

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

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Welcome to St Magnus Cathedral this morning. It was founded in 1137 by St Rognvald, in honour of Magnus, his uncle. The Cathedral belongs to the people of Orkney and its doors are open to all. If you are a visitor, we hope this order of service will help you feel part of our worship together.

You can find our Sunday worship here.

<https://www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation/>

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/TQSekJUosWI>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

As we kindle this symbol of light - our Christ Candle -
let us think for a moment about why we've come here
today, and what it is we hope this hour of worship might
bring.

We are all on a journey along life's highway,
with its twists and turns.
We are all on a journey of faith, seeking to know Christ
more fully
to hear the message of hope, second chances and
unconditional love.

We are on a journey:
some of us are near the start, some near the middle,
some near the end, some unsure where we are!
Journeys can be exciting, journeys can be scary, journeys
can be fun, journeys can be sad. Journeys can be long or
short, journeys have endings and beginnings, wherever we
are on our journey
we are glad to know we do not travel alone.
As we journey along these roads, not always knowing where
we are going, may we explore the way fully; not only
taking the familiar road,
but going to places we have never been before.
Let's start that journey here, as companions on the road,
we search together, to meet the living God.

Reading **Ephesians 4 25-32**

Therefore, let's have no more lies. Speak truthfully to
each other, for we are all members of one body. When you
get angry, don't let it become a sin. Don't let the sun
set on your anger, or you will give an opening to the
Devil. You who have been stealing, stop stealing. Go to
work. Do something useful with your hands, so you can
have something to share with the needy. Be on your guard
against foul talk. Say only what will build others up at
that moment. Say only what will give grace to your
listeners. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom
you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all
bitterness, all rage and anger, all harsh words, slander
and malice of every kind. 32 In place of these, be kind
to one another, compassionate and mutually forgiving,
just as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Reflection

Many of us have this picture of Jesus as a passive white
guy that speaks in hushed tones and, for some reason, is
always holding a sheep. That picture is wrong on many
levels. And maybe the biggest mistake we could make is
thinking of Jesus as a mild-tempered, never raised his
voice, kind of guy. That was not Jesus. He got mad on
many occasions. The question we need to ask is: what made
Jesus mad?

If we are following Jesus then what made Jesus mad should
also make us mad.

We will look at what made Jesus mad in a minute. First, I
want to address righteous anger. We often view anger as
an emotion we should avoid. But our anger isn't the

problem, it's what we do with our anger that determines if we stray from the way of Jesus or not as our reading to day alluded to.

In fact, there are things in this world that should make us angry. We should be outraged by injustices, violence, greed, poverty, and death that run rampant all around us. That should stir up an anger deep within us because it's just not right. That anger is good; it's a righteous anger.

Righteous anger over evil is good, but in our anger, we should not be tempted to fight evil with evil. Through Jesus' teaching, we are shown a better way. When stones are thrown at us, we don't throw them back. Instead, we love. Yes, that's unfair. Yes, that could cost us. But only love can truly stop evil.

And that's exactly what Jesus did. When he got angry over the evil in this world, he never stooped to its level.

So, what made Jesus mad?

As we look at what made Jesus mad, I would encourage push back against the urge to point the finger. It's really easy to see how *those* people did something that made Jesus mad, but it's really hard to see it in ourselves. Instead of pointing the finger, look in the mirror.

Alright, let's jump in... Here's what made Jesus mad.

The religious leaders in Jesus day tended to value adherence to the law over caring for people, which is not what was intended. The heart of the law was missed in the pursuit of following the law. In other words, they cared more about obeying the rules preciously that they missed what the rules were supposed to lead to.

And let's be honest, so often we are no better today, are we?

Jesus continually broke the rules that the religious set up. By which I mean he broke the extra rules the religious leaders put in place to protect the law, and that made a lot of people mad.

Maybe the best example is Jesus healing on the Sabbath. To the religious leaders, that was a no-no, because you were supposed to rest.

Jesus pushed back on this attitude and showed that people were more important. He healed people right in front of the Pharisees, just to show how serious he was.

What made Jesus mad? Rules that kept people from him.....

We love to think we are better than *them*, don't we? At least *I'm not as bad as so and so*... We often think too highly of ourselves; we aren't as good as we think we are. And Jesus got mad at those who thought they were all that.

Most commonly, Jesus got mad at the religious leaders because really, they were just religious phonies. They pretended to be good, but in reality, they were just as messed up as everyone else. But they refused to admit and acknowledge their own shortcomings.

Jesus famously calls out this hypocrisy by saying they wash the outside of the cup but ignore the inside. They cared more about what people thought of them, that they would appear to be righteous. In other words, they ignored what was more important for the sake of appearances.

It's important to note Jesus wasn't mad at them because of what they were. He was mad because they pretended they were better than they were. Jesus came for the oppressed and the sick, but he got mad at those who were self-righteous.

What made Jesus mad? The religious leaders that pretended to have it all together, while ignoring the selfishness of their own hearts.

Another reason Jesus often got mad at the religious phonies is they made it hard for people to get to God. They complicated the rules, sold sacrifices for a profit, and belittled those who weren't as "good" as them.

All this so they could look better and feel better about themselves.

But let's not point fingers. We do this ALL the time in our minds and behind people's backs. We tear people down so that we look better. Sometimes we are no better.

This attitude made Jesus mad.

This is ultimately what caused Jesus to overturn the tables in the temple twice. What was happening was the

religious leaders were selling the sacrifices required by the law for a profit. In other words, poor families who travelled far and at great expense to follow the law were extorted, when they should have been helped.

That p*** off Jesus. This is where we see Jesus at his angriest. He makes a whip and drives them out. Why? Because they were making it harder for people to get to God all so they could make a few quid.

Want to make Jesus mad? Keep people he loves (which is everyone by the way) from having access to him.

What made Jesus mad? People that made it more difficult to get to God.

Jesus wanted all people to have the opportunity to know his love for them and when that opportunity was squashed by a rule, a person, or a system, he got mad.

I don't know about you, but I'm not like that. Most often my anger is directed towards those that have wronged me. Maybe that's you too. And listen, I get it. We have valid reasons for being mad at that person. They deserve it, but we follow a teacher that gave us what we needed instead of what we deserved. Jesus modelled this. He didn't lash out, even though he had every right to. Instead, he reserved his anger for those that were being neglected and abused. May we too show a bit more anger for what made Jesus mad.

Prayer

The Master storyteller, has provided us with all we need.
we are thankful for all the stories revealed to us in
scripture.

We do not claim to understand them all but we love to
wrestle with them
and discover more of Christ through them.

In the journey of life we are given, we will face the joy
and difficulty of family life, of parents and siblings,
of ever-growing circles,
of new members of the family.

We pray for the families
who are struggling today,

for those who are torn apart
and those who cannot bear to be together.

We pray for the families
who are suffering today,
for those who can't make ends meet, for those who don't
know
what tomorrow will bring.

We pray for all families, large and small,
poor or rich, together or apart, growing and changing,
increasing and decreasing,
by choice or forced;
may they know the power of love
and may they trust in the Spirit that all will be well.
Amen.

Blessing

Let us go into the journey that is ever unfolding;
let us enjoy the pauses that invite us to grow;
let us share the path
with companions on the way; and let us travel always
into God, into truth, into life.

May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be
blessed by his Spirit this day and always.