

**Sunday Update**  
**7<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**Matthew 28:16-20**

*16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'*

Do you belong to any clubs? People are not joining clubs in the numbers that they used to; golf clubs, bowling clubs and others are struggling for members, so that when 20 years ago they had waiting lists and you felt privileged to be admitted to the club you wanted to join, now lots of clubs are offering reduced membership fees and great deals to persuade you to join. Some clubs have had to close because they have so few members that their club life is not sustainable. People are not joining clubs so much but are supporting causes that inspire them! Is being a Christian about being part of a religious club that we call the Church? Is that the way we see things? Is that why many people think the church has nothing to offer, because it is a club rather than a cause that inspires them?

The very end of Matthew's gospel tells us about a conversation Jesus has with His disciples about what happens next. This is the passing of a baton from Jesus to His disciples so that they carry on the mission of God that Jesus has begun; phase 2 belongs to the disciples and the church, to tell people about Jesus so that others can believe and follow Jesus as well. The meeting takes place on a mountain in Galilee; the disciples meet Jesus and worship Him even if they are still in two minds about what has happened. We are back before Pentecost, so the confidence, boldness and courage that we saw last week are not there yet; the power of the Spirit has not yet come into their lives.

This passage contains what has come to be called *The Great Commission* as Jesus tells His disciples what they are to do next. The translation of the passage above gets it slightly wrong; we read Jesus saying "*Therefore go...*" as if the main and most important command is to "go", but in fact the only command He gives is the command to "make disciples". A better translation would be "*as you go, make disciples, baptising... and teaching...*" For three years, this group of people have been disciples, listening to Jesus, learning from Him, watching Him, beginning to believe in Him; they will still *be* disciples, but now they have to *make* disciples as others are inspired to come to Jesus in faith, learning how Jesus will shape their lives for good and for ever.

A disciple is someone who learns. "A disciple is not one who has already learned, but one who is always learning. The 'school days' of the Christian are never over." (RVG Tasker) If you want to see what being a disciple looks like, then the stories of Jesus and the twelve are such a good example: the twelve follow Jesus and listen to His teaching; they learn about Him by watching Him; they make mistakes and Jesus corrects them; they believe and profess that faith. Little bit by little bit they grow in faith, understanding what faith means and how faith shapes the way they live their lives. That is a disciple, and that is how life should be for us: we listen to Jesus when we read the Bible; we watch Him; we learn from Him; we make mistakes and are corrected; little bit by little bit we learn what faith means and how that faith shapes the way we think about life. Our "school days" are never over.

Membership or discipleship? I was brought up in the Church when the end in view was becoming a member of the church. That was the target; when you became a member, you had arrived and all that was left was to take part in the affairs of the club (oops, sorry, the church!) I “arrived” at the age of 18 just as I left home to go to university. I then discovered that the Bible opened up a different view of faith and life, with faith as a place of life-long learning in which I had not “arrived” but needed to keep learning, keep listening, keep following. This is a different way of thinking about faith and life: we know that we already have lots of good things from Jesus, but we also know that there are lots of things we still have to grasp, or come to terms with, or understand. If we see that, then we also understand that life will always be like that; we will never stop learning! Be disciples

Our challenge is not just to “be disciples”; our challenge is to “make disciples”. Jesus is not sending His church into the world to make new members of a club; He is sending His church into the world to tell people about Him so that people will be inspired to follow Him. The church is not a religious club, but at our best we are a missionary movement that tells people how great Jesus is so that others are inspired to be part of the greatest cause in the history of the planet, growing the kingdom of God.

Hugh Wylie is a former Moderator of the General Assembly: his theme for the year was “*Be the story, do the story, tell the story*” – Hugh got that all the right way round! We will only encourage people to be disciples when we are disciples ourselves; when we are being the kind of people Jesus wants us to be, we become models for others to copy. When our lives are shaped by the values and ways of Jesus, then people are moved to want to know more. When we live the story, others will be inspired to join the cause and live it with us. This is how we, as disciples, make disciples.

*Prayer: we thank you that Jesus is Lord; we thank you for being the privilege of people who belong to Jesus and who are called to follow Him; help us to think as disciples and be open to learn new things today; help us to be the story, do the story and tell the story, so that others will be inspired to join us in living with Jesus as Lord.*

*Day by day, dear Lord of you*

*Three things I pray:*

*To see you more clearly,*

*To love you more dearly,*

*To follow you more nearly,*

*Day by day.*

Pray for:

- The Church: our local church, churches across Scotland, churches across the world, to be churches that are committed to being disciples and making disciples.
- People who are weak and vulnerable today, those who mourn, those who are sick, those who are isolated and lonely; those in hospital and families who can't visit; pray for people you know by name.
- NHS staff, care home staff, those caring in the community – God keep them safe.
- The opening up of lockdown, to be done carefully and not recklessly.
- For the virus to go away completely; pray that science will find a vaccine.
- People whose hearts and minds are feeling “shut-in”, for whom the physical lockdown is affecting their mental health and sense of well-being and freedom. For victims of domestic violence, with nowhere to escape to.
- Children and young people at home, missing friends from school, missing the contact with other people. Parents working, schooling children, trying to care for other family members.

- Those who are furloughed from work and those who have lost their jobs and have no prospect of a new job soon pray for a sense of purpose when they are away from paid employment.
- Our community, caring for vulnerable people, helping those in need, for resilience and strength.
- Our political leaders, trying to make difficult decisions in the right way.
- Other parts of the world, suffering as we are, in the same situation and with the same needs. The people of the USA, trying to come to terms with issues of racism; the people of Bangladesh and the Rohingya refugees wrestling with the aftermath of last week's superstorm.
- For one another, sustaining our faith when there is nothing of the outward life of the church. For Martin Fair, the new Moderator of the General Assembly as he finds his feet in this new role in leadership of the Church.

Here are some links to hymns you might know and love; go and have a listen.

Praise my soul the king of heaven <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRIVbdsi4c>  
 Light of the world (Here I am) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBKzCpkXJR4>  
 Ye gates lift up your heads <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRMImZyfseg>  
 Jesus Christ (once again) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwTB1DX5cK0>  
 Go forth and tell <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNyDd9qtuk0>

Heather's A-Z of videos: the latest is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1pm64Xxllc>

### **Favourite Bible passage:**

Do you have a favourite Bible passage? Why not tell us what it is. Here's what to do: pick your favourite Bible passage, then video yourself reading it and in a sentence explain why you picked it. E-mail the video to me and we'll collect them on the Youtube channel or the church website. Give it a go! You can see the latest of these at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtAet-tORqo&t=1s>

### **Communion Service**

Today's Zoom time will be a communion service. Jim will do the words of communion together, but obviously he can't share bread and wine with you. What he suggests is that you have a piece of bread with you when you come to the service, and something to drink that for you will act as the wine; either wine itself or juice of some sort, or water or even a cup of tea, that for you will be symbolic of the blood of Jesus and we will eat and drink together to share communion. Hopefully you will feel able to take part, but if not we quite understand.

### **Some other resources:**

- Each Sunday at 10.30am, we will have a short time together using Zoom; a link has been sent out in the e-mail with this update which should enable you to join in.
- This reflection is available on our own church website under the "sermons" tab and there is an archive of sermon material there for you to read and links to the video reflections – [www.jgpc.org.uk](http://www.jgpc.org.uk)
- If you have a smartphone, the Bible2020 app will give you a short bible reading each day (from the Scottish Bible Society)
- Scripture Union daily bible readings can be found at <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive>
- The Church of Scotland website has prayers and reflections from the Moderator and details of lots of on-line streamed church services - <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>
- Claremont Church in East Kilbride are making services available over a phone line: here are the contact details which you can share with people who are not on line: **Sunday Services @ 10:30 - same details every week** 020 3937 2973; PIN: 352 598 857#
- There will be a service on BBC1 at some time on Sunday morning.

## Worship and Witness

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and have fun spending time with each other and with God.

### Prepare yourself...

#### Pray

#### One God,

present yesterday, present today,  
present tomorrow.

#### One God,

in all, through all, everywhere.

#### One God,

powerful, gentle, holy.

We believe in you,

#### One God.

Amen.



### Question...

Have you ever received a gift that you needed to tell everyone about because it was so good?

### Read the Bible...

Here's a few options you could choose from:

- Read Matthew 28:16-20.
- Draw the story: draw out the story as it's read. Think about who was there, where they went, how they felt, what was said.
- Act it out: tell the story and do some actions along with it. Here's some suggestions:

Jesus' disciples went to the mountain. They were going to meet Jesus. (*walk across the room*)

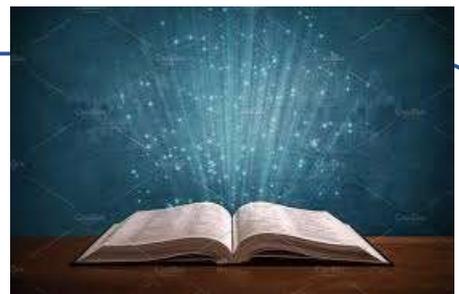
When Jesus arrived, they worshipped him. (*kneel down*)

Jesus told them that, because they loved God, (*cross hands across heart*)

they should go and tell others all about God. (*walk forward*)

They should teach people everything Jesus had taught them. (*lift up arms*)

Then Jesus told them something very special – that he would always be with them. (*hug yourself or someone*)



## Talk together...

- What kind of feelings did Jesus' disciples have in the story?
- How did you first hear about Jesus?
- Is it easy to tell people about Jesus? Why/why not?
- Do we always have to use words to tell others about Jesus?
- What encourages you to be a witness to others?
- What things are you good at or do you enjoy? How could you use those to tell others about Jesus?

## Pray together...

### Pray for your friends:

- On a piece of paper draw round your hand and cut it out.
- On each finger write the name of a friend or family member (or colleague, adults!) who might not know Jesus yet.
- Pray a simple prayer for each person: Father God, help (*insert name*) to know that you love them. Help me to be your witness. Thank you for promising to be with us and help us. Amen.



## Learn together...

Try to learn Joshua 1:9 together. Write out the words onto bits of paper and read them together. Then turn one or two of the papers over and read again, filling in the missing words. Keep doing this until all the pieces are turned over, can you remember the whole verse?!

## Praise together...

Choosing to follow Jesus and telling other people about him is not always easy, but God promises to be with us and help us through his Holy Spirit. This song is a reminder that God is always with us and it has some good actions you can join in with: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alRdE28rJw&list=PLMoyWmAWFN4UMAPOmVaLciC1fgguZ8bF&index=14&t=0s>

## Make something...

**Map baubles:** you'll need: old maps or printed maps, scissors, glue, ribbon/thread/string/wool

- Cut out circles from the maps – you might want to create a template. You'll need at least 4 circles per bauble.
- Fold each circle neatly in half.
- Glue one half of the circle to one half of another circle and continue doing so until you've made a bauble shape (you can secure with paperclips until dry if need be.) Stick a length of ribbon between two of the pieces to give a loop with which the bauble can be hung up. Example 
- Here's a really helpful video on how to make them: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv\\_cdyfEI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv_cdyfEI)



