

twelvebaskets

FREE TO DUPLICATE AND DISTRIBUTE



ORDINARY 25A

24th September 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

A Free resource funded by donations from Individuals, churches and **twelvebaskets**.

If you would like to help fund this resources [click here](#).

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Opening / Centering Prayers

God of this day, this time, this moment,
God of abundant grace,
Open my heart to you this day and always.

God of every country, ever space and place,
Help me to notice all the ways you pour out your love into my life.

I come to you in prayer and worship,
To pour back as praise all that I have received from you.

God of abundance,
It is plentiful, thank you, that it is plentiful.

[Pause].

God of abundant grace, I am hungry for your love and forgiveness,
You provide me with all I need each day,
you made a way in the wilderness and give me food for the journey,
and yet I have wandered from your ways, accidentally or on purpose.

I grumble in the face of your generosity.
I turn away ashamed from your love.
I go back to ways of greed and selfishness.
Help me and forgive me, merciful God.

Pour out your grace into my heart today, Lord,
It is enough, thank you, that it is enough for me.

[Pause].

God of abundant grace,
Bring me back to you,
Forgive me all the ways I have strayed.

Assure me of your faithfulness, your provision.

Do your work of healing, and liberation, and transformation in me today,
By your grace,
It is sufficient, thank you, that it is sufficient.

[Pause].

God of abundant grace,
Thank you that you are here, right here,
Working in this place, right now.

Thank you that your way is not the way of the world
Teach me to walk your way, every day, labouring
In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: [Matthew 20:1-16](#)

Respond by singing (some or all of these songs):

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded - [YouTube](#)

83 STF – Praise my soul the King of heaven - [YouTube](#)

277 STF – My song is love unknown - [YouTube](#)

Responding to the reading:

Read these words from American theologian and pastor, Nadia Bolz Weber:

I'm certain that scarcity is not something that God fears – after all, how many stories are there in the Bible of water appearing from nowhere, and flour and oil lasting forever, and manna from heaven and the feeding of thousands with a couple loaves and few fish. Scarcity is not the origin of value for God, I think the boundlessness of Gods own heart is the origin of value to God. I mean, come on, God did not create the heavens and the earth by holding back in case he ran out.

In God's economy, the storehouses of grace are stacked to the ceilings, and the gates are open wide. There is no fear for any of us that there might not be enough grace for us, or that it might not be available to us.

Are you somebody who finds it hard to believe in your own entitlement? Are you convinced that God's abundant love and grace are actually scarce when it comes to you? Perhaps you're like the workers in the parable who were hired later in the day, and are convinced you'll receive a pitiful wage as a result. It can be hard to believe, for whatever reason – shame, or self-loathing, or sadness – that God's abundance is for us, too.

Or perhaps, if we look again at today's parable, we see another reason why not everyone is over the moon about this abundant provision. The workers who had worked the longest expected to be paid more than those who had just worked an hour or two. They were annoyed and grumbled about the fact that the idle workers had been paid the same.

I wonder how many of us relate to those angry hard-working labourers? Working themselves into the ground all day, just to receive the same appreciation as people who've barely lifted a finger? I know I've found myself feeling bitter sometimes, at the end of a long day, perhaps a church coffee morning, or a work event, or a family party – when I feel I've worked harder than most and not received due recognition.

This parable is a lesson to us about privilege. Jesus is saying to those of us who suffer with a sense of entitlement: do you really think your privilege matters? Do you think you matter more than others? Do you, in some secret corner of your heart, think people with less than you are deserving of their lot? Examine your own deep sense of entitlement and then rethink what the Kingdom of Heaven might look like. Abundance for all is good news, but it might not feel like it if it means you are the one moving from first to last in the queue. And yet, if you can leave off your grumbling for just a moment, you'll notice that your cup overflows as much as anyone's.

This is God's economy of abundant grace – which, if we let it, will transform us, and the world around us.

Questions for you to reflect on, or you might like to find someone you can discuss them – maybe someone you can trust.

- Who do you relate to most, the workers who are surprised that they receive so much, or the workers who grumble because they feel hard done by?
- What are you learning about yourself and God's abundant love of you at the moment?
- In your community, where do you see signs of God's Kingdom? What systems and injustices of greed and power need challenging?
- How might you live out God's abundant love and generosity with others as a way of sharing the good news you experience?

Hymn:

You might like to finish by singing along to one of this classic hymns, which sends us out into the world to seek to follow God's word:

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide - [YouTube](#)

[Please note, Twelvebaskets does not own the rights this video so you must seek permission from the rights holder before using online or in public worship.]

Blessing

I want to live in a world more like your kingdom,
And less like the kingdom of greed we find ourselves in.

No longer the kingdom of comfort,
But forever, the Kingdom of heaven.

Be at work in me, Lord God, by your Spirit,

Amen,

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 25th September

- Pour a glass of water.
- Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God. You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water.
- Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.

Tuesday 26th September

- Holy God, today I am thankful. I come in prayer, recognising and remembering this day that all I have received is grace, all is gift. I have received so much, and so often I take it for granted. Today, I come with a thankful heart, knowing how richly blessed I am, and seeking to offer gratitude.
- You might like to list the things you are grateful for – go on as long as you possibly can!
- Thank you God. Amen.

Wednesday 27th September

- Think about the fruits of the spirit.
- Pick one of them that you don't feel you are very good at, or that needs some intentional work.
- Spend some time praying about this, and then practice it for a whole day in all you do.

Thursday 28th September

- Find something in your house that is symbolic of your faith. Hold it. Give thanks for the journey of faith that God has taken you on in your lifetime. Ask for God to guide you on your onwards journey.

Friday 29th September

- Creator God, great shepherd of the sheep, fill me with your hope as I pray. Holy Spirit, give me the strength and courage for this day, fill me with the peace I need, and the joy of being surrounded by your love. Help me to notice where your love is at work in the world, and to get involved where I can.
Lord of love, show me what is mine to do today.
Amen.

Saturday 30th September

- Write a note or a message to a friend with a Bible verse in it that you think might be relevant to your life.
- Tell them you're thinking of them, and pray about them as they receive it.