

# Morning Worship

9<sup>th</sup> August

Church of Scotlands – Upper Tay and Tenandry

## Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our worship this morning.

Let us attend to our souls

And still our minds

And open our hearts

As we sing our first hymn, the 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm, All people that on earth do dwell

1 All people that on earth do dwell,  
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:  
serve him with joy, his praises tell,  
come now before him and rejoice!

2 Know that the Lord is God indeed,  
he formed us all without our aid;  
we are the flock he loves to feed,  
the sheep who by his hand are made.

3 O enter then his gates with praise,  
and in his courts his love proclaim;

give thanks and bless him all your days:  
let every tongue confess his name.

4 For God, our mighty Lord is good,  
his mercy is for ever sure;  
his truth at all times firmly stood,  
and shall from age to age endure.

5 Praise God the Father, God the Son,  
and God the Spirit evermore;  
all praise to God the Three - in - One,  
let heaven rejoice and earth adore!

## Opening Prayer

Dear God,

To you all desires are known

All hearts are open

We do not hide ourselves from you this morning

Forgive us our pretence

Our self-deception

Our fear to go near the parts of ourselves the live in shadow

And by your Spirit, this morning, may we be open to you

So we give to you, in faith, in trust, in hope

Every desire that stirs us

Every thought that echoes around our mind

Every complaint which we wish we could let go

Every conflict we wish we could win

Every question that does not yet have an answer

Every ambition cherished

Every person dear

Every prayer we mouth

All of us

Every blessed thing

That if all of us is open to you

Then all of us may be transformed

And offered back to you.

Help us this morning to see Jesus  
The Christ who created, redeems and is present in the world  
Help us to see him walking on the waters  
Enticing us to walk with him.

Forgive us our sins,  
Our hatred of the light  
Our petty enmities  
Our shallow faith  
Our carefully calculated superiorities  
Our deceit  
And our fear

Forgive us all our sins,  
And in Jesus Christ remake us we pray,

And now hear us in the prayer that Jesus taught us

Our Father in heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your kingdom come  
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven  
Give us today our daily bread  
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil  
For yours is the kingdom  
The power and the glory forever,

AMEN

### **Reading - Jesus Walks on the Water**

Our gospel reading this morning comes from the Matthew 14:22-33

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way<sup>[a]</sup> from the land,<sup>[b]</sup> beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind,<sup>[c]</sup> he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### **Reflection**

Our story today happens after the feeding of the 5,000.

Jesus does a very striking thing.

The moment that the disciples have gathered up all the leftovers  
Before he has dismissed the crowds  
He compels the disciples to get into a boat, ahead of him  
And get to the other side.

This would have been a moment to bask in an incredible catering operation  
In participation in one of the most famous miracles in all human history  
Had just happened  
But Jesus is immediate.  
Get into the boat.

Go, Go, Go,  
You've got to get into the boat now,  
You've got to get aboard.

Jesus wants his disciples out there, on the sea  
And if he has foresight into what is going to happen  
He knows that he is sending them into an encounter with a storm  
At 3-6am, the last watch of the night.

He wants them out there.  
The Greek says that Jesus compelled the disciples to get into that boat.

The word for compulsion, is only used in only one other story in the gospels, the story of the Great Feast where you remember the host of the feast, having been snubbed by his wealthy friends, demands that the poorest, those with disability, those without a home, are welcomed into his feast.

It seems that the two times that God compels the most  
Is to the marginalised to be accommodated in the kingdom of heaven  
And for disciples to be scared witless miles from dry land.

This is an interesting insight into God's priorities  
God's compulsion to welcome the marginalised  
Is matched by God's compulsion to send disciples into danger.

God it seems, is supremely uninterested in our tranquility  
In fact he is passionate about disturbing it.

God is not what is sometimes called a "helicopter parent".

This week our oldest son – Sam, these days built like middle weight boxer, has been visiting his grandfather down in Sussex, not far from Brighton.

On the first day he was down there, Papie – as Grandfather is called, managed to slice part of his finger whilst peeling potatoes. So with blood coming out of this finger, I think prevented going too far by a marigold glove, Papie and Sam drove to the nearest hospital four miles away. Because of Covid though, Sam was not allowed into the hospital, and had to either wait outside or walk the four miles home.

When he phoned us, we were like "he can't walk four miles – he doesn't know where he is, it's the middle of rural Sussex, that place is a hotbed of roadside crime, quick Anna, phone someone, anyone, get him to give him a lift."

So we start phoning Sam, Sam you need to get a lift, you can't possibly survive out there.

It's safe to say that the God who sends his disciples into a boat, onto a big lake, into the night, into a storm,  
Would not be worrying about a well built 15 year old walking a pavement of the English home counties in Broad daylight.

God is quite the opposite,  
Into the boat, into the night, into the storm, he compels them;

And so it is that during the fourth watch of the night – 3-6am  
They are miles from land  
The waves are breaking upon the boat  
The wind is against them

And to add to their terror  
They look at see a figure walking on top of the water  
And they think it is a ghost

As well as being terrified by the natural world  
They are now being terrified by the supernatural world

And who is it that has caused them to be here  
Jesus

Why, because God knows that we must meet him in extremity  
God knows if we only meet God in places which are safe, we will come to believe in a God who is tame  
God knows that if we only meet God in places where we are in control, then we will believe in a god who is under our control.  
If we meet God within the limits, then our image of God is one who stays within neat lines  
But if we meet God when we have come to the end of human limits, then God is no longer a human invention, we meet the God who is real.

The burning bush God,  
The God of the wind  
The God who loves to walk on top of the waves.  
The God who loves to surf.

If the first part of the story is this  
God sends his people into extremity  
So that we can meet God.

So if your life at the moment feels that it has extremity in it,  
If it has wind against you  
Waves battering you  
Ghosts terrifying you

Then be glad because this is the place where you meet the true God  
Not the small god you can no longer believe in  
But the big God who believes in you.  
And do not be afraid of this place,  
You are where God has intended  
This is the place where he will meet with you

This is the place where he will summon you out of the boat  
This is the place where you will walk on water.

So ask him now, "Jesus, where are you"

And ask him now, "Jesus, if it is you, command me to come out of the boat, and to walk with you upon the waters."

May God bless you,  
AMEN

### **Prayer for Others**

Let us say our prayer for others:

Oh God,

It is you who summons us into the boat,  
Into the storm  
Into the dark  
Into the place of the waves

So where we are stormbound  
Darkened  
Battered and weary

Come and be present to us  
To those we love

It is you who summons us out of the boat  
Onto the water  
Onto the impossible  
Closest to our fears

So give us courage to discern where your voice calls  
And give us courage to walk

And where we sink hold us by the hand.

We pray for those we love who need you now....

We pray for those dealing with poverty, with debt, with financial fear...

We pray for those who we do not know, but need our prayers...

Especially we pray for the people of Beirut as they come to terms with this week's explosion  
And we pray for our young people after this week's exam results  
We pray that they will get the grades which reflect their work  
And to walk with confidence into the future to which they are called,

This we ask in the name of Jesus,

AMEN

And now let us sing our closing hymn, "For my sake and the Gospel's Go"

"

For my sake, and the gospel's, go  
and tell redemption's story";  
his heralds answer, "Be it so,  
and thine, Lord, all the glory!"  
They preach his birth, his life, his cross,  
the love of his atonement,  
for whom they count the world but loss,  
his Easter, his enthronement.

Hark, hark, the trump of jubilee  
proclaims to every nation,  
from pole to pole, by land and sea,  
glad tidings of salvation;  
as nearer draws the day of doom,  
while still the battle rages,  
the heav'nly [Dayspring](#) through the gloom  
breaks on the night of ages.

Still on and on the anthems spread  
of alleluia voices,  
in concert with the holy dead  
the warrior church rejoices;  
their snow white robes are washed in blood,  
their golden harps are ringing;  
earth and the paradise of God  
one triumph song are singing.

He comes, whose advent trumpet drowns  
the last of time's evangels,  
Emmanuel crowned with many crowns,  
the Lord of saints and angels;  
O Life, Light, Love, the great I AM,  
triune, who changest never,  
the throne of God and of the Lamb  
is thine, and thine forever.

### **Blessing**

May you not be blessed with shallow ease, but with a life of glorious adventure  
May you not be blessed with lazy comfort, but with the presence of Jesus  
May you not wish for paltry crumbs, but dream of the best of the kingdom

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
May you be blessed,  
From this day  
And forevermore,

AMEN