

23RD MAY 2021

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

The Word of God (the Bible) is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but for a weight of glory. (Thomas Watson)

HYMN

O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of life:
Its living streams I've tasted
Which save from grief and strife.
And to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand;
His grace is all-sufficient
As by His wisdom planned.

O I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved's mine;
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His house of wine!
I stand upon His merit;
I know no other stand.
I'm hidden in His presence
And held by His own hand.

The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace:
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory,
And my eternal stand!

PRAYER

Father in heaven, we thank you that Christ is the all sufficient Saviour and His righteousness is an all sufficient righteousness. Lord, we ask in Jesus' precious name that you would give us sight to see the light of Christ. Bless your Word, oh Lord, we pray. Keep Your hand upon us all and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. We pray that Your grace and mercy and peace will be the abiding portion of all Your people both this day and evermore. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING MATTHEW 17: 14-20 (NKJV)

14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,
15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

LORD'S PRAYER

*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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON

The healing of the boy here in Matt. 17:14-20 at first glance seems to be only one more in a series of miraculous healings recorded by Matthew. What makes this one unique is Jesus' emphasis on the role of faith. It is true that faith is prominent in the miracles recorded in chapter 9, but in chapter 17 it is the lack of faith that is emphasised by Jesus.

That God is not dependent on human faith for accomplishing His work is clear from the accounts of other miracles recorded by Matthew. The transfiguration of Jesus immediately prior to the healing of the boy is a prime example. It was a spectacular miracle; yet no human faith was involved. This is also true in the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:13-21) and the four thousand (15:32-38). So, the first thing we need to learn about faith and the power of God is that He is not dependent on our faith to do His work. God will not be hostage to our lack of faith.

The second thing we need to learn, however, is that God often requires our faith in the carrying out of His purposes. We see this in the healing of this boy. Mark, in his account, brings this out sharply in Jesus' conversation with the boy's father. The father, in great distress, said to Jesus: "But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (Mark 9:22). He had already experienced the failure of the disciples, so he was not sure if Jesus could help. His faith at this point may be described as no more than an uncertain hope that Jesus could do what the disciples could not do.

Jesus responded to the father: "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes" (v. 23). Biblical faith may be described in different ways depending on the situation. The description of faith in Hebrews 11:1 as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," was appropriate for the Jewish recipients of the letter, who were facing severe opposition and needed to be encouraged as to the certainty of their hope in Christ.

For the father of the boy, faith would mean believing that Jesus could heal his son. We are often like the father. We may face what seems to be an impossible situation, and because we have prayed a long time without an answer, we begin to doubt that God can answer our prayer. But we must believe that with God nothing is impossible.

Sarah, the wife of Abraham, doubted that God could give them a son in their advanced age, to which God replied, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14). Centuries later, the prophet Jeremiah wavered in his faith when God told him to buy a field in the face of the Chaldeans' invasion (Jer. 32:6-26). Again, God's response was: "Is anything too hard for me?" (v27). To have faith in God, even in the face of unanswered prayer or a seemingly impossible situation, means we continue to believe that He can do what seems impossible to us.

The importance of faith is further emphasised in Jesus' answer to the disciples' question: "Why could we not cast it out?" (Matt. 17:19). He said it was because of their little faith. We are not told in what way their faith was deficient.

We do know that Jesus had previously given them authority over demons to cast them out (Matt. 10:1-8), so why was their faith so weak at this time? Perhaps they presumed that because they had been successful before, they would be at that time. So, we see that faith not only involves a firm reliance on Jesus' power and ability, but also a complete surrender of any confidence in our own.

In Matthew 17 we see an example of God's providence, in connection with a mundane event – the paying of the temple tax. Jesus, as the Son of God, was under no obligation to pay the tax. Yet in order to give no offense, He sent Peter to catch a fish in whose mouth was the required shekel. This brief account raises some questions: How did the shekel get into the mouth of the fish? How did Peter just "happen" to catch that fish and not another one nearby? It is possible that Jesus performed a miracle and created the coin out of nothing in the mouth of the fish.

It is more likely, however, that it was a work of providence. Someone "accidentally" dropped a shekel into the sea. A particular fish grabbed it, and it stuck in its mouth. The fish swam to the exact spot where Peter cast his net and the fish was caught. None of these events was miraculous; yet all of them were necessary to accomplish Jesus' purpose, and Jesus was in control of each one of them. God's power is as much at work in His providence as in His miracles. So, as we struggle with our own faith, or lack of it, in the difficult situations of life, let us believe that God is able, whether through miracles or providence, to care for us.

HYMN

*Majesty, worship his majesty
Unto Jesus be all glory, power and praise
Majesty, kingdom authority flow from his throne
Unto his own his anthem raise
So exalt lift up on high the name of Jesus
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the king
Majesty, worship his majesty
Jesus who died now glorified
King of all kings.*

PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, we pray as You have given us Your Word with the strong consolation of its truth, with the assurance that through faith we are anchored to Jesus Christ, we pray that you would give to each of us a gracious sense that you desire that we should be absolutely convinced of the security that You give us through faith in our beloved Saviour. Lead us into such assurance and its joy and its stability we pray for Jesus Christ our Saviour's sake. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

WORSHIP

Sunday Church services are at 11am and 12.15pm (if required). Seating in the Church is limited to comply with current guidelines. To attend you must contact the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, by Friday at 5pm prior to the service to book a place.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

The Sunday Zoom service is at 6.30pm. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Please continue to take care and stay safe.



HIGHLAND FOODBANK

Please place your donations in the box in the vestibule which can be taken to the depot. For now, the Foodbank is unable to accept beans, pasta, soup and pulses. They are happy to receive rice, long-life fruit juice, UHT milk, sugar, tinned potatoes, ham, corned beef, mince and stew, oatcakes, crackers, tinned custard, coffee, small washing powder and toilet rolls. Monetary donations are also very welcome. Last year 8267 local people were given emergency food parcels. The need is still immense. Thank you.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The next meeting via Zoom will be on Wednesday 27th May at 9.45am. Please email jintys@btinternet.com so that a link may be sent for you to join. We hope to complete our studies of the Letters of John. Look forward to seeing you there.