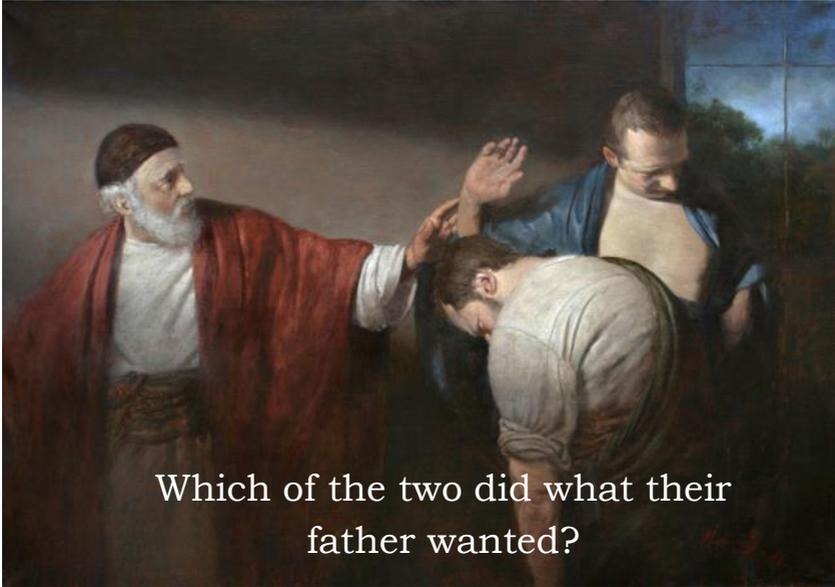


Ardoch Parish Church

Sunday 27th September 2020



Which of the two did what their
father wanted?

Rev Mairi Perkins welcomes everyone to our Service
of Worship.

Mairi explores today's question which on the
surface appears quite obvious. Do we recognize and
submit to the authority of Jesus, as the father?

Our first hymn is "Meekness and Majesty"

Meekness and majesty,
Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony,
The Man who is God.
Lord of eternity
Dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility
And washes our feet.

*O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship
For this is your God,
This is your God.*

Father's pure radiance,
Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience
To death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify
Prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
Love indestructible
In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity,
Stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity
To the heights of His throne.

Graham Kendrick
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Mairi leads us in prayer

Let us pray

Name above all names,
name yet unnamed;
in the fullness of time

you emptied yourself
becoming weak in power
to be strong in love.
Still fear and trembling
fill our days and our faith;
please help us to shift
from fear to awe.
Move us from trembling
to transformation
that we might
not confuse the love of infinite power
for the power of infinite love.
So we pray for those
in places of privilege and power
that empty words and empty promises
might be replaced with the fullness
of justice and the honesty of humility.
We pray for those
under the thumb of privilege and power:
for voices silenced,
breath suppressed,
lives destroyed.
Bend our knees that we might
uplift all those long-held down,
all those long ignored,
all those bound

by powers and principalities
into shapes that seek
to hide your imaging shining within them.
Encourage us to be of
that same mind
of that same spirit
of that unity in Christ
that first wound the world
with the cords of your grace.
Amen.

Let us say together 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 debts, as we forgive our
debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen

**John Souter reads from
Matthew Chapter 21 v 23-32**

His chosen hymn is "At the Name of Jesus"

At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,

every tongue confess him
King of Glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word:

Mighty and mysterious
in the highest height,
God from everlasting
very light of light:
in the Father's bosom
with the Spirit blest,¹
love, in love eternal,
rest, in perfect rest.

At his voice creation
sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces
all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations,
stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders
in their great array.

Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed.²

Bore it up triumphant
with its human light,

through all ranks of creatures
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast;
filled it with the glory
of that perfect rest.

Name him brothers name him,³
with love strong as death,
but with awe and wonder,
and with bated breath;
he is God the Saviour,
he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped,
trusted and adored.

In your hearts enthrone him;
there let him subdue
all that is not holy,
all that is not true:
crown him as your captain
in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you
in its light and power.⁴

Brothers, this Lord Jesus⁵
shall return again,
with his Father's glory,
with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him
King of Glory now.

Mairi leads us in her reflection on “Authority”

Authority, the word itself comes across very powerfully. Authority is the theme that we are exploring in today’s gospel. We read two accounts where different people have some very serious authority issues. Firstly, we see the two sons challenge their father’s authority and then we read about how the chief priests and elders take issue with Jesus’ authority

But what about us, yes you and me, what authority issues do we have. We all have authority issues but I am not talking about authority issues in the way we usually understand them.

Today’s question on the surface appears quite obvious. Do we recognize and submit to the authority of Jesus as the father.

The difficulty begins when we confuse divine authority with human authority. We misunderstand it to be based on credentials and expertise, years of education, successes and accomplishments, status and reputation, or the position held in relationship to another. We see authority as something which comes from outside a person and that it is given them by their circumstances. It is an authority which they think they are entitled to have. We often react to these people in a negative manner thinking and even saying

“Who do you think you are?” “What gives you the right to tell me what to do?”, “You’re not the boss

of me!" We really don't like someone else teaching us, correcting us, or telling us what to do and neither did the chief priests in today's passage "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" they say to Jesus and we see it very clearly in the refusal of the two sons to go to the vineyard.

There is, however, another authority issue imbedded in today's gospel. That issue relates directly to us it is our failure and sometimes our refusal to recognize, claim, and exercise the authority within us; to actually go to the vineyard.

What we need to be able to see and understand is that every single day God authorizes us to enter and sends us into his vineyard, to act in this world with his authority and on his behalf through the gifts he has bestowed upon each and every one of us.

True authority always comes from within. It is a God-given quality. That's what the chief priests and elders failed to understand. They chose to exchange their God-given authority for human power. Sometimes we do too, don't we. That's what's happening in much of our world today.

Power struggles always emerge where there is a lack of authority. Look at our political system. Look at the wars throughout the world. Look at the conflicts in your own relationships. Those issues are always about power, they are never about authority.

Our leaders exercise power but very few exercise authority. When we exercise power we look to our own interests but when we exercise authority we look to the interests of others.

If you just take a moment to look at the people who hold authority for you. They are not concerned about themselves. They do not dominate or control you. Their aim is simply to inspire you. They expand your world, open new possibilities, and bring forth life and gifts in yourself that you never knew were there. They cause you to re-evaluate your life, change your mind, and live differently. Now that sounds an awful lot like Jesus and it's very different from those who exercise power.

I know people who have no leadership position, title, or theological credentials and yet they have such great authority. How can I say that? I can because I see it in their compassion and gentleness. I hear it in the way they pray. I feel it in their love for me and others. They too show me the way to the vineyard of my life. But it's not about them. It doesn't come from them.

All authority originates in God, but it is not exclusive to God. God shares his authority with us. The authority God shares with us is nothing less than his own divine attributes. It is the expression and manifestation of God's life in and through our own.

I do not have more authority than you. I do not have better authority than you. I just have a different authority. God gives each of us gifts and authority unique to our lives. We know that God is generous and extravagant with the gifts he gives and the authority he shares. We all have God-given gifts and authority.

There is no one without authority. The difference isn't that some have authority and others don't. The difference is that some recognize and exercise their authority and others do not. Regardless, God knows and sees the authority he has given us and waits for us to see and know it too. And when we do recognise it, we are changed people and we more than happily go to the vineyard.

Amen

Our closing hymn is "How Great Thou Art"

How Great Thou Art

Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Consider all the world Thy hands have made

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder

Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

And when I think that God, His son not sparing

Sent Him to die I scarce can take it in

That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home what joy shall feel my heart
Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there
proclaim

My God, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

How great Thou art, how great Thou art
How great Thou art

Benediction

Now go, with Christ's authority in your hearts.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intimations overleaf

Intimations

Harvest Thanksgiving will be held, next Sunday, 4th October via a live Zoom meeting at 11.30am.

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As normal there will be a harvest collection this week to support the work of Edith's Hope in Uganda.

The charity is working hard to support orphans' and child headed families who are suffering due to the Covid pandemic. Food prices have soared and they are without the infrastructure of a well resourced healthcare.

Please send donations to Charles Robertson or to our treasurer Stuart Brannen, either by cash or a cheque payable to EDITH HOPE. Thank you.

Autumn Link - Gordon Roy has kindly offered to edit and produce the Autumn Link.

30th September is the deadline for submitting articles, reports etc

Please send all material directly to Gordon at, gordon.roy@outlook.com

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139

ardochparishchurch.org

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