

Worship at Home service Sunday 22nd October 2023 with John Atkin

A call to worship:

I am the Lord, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:5). Come, let us worship the creator God who made each one of us and calls us by name. **Amen**

A prayer of approach:

God of integrity, **May** your word sink deep into our hearts today and move us.

May it leave its mark on our minds and inspire us. **May** it imprint your desires into our actions and guide us. **May** it instil in us a sense of belonging to that which is true and beautiful, so that we draw others closer to you and they too feel a sense of belonging.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

StF 594 Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us.

Lord Jesus Christ
You have come to us
You are one with us
Mary's Son;
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
Pouring Your love and goodness in;
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ,
You have come to us,
Born as one with us,
Mary's Son;
Led out to die on Calvary,
Risen from death to set us free;
Living Lord Jesus, help us see
You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ
I would come to you
live my life for you
Son of God
All your commands I know are true;
Your many gifts will make me new;
Into my life your power breaks through,
Living Lord.

[Living-Lord, Lord Jesus Christ - YouTube](#)

Prayer of confession

Faithful God, forgive us when we mar your image and others don't see your compassion mirrored in our lives.

Forgive us when the mark we leave on the lives of those we encounter is a negative one. Forgive us when we seek only to identify with the powerful and not the vulnerable.

Forgive us when we give our allegiance to that which is not healthy.

Forgive us when we are reluctant to identify as your disciples.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Dear God, we thank you for your gift of forgiveness, and that you remain loyal to us, even when our loyalties drift elsewhere; that, in spite of our mistakes, your grace ensures your imprint on our lives isn't fully erased; that, because of your love we can be confident in belonging, and begin again with your blessing. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Bible readings

**Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96: 1-13;
Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22.**

Prayers of thanksgiving

Creator God, for the living word of your love, we praise you.

For the cross where Christ took on our sin, we praise you.

For the empty tomb where he rose and overcame death, we praise you.

For your holy spirit that emboldened your first disciples, we praise you.

And for giving us the privilege of bearing your mark of belonging, we praise you – today, tomorrow and always.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Lord God, in our corner of the world it isn't easy to really feel the pain of persecution for our faith, but we know that it happens. We pray for those who are persecuted and punished, violated and scarred because of their faith. We pray for those who despite these things speak out and speak up, and witness to you, the living God. We pray for the families of these people that they may be given strength and support in their own faith and discipleship. We pray for those who teach us of you, who unpack your truths, who explain what living a Christian life is and how to follow you.

We pray for those who guide us in times of struggles with our faith, those who stand by us in times of denial and bewilderment. We pray for those who are dying in the faith, and those who are struggling to find their faith before they die. For these and all your witnesses, Lord, we pray. **Amen.**

The 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 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.**

Time to reflect:

In Matthew's passage the paying of taxes to Rome was a contentious issue. Generally, locals were employed to collect the taxes on behalf of the Roman leaders, and they were viewed by their peers as traitors. This was made worse because the role of tax-collector was unpaid, and so there was a custom of collecting a greater amount than that demanded by the emperor, the surplus being kept as a wage for their work.

The question asked of Jesus was therefore intended to cause trouble, Jesus was presented with a likely no-win situation. Speaking in favour of taxes could diminish his popularity among his followers and set him once again at odds with the religious leaders. Speaking against would set him firmly against the Herodian supporters of Rome. Jesus' own question also had the potential to cause trouble. There were various titles given to the emperor. Some of these – Lord, Saviour, Son of God – were clearly offensive to the people. Jesus' answer, however, requires his hearers to reflect, to pray, to use their consciences. However unpopular, there are things that belong to the emperor. More significantly, however, is that all things belong to God. The coins have the mark of the emperor; all of creation has the mark of its maker. This also requires Jesus' hearers to reflect, to pray, to use their consciences, to consider how this works out in practice.

God can use whoever, or whatever, is necessary to achieve his purposes. God can work through the emperor just as he worked through Cyrus in today's Isaiah passage. Being the people of God entails joining in with what God is doing.

Being dual citizen's, being part of the UK requires that we pay our taxes properly for the services and benefits we receive, but our primary citizenship and commitment is to the Kingdom of God trying our best to live as Jesus would want us to live in this 21st century world in order to bring about Gods kingdom here on earth.

StF 662 – Have you heard God's voice.

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred? Are you still prepared to follow? Have you made a choice to remain and serve, though the way be rough and narrow?

Refrain (except the last time) *Will you walk the path that will cost you much and embrace the pain and sorrow? Will you trust in One who entrusts to you the disciples of tomorrow?*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down when the multitudes are silent? Will you make a choice to stand your ground when the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God's heart? Will you listen to the voiceless? Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start, will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith and believe it could be different? Will you share your views using words of grace? Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

We will walk the path that will cost us much and embrace the pain and sorrow. We will trust in One who entrusts to us the disciples of tomorrow.

[Have You Heard God's Voice \(StF 662 / Singing the Faith 662\) - YouTube](#)

A sending out prayer:

Lord, this day and every day, may we touch many lives for you by our living, by allowing your love to flow in and through us, reaching all among whom we live, and work, and play. May we be generous with our time and resources, and may you be glorified in all we do.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**