

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 10A

11th June 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening / centering prayer

In this moment, pause to meet with God:

The God who welcomes me regardless of time and place,

The God who encourages me to learn and love,

The God who challenges me to change and grow.

In this moment, pause to meet with God.

To get ready, to praise, to contemplate the global community we are a part of and to recognise the joy we have in every encounter with the one, who by their grace, blesses me and those around me.

In this moment, pause to meet with God.

Hold the stillness, and the space of prayer, for as long as you can.

If you have half an hour to spare, pause at this point and go for a walk or sit in a quiet space for as long as you can and just hold the stillness. Listen for what God prompts might be put into your heart as you still the noise around and inside you.

When you are ready, return to this piece of paper, and say – out loud if you can:

Amen.

It is good to worship God! We are in the season of Pentecost, a time when we think about how the church began. Have a think for a moment:

- What new things are you learning at the moment?
- What are you being reminded of that you might have forgotten?
- Who are the new people in your life (perhaps new friends or reconnecting with people whom you have not seen for a while)?
- What do you think might be a 'next step' for you as you try to follow Jesus.

As we worship, let's use this chance to reflect and learn more about ourselves and how God might be working through us.

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

Readings: Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26 – [Click for the reading](#)

Response to the reading

What is the gospel if it isn't inclusive?

In today's readings, Jesus steps into three situations where a religious leader may typically have been expected to go in his contemporary society. In fact, each of the three encounters he has in this passage might have been deemed 'unclean' by contemporary Jewish law, another system that has played its part in exclusion – marking whole groups of people as 'ritually unclean' because of their profession,

heritage or condition. Jesus consistently and repeatedly steps across these barriers to ensure his message of radical inclusion cuts through. And he's doing it again today.

Everyone is included. The tax collector. The old and suffering. The young. The grieving. Even death is not enough to separate us from God's love for us in Christ. If nothing else, I hope that radical inclusion is a message of hope for you today: however broken, useless, excluded, shunned, shamed and in pain you feel; you are welcome. You are welcome here. There is a space for you in God's big story of love.

This is what radical inclusion looks like: there is space for us. All of us.

But it also comes with a challenge, to create spaces where others feel like they are included too. These stories, and so many of the other stories Jesus tells, or gets involved in, are a reminder that everyone is welcome. But they are also a reminder that if we ever think that we are part of the 'in crowd', that we are the ones who get to control the doors, that we are in charge of who comes in and who comes out...then we've missed the point. Think of the parable of the wedding feast, or the Samaritan helping the beggar on the road, or Jesus healing lepers and rebuking religious leaders.

This Jesus is an invitation into radical inclusion, and that should make us uncomfortable, if we think we've 'got it all sorted'.

- How are you playing a part in excluding others?
- What barriers and borders do you put in place, or help to maintain?
- Who do you think feels excluded from our church community?
- How could we change that?

These are difficult questions for us to wrestle with, but worth the time to make space for if we are to address the challenge that Jesus' radical inclusion sets before us.

Hymn:

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go from this place awash with God's grace offered to you through story and song.

Share that grace so that others might learn how special it is.

Embody God's radical grace and strive to make the world a better place.

Do not cease until all are wrapped in the love of God and are able to flourish and grow.

Do not cease until the Kingdom of God is realised as she would want it to be

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 12th June

- Place your hand on your shoulders and think of all the burdens you feel you're carrying. Pray that God might help lighten your load. Roll your shoulders a few times and sit quietly after you've said Amen.

Tuesday 13th June

- Pick up a book or magazine that's near to you. Open it randomly. Randomly pick one word from the page you're on. Write the word down. For each letter of the word, think of a person you know whose name begins with that letter. Pray for them one by one.

Wednesday 14th June

- Put an empty chair next to you. Sit down in another chair. Imagine Jesus is sitting with you in the empty one. He speaks your name. Tell him about what's on your heart. Listen for what he says to you.

Thursday 15th June

- Look around you. Can you see an item that somebody else once gave you as a gift? Or something that once belonged to another person?
- Pray for that person now, giving thanks for them, and asking that they know God's presence with them today, wherever they are.

Friday 16th June

- Have you read James Joyce's mammoth novel, Ulysses? No, me neither...
- It's a very long book, and it's set on this day – 16th June – because it was the day that Joyce met his wife, in real life. So he chose to set his magnum opus on that day, and all the events of the book take place over those 24 hours.
- This might remind you of a special day in your life. You might like to think back to that day – give thanks for the blessings you received, and the happy memories you carry with you.

Saturday 17th June

- Today is the anniversary of John Wesley's birth, though he would have been well over 300 by now!
- Today we give thanks for Wesley's passion for following Jesus and sharing good news with people all over the country and indeed the world. May we know something of his faith and commitment again today.