

# Worship At Home

## October 17th 2021



Satisfy us with your steadfast love  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days,  
and gain a wise heart.

Come and meet the Lord who loves us and is  
all we need.

Come, rejoice and be glad as we worship  
together.

Loving Lord, you know us better than we know ourselves. As we come together to worship you, help us to explore our relationship with you. May your words and challenges strengthen and affirm us. May your love sustain us and guide us. May our worship be acceptable to you. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

**Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 96 - "You are before me God ...**

1. You are before me, Lord, You are behind,  
And over me You have spread out Your hand;  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
Too high to grasp, too great to understand.

CCL 1160072

2. If I should take my flight into the dawn,  
If I should dwell on ocean's farthest shore.  
Your mighty hand will rest upon me still,  
And Your right hand will guard me evermore.

3. Search me, O God, search me and know my heart,  
Try me, O God, my mind and spirit try;  
Keep me from any path that gives You pain,  
And lead me in the everlasting way.

<https://youtu.be/PnQtCpw9Sk>

**Almighty God**, we come before You with heads bowed in reverence and awe.  
We are aware of the grace extended to us, that we, mere specks in the immensity of Your  
creation have not earned this privilege.

Yet, in Your unfathomable love You invite us to come.

We are in awe of Your creation in all its rich power and diversity, amazed that You offer  
humanity insights into its workings.

Lord, we acknowledge that we do not earn the right to approach through our riches, intellect  
or positions of power, all are welcome in Your presence through the sacrifice of Your Son,  
Jesus Christ, our Saviour. That same Jesus taught us that human standards of importance  
do not matter to You. Instead, a contrite heart and a willingness to set self aside in Your  
service gain the reward of entering Your presence.

Heavenly Father, as we stumble along Your way help to keep us to the path of obedience that  
Jesus trod that we may continue to enjoy the glow of Your presence. Lord, there are so  
many things that can get in the way of our relationship with you. We offer them to you now  
and ask that you will forgive us and show us new ways to always put you first. Whatever that  
may take. Grant us your wisdom, Lord. **Almighty God** we ask for Your forgiveness through  
the love of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

**Reading:** Mark 10.17-31

**Reflection:** Impossible? With God Possible!

I wonder if you have ever played a game called Buckaroo!™? If you don't know what I am talking about take a look at this clip on You Tube - [https://youtu.be/Yik7XC\\_Czcs](https://youtu.be/Yik7XC_Czcs) . The game involves loading a horse with lots of different items until the horse 'bucks' and sheds all the items. Like the rich man who came to Jesus, or the overloaded Buckaroo!™ horse, if we carry too much 'stuff' it may cause a problem. Spend a few moments thinking about whether there are things in your lives that are, or risk becoming, so important that they might get in the way of their relationship with God or developing this relationship further.

I once knew a family with a disabled son who required constant care. To secure his future they sold up their home and raised money to establish a house in which he and a handful of other disabled people and carers could live securely. Although this is not a story about giving up everything to follow Jesus, it is perhaps an example of the kind of sacrifice Jesus speaks of, and also of the unintended and positively wonderful consequences of doing so? Do you know other stories of people who have risked all for a different future?

The story of the rich young man could be seen to be saying that rich people cannot have eternal life or a share in God's kingdom. Jesus is quite clear in his direction: go and sell everything; and, of course, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' So, are all rich people doomed? And how rich is rich?

Look a little more closely and we see that the man's problem was not the fact that he had great wealth, but the importance this had in his life. Jesus' directive to give up his riches was not a statement about wealth or even lifestyle per se; it was a challenge about what took priority in the man's life. And that was his wealth. Although he wanted to inherit eternal life, and although he knew God's commandments and the Law of Moses, his riches were more important to him.

Why was this? Perhaps it was the status, security, comfort or power they gave him. But we needn't dwell on that question, because again it is not those things of themselves that caused the problem. Whatever it was, it got in the way of his relationship with God. It prevented him developing or deepening that relationship. That is the challenge posed here. Whatever it is that gets in the way of developing or deepening our relationship with God is the equivalent for us of the rich man's wealth. Will we take up the challenge to reflect on our lives and see if there is anything that qualifies?

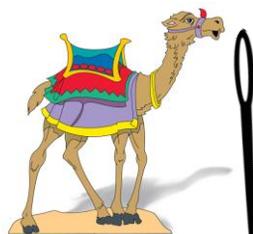
Having said that - and as good and important as such personal reflection and subsequent repentance is - there is something else we need to note from this passage. And that is the camel - the camel and the eye of a needle. We don't need to explain it, it is a proverb. We just need to understand the concept: some things are just not possible. No one can earn the right to eternal life. The rich man stood no chance - and not because of his riches. It is not possible.

Not possible for mortals, for humans, that is. But with God, all things are possible. Jesus' words remind us that God's kingdom is open to everyone who puts God at the centre of all they do - even though we know that this is, and always will be, work in progress!

Which is the true me? Most of us present ourselves carefully to God and the world. But if God knows us and loves us, why might trusting in him completely be such a risk? What if trusting all to God doesn't diminish or restrict our lives but enhances them?

So, what holds us back from committing totally to God? After all, God has committed himself completely to his creation and to us in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Can a camel fit through the eye of a needle? (There is a fun [YouTube clip](https://youtu.be/pBuKYAN4yTA) [ <https://youtu.be/pBuKYAN4yTA> ] that explores getting a camel through the eye of a needle.) The rich young ruler seemed to be doing everything he could to earn eternal life. He followed the laws and thought that the effort he put in and the way he lived his life would tick all of the boxes. But then Jesus said something that changed everything for him. A humorous comment (what might a modern equivalent be in your context?), but a serious message. What might get in the way of our entering the kingdom of God?



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In this passage, people make choices. The rich young man chose to follow the laws for most of his life. He had another choice to make when Jesus suggested that he sell all he had in order to inherit eternal life. The disciples also made choices, as Peter points out towards the end of the passage, declaring that they (the disciples) left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus commended them, but that doesn't mean eternal life is the result of completing a tick list of requirements. So, what is the answer? The real answer is back in verse 27: for humans it is impossible; only God can make it happen. And the real wise choice is to be in a right relationship with God by making Jesus a priority, and weighing up all other choices through the lens of the characteristics of Jesus and his lifestyle.

The Gospel passage ends with (another) statement reflecting the revolutionary nature of God's kingdom, where the 'first will be last, and the last first'. What would that look like in our church and society? How can we tell if we are genuinely living it?

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### Let us pray

Thank you, God, that all things are possible with you. If we truly do something in your name, however hard it has been, you will bless us. You are always there to guide us, to keep us on the right track. Thank you that when we don't understand something - such as a camel going through the eye of the needle - you are there to give us understanding.

You keep us on the straight and narrow way when we need it most. Thank you, God, that with you everything is new. Through you we know we have the way to eternal life. Thank you, Lord.

We bring to you the police and criminal justice system, and those whose confidence in the police has been shaken. We pray for those who seek to restore faith in an organisation and its people who are supposed to offer security and protection. We bring you the NHS and all who work for it. We pray especially for those facing difficult decisions concerning appropriate treatments, safety of staff and matters concerning Covid-19. We bring to you the church throughout the world, different traditions, different denominations. We pray for those who seek to guide the mission of the Church that your Word may be spread and your work done in all places. We bring to you those who are challenged by lack of resources to achieve their vision of your kingdom. We bring to you all those who face difficult choices, those without enough money for the essentials of life, those facing decisions about medical treatment or concerns about housing. We pray that they may find help and support in their communities.

As we bring all these things - indeed, the whole world - to you, knowing that there is much that needs doing, we are reminded today that first of all things is our relationship with you. Wisdom comes from you. By your Spirit, you guide and strengthen us. You show us the path, and help us to make our decisions. All things are possible with you, and without you we can achieve so little.

Loving God. **May your wisdom shape our choices.** To the sick bring healing. To the sorrowful bring comfort. To the despairing bring hope. And to us bring vision, wisdom and a knowledge of your purposes. In the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

**Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 259 Beauty for brokenness,**

- 1 Beauty for brokenness. Hope for despair. Lord, in your suffering CCL 1160072  
This is our prayer. Bread for the children. Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset. Your kingdom increase!
- 2 Shelter for fragile lives. Cures for their ills. Work for the craftsman  
Trade for their skills. Land for the dispossessed. Rights for the weak.  
Voices to plead the cause. Of those who can't speak.
- Friend of the weak. Give us compassion we pray. Melt our cold hearts. Let tears fall like rain. Come, change our love. From a spark to a flame.*
- 3 Refuge from cruel wars. Havens from fear. Cities for sanctuary. Freedoms to share  
Peace to the killing-fields. Scorched earth to green. Christ for the bitterness  
His cross for the pain. *Friend of the weak. Give .....*
4. Rest for the ravaged earth. Oceans and streams. Plundered and poisoned. Our future, our dreams. Lord, end our madness. Carelessness, greed. Make us content with the things that we need *Friend of the weak. Give .....*
4. Lighten our darkness, Breathe on this flame. Until your justice burns brightly again  
Until the nations learn of your ways, seek your salvation and bring you their praise.  
*Friend of the weak. Give .....*

Loving God, who sees us and loves us just as we are, be with us and go with us, guide us and challenge us to draw closer to you, and to be and live more like Christ.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

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Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.

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If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you. 4