

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 26C

25th September 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Lord I come, to take this time, away from the relentless pace of life:

Away from the everyday stresses, frustrations and endless to-do lists,
I take this time to sit in your presence, Lord, and just breathe,
Just be.

I have my roles to play,
As parent, friend, neighbour, colleague, teacher, leader or companion,
In this moment, I am simply your child,
Loved for who I am, just as I am.

In this moment, I find peace and strength,
I find the comfort and love I need, in exactly the way I need it
Your love meets me where I am, calls my name and speaks a language I understand

Lord, in this moment:

Hold me,
Accept me,
Validate me,
Inspire me,
Guide me,
Fill me up,
Renew me,
Challenge me,
Strengthen me

In Jesus' name

Amen.¹

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

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart - [YouTube](#)

Reading: Luke 16:19-31 – [Click for reading](#)

Response to the reading

A little earlier in this chapter of Luke, we read: *'The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God."*

¹ Opening prayers written by Emma Dobson

So Jesus is seeking to make the Pharisees examine themselves. Perhaps he hopes that their hearts might be softened and they may recognise the paths to true life and love. Is that what this story is also meant to do for us?

Abraham is obdurate in the face of the rich man's pleas for salvation for himself or his family – *'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'* This last comment certainly sounds as though it may be intended to reinforce the early Christian witness that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and therefore his words should be regarded but may still be ignored. It certainly makes us uncomfortable, doesn't it?

- What about you – how do you make sense of this story? Does it reinforce, or challenge some of your own thoughts, hopes or beliefs about the 'afterlife'?
- Is it meant as a story about what life-after-death might look like, or is it a metaphor, or a parable for a particular time and context?
- How do we reconcile this with the 'love wins' God who we believe is always offering us grace, seventy-times-seven chances at redemption – do we really believe that grace disappears in death?
- How do we engage in conversations about heaven, hell and the afterlife with our friends – both those who are Christians and those who are not, or not yet sure?
- Are there safe places in your church / church communities where we can address some of these difficult questions, air our doubts and uncertainties, explore our 'not knowing' together?

(If not, try to find somewhere safe, and someone safe, who you can discuss some of these questions with this week. See if you can establish some spaces where others can engage with the questions too. Perhaps you might like to read a book together, addressing some of these issues. For starters, you could try Paula Gooder's Heaven or Rob Bell's Love Wins).

Blessing

Let us go out and do good, let us be rich in kindness, mercy, love and generosity.

Let us be ready to share, and live in peace with all.

The peace of the Lord be always with you and also with you.

Amen.²

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 26th September

- Sit with you feet flat on the floor.
- In your mind name five things you can feel.
- Four things you can see.
- Three things you can hear.
- Two things you can smell.
- One thing you can taste.
- Where do you notice God's goodness amongst these things? Give thanks.

² Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Tuesday 27th September

- Find a map of your local area.
- Using post it notes or bits of paper, or simply your finger, identify areas where the community is flourishing and areas of need.
- Ask God to continue working in these places.

Wednesday 28th September

- Phone or text message a friend and ask them if they've got anything they'd like you to pray about. Offer up their request in prayer to God.

Thursday 29th September

- Open your Bible at random and read a chapter out loud very slowly. Notice any word or phrase that jumps out at you.
- Write it down and carry it with you for the rest of the day, noticing prayerfully if it connects to anything you experience.

Friday 30th September

- Today is the first day of 3Generate – the Methodist Church's national youth event in Birmingham. This year, over 1,000 Methodist young people will be gathering on site – perhaps you know someone who is going?
- Take a moment today to pray for the event, for its leaders, for the children and young people who are going. Pray that the event might be a space of encounter, of people meeting with and committing themselves to following Jesus, to learning more of the God who is Spirit.

Saturday 1st October

- On this day in 1553, Queen Mary I of England was crowned queen. In light of the announcement of our new King, and the death of the Queen, today you could spend some time praying for the royal family, their grief, and the responsibilities they have to show leadership and grace at this time.