

2026 06 21 WORSHIP AT HOME

Dear friends,

Our Gospel reading this week could be described as ‘tough love’. Jesus makes great demands on his disciples but equips them to achieve what he asks of them. He is uncompromising in his call on their loyalty but also on his support of them. Being a Christian in this day and age is not an easy ride, but we know that Jesus is always with us to guide us and to strengthen us. Every blessing, Margaret

Call to worship:

Lord, you went to the cross for us. You did not change your mind on the way.

Lead us to know you and trust you so deeply that we do not change our minds when we choose to follow you. Amen

Lord God, as we come to you today, we will hear difficult words. Words we might not expect to hear from you.

You warn us that the road ahead might not always be easy.

We need to look closely at ourselves – make sure that we are ready for whatever comes; not frightened to trust you, whatever you ask us to do; not frightened to take up our cross as we walk your way.

Make us ready, Lord. Amen.

The words to ‘Father, I place into your hands’ by Jenny Hewer [b. 1945]

Singing the Faith 519

1 Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do.

Father, I place into your hands the times that I’ve been through.

Father, I place into your hands the way that I should go,
for I know I always can trust you.

2 Father, I place into your hands my friends and family.

Father, I place into your hands the things that trouble me.

Father, I place into your hands the person I would be,
for I know I always can trust you.

3 Father, we love to see your face, we love to hear your voice.

Father, we love to sing your praise and in your name rejoice.

Father, we love to walk with you and in your presence rest,
for we know we always can trust you.

4 Father, I want to be with you and do the things you do.

Father, I want to speak the words that you are speaking too.

Father, I want to love the ones that you will draw to you,
For I know that I am one with you.

Prayer:

Lord God, sometimes we just need to take time out – to renew ourselves in the knowledge of how wonderfully true and just you are.

You protect us, Lord, and we worship you. Amen.

Lord, sometimes we find your words hard, and, if we don't like them, we zone them out, thinking they can't possibly be meant for us.

Sometimes we treat precious things as if they are two a penny. We are tempted to give up on your ways for it feels too hard to make good choices.

Sometimes we are afraid of making hard decisions – of people hurting us, harming us, hating us. We are sometimes afraid to acknowledge you, Lord.

Forgive us, Lord, and make us ready to follow you. Amen.

With humble hearts, we have confessed our sins.

Jesus forgives all those who are truly penitent.

We live anew in our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Praise be to God. Amen.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, that we are a people of your Word and have the blueprint for how to live our lives. We have the promise that if we lose our life for your sake we will find it.

It's difficult to understand, but we are ready to trust you.

We share in fellowship together and go forth strengthened.

Help us to know when to speak words of peace – and when to refuse to compromise. Amen.

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

Matthew 10: 24-39 taken from the Holy Bible New International Version copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc. Used by permission

The student is not above the teacher, nor the servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the rooftops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn:

‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.’

Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Comment: Jesus has commissioned the twelve disciples to proclaim the good news. Now, in this major teaching block, he instructs them about mission strategies and priorities. He is realistic in anticipating trouble but encourages the disciples by reminding them that their lives are of great value to God. He returns to the theme of false accusations and acknowledges the pressure to abandon the faith but warns that to do so is to risk complete loss. He makes the disciples see that their commitment will save them from destruction. If they entrust their lives to God, nothing can separate them from his love. He will acknowledge them as his own, as someone might acknowledge a child as part of a family. Jesus is creating his own family as he builds his disciple group. These household ties outweigh the commitment of the birth family. Families can become toxic, but God is eternally dependable. In a family-based society, Jesus recognises this is controversial, but he places central value on loyalty to God as mediated through himself. This is expressed as the marginalised lifestyle of someone who 'takes up the cross'. This phrase would have had more shock value in Jesus' time than today. Crucifixion was, literally, an unspeakable death, and Jesus' explicit use of the image must have deeply disturbed his hearers. He is uncompromising in his honesty regarding what discipleship means and expects similar commitment from his disciples. Jesus concludes this section of teaching with a proverb about losing and finding life, used also in rabbinic texts, comforting and strengthening the disciples in their loyalty to him.

Prayer:

We face a world that is sometimes hostile. Grace us with courage, Lord.

We face a world bewildering to the ignorant. Grace us with understanding, Lord.

We face a world that can be very superficial. Grace us with depth, Lord.

We face a world at times of greed and envy. Grace us with simplicity and humility, Lord.

We face a world that can be silent about you. Grace us with wise words, Lord.

Help us remember, Lord, the strength and power of your fullness in Father, Son and Holy Spirit and help us to ask for all the graces we need day by day. Amen.

Close:

Jesus, you call us to follow. You send us out in your power to preach the good news. You challenge us to put you first in our lives. Give us the courage to respond wholeheartedly to this call and to follow you wherever you call us to go. No compromise. Amen.

Jesus, you walked to the cross, and paid the ultimate sacrifice for us, for our freedom.

May we walk with you this week as we learn what it is to truly take up our cross and follow you.

May we shout from the rooftops and burn with your love inside us, so that others may see you too. Amen.

May the blessing of God – Father, Son and Holy Ghost – be with each of us, with those whom we love and those for whom we pray this day and for evermore. Amen.

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