christian faith may not prevent storms in our lives, whatever form of crisis, concern or catastrophe. But we are promised that with God, we have a great access to Divine power within us and around us. When we try to channel God, focus on God, sometimes scream and yell at God . . . just as the disciples shouted for Jesus, that is ok. My Dad calls it the PUSH principal. Pray Until Something Happens.

Lockdown rules change and life is still a little uncertain. Storms may still rage, but within us we will gain the peace, the strength, the trust, the patience, to cope, to endure, to find joy and even to laugh.

My Dad is learning he has to be patient. An ankle doesn't heal over night. He is not used to being a patient, never mind being patient. He reminded me that the root of the word patience and patient is patio patere, to suffer. In light of this someone gave him a Mug and on the mug it reads, "Grant me patience, Lord but hurry."

Let's keep laughing. Let's keep praying. Let's keep going. God bless you.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord God we thank you for every blessing you have given us
For the love of family and friends
For rest and work
For good teachers
For kind compassionate neighbours

WE thank you for the song of birds and the beauty of the trees and flowers
We thank you that your love enfolds us from the day of our birth
To the day we may die
And we thank you that you can renew us each day in body mind and spirit
Bless our fathers and grandfathers and father figures

We pray for all families in this area
Grant them your strength and bless them
As we emerge slowly from lockdown life.

God of family,
we bring before You the parents who are weeping and lamenting, who are waiting for their children, whose trace is lost in the sea, in the desert, on railway tracks, in shipping containers and uncertainty: men, women and children who had escaped from the war zones, the famine and poverty of this world , with the hope for a better, safer life.

God of life,
we bring before You our lament for the dead, stranded at the borders of safety,
who died fleeing through deserts, over mountains and seas.

We call to You and join in the cry of all those who sought justice and a better life for themselves and
their children and perished in the process.

God of justice,
we bring before You political leaders, advisers and decision-makers who hold the fate of others in
their hands.

Make them aware of the causes of migration and flight.

Keep their consciences alive so that refugees are offered protection and dignity.

Let them agree rules of residence that are based on human rights and guided by solidarity and
compassion.

God of peace,
give us the strength to be witnesses of the suffering of the world and fill us with the fire of Your spirit
to renew our efforts to serve those in need and give us the grace to welcome, learn about and share
our lives with people who come to live in our communities.

Amen.

Blessing

May God give you strength
to face any giant.
May God persuade you
to meet them with grace
and may what no longer fits
be left behind,
your armour being rather that
of love and truth.

Kirk Contacts

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Thursday 24 June 7 pm—Joint Bible study with Balerno, St James Church Utrecht, Currie Kirk and West Kirk of Calder linked with Polbeth Harwood.

The Bible study will be on ZOOM. If anyone is interested please email AGroenewald@churchofscotland.org.uk

A picture to colour for your Dad



Jesus calms the storm

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 join together today and look to you.
Thank you for being with us throughout
this last week,
For being with us now,
For being with us always.
Remind us today of who you are and how
much you love us.
We give you praise and glory.
Amen.



Question...

Have you ever been out in a storm? What was it like?



Read the Bible...

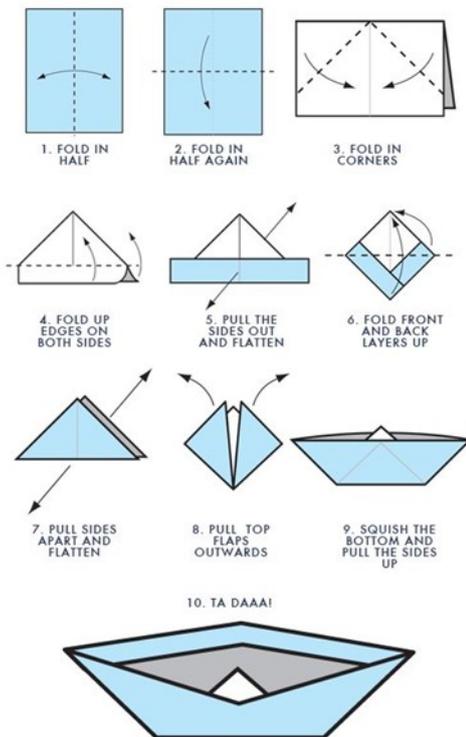
Today's verses are found in Mark 4:35-41. You can read them in a Bible or find them [here](#). Here's a video of the story: [Speed sketch Bible stories: Jesus calms the storm](#)

You could try acting out the story too with one person being Jesus and the others the disciples.

Talk together...



- * What surprises you most in this story?
- * Do you have any questions about what happened? Try and think through these questions together.
- * Look at the questions in the story (verses 38, 40 and 41), do you ever have the same questions? Do you think you could answer them?
- * What do you think we can learn about God from this story?
- * What makes you feel safe?
- * When your safety is threatened, how do you react?
- * When situations are difficult, do you ever ask God "do you care?"?
- * What is the truth about God when we feel in difficulty, in danger or afraid?



Pray together...

You'll need a piece of A4 paper for each person and something to write with.

Write a prayer on your piece of paper, perhaps a particular situation or concern you want to talk to God about.

Then fold your paper into a boat shape using the instructions opposite.

Float your boats in some water and pray over them together.

We bring to God everything, our hopes and fears and dreams, the questions that are too big to answer. See us, hear us and bring us peace.

Play together

Parachute games

Use a parachute or a bedsheet and play your favourite parachute games. Try re-enacting the Bible story using a toy boat or other object on top of the parachute sea.

Paper ball bail out

Crumple up lots of paper or use small play balls. Split into two teams with an area each. Start a timer for 2 minutes. When the timer starts each team begins tossing balls into the opposite teams' area. Keep tossing until the time ends. Then count the balls in your area, the team with the fewest wins.

Praise together...

[Still](#) – Hillsong United

[Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus](#)

[He will hold me fast](#) – Keith & Kristyn Getty

[What a mighty God we serve](#)

