

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 27C

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A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

God of all mercy, God, by your grace you have called me to this space, to this time, to this day.

Guard me and protect me in all that you call me to,
that I may be strong in faith, in joy and love;
through Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and always.

Lord, in today's gospel reading is the image of something small--the tiny mustard seed, the grain of yeast, the small treasure--and these remind me that, though I think of myself as small, I am not insignificant in your kingdom.

Open my heart, my ears and heart to you in thankful remembrance of the ways in which I can serve you throughout my whole life.

Holy God, in a world that often teaches us bigger is better,
Take away my need for the big possessions.
Open my heart to receive your word of love and healing, and let my spirit be ready to grow for you.
Forgive my stubborn resistance to your faithful presence.

[Pause]

Thank you Lord, that you forgive and accept me, just as I am, and set me free in Jesus' name.

Giving God, I thank you for the gifts you have given to me. In a time of silence, I name those small gifts that you have blessed us with, and whisper my thanks...

[Pause]

Lord take my offerings of thanksgiving and help me to say thank you a little and often so that I can renewed by your Spirit.

Amen.¹

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

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace, how sweet the sound - [YouTube](#)

Reading: Luke 17:5-10 – [Click for reading](#)

¹ Opening prayers written by Matthew Forsyth

Responding to the reading

We love, because God first loved us, right? And at the heart of our faith is this wonderful idea of grace. It's such a church-y word, 'grace', but perhaps it helps us find our why, to articulate why we are here. We are here, because we have received so much and we are beginning to accept that, to wrestle with that, to own our own undeserved, but total, acceptance....

In our gospel reading today, the disciples crave an increase in their faith, and Jesus reminds them that they have faith enough – even faith the size of a mustard-seed is life-changing, world-transforming. They have received all they need. Everything is gift.

When it comes to grace, one of the best descriptions of what it is and how it affects us comes from theologian Paul Tillich. Spend a few minutes with this today – it is worth reading a few times, perhaps even committing to memory.

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual... It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear... Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!" If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed.

- What feelings does this passage trigger in you?
- How do you respond – do you know yourself to be 'accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you'?
- How might you articulate the impact of grace in your own life? Would that change if you were talking about grace with someone who has never been to church or isn't currently a practicing Christian?²

Hymn:

696 STF – For the healing of the nations - [YouTube](#)

² Reflection written by Tim Baker

Blessing

May you go out from here, blessed by this time of worship.

May you join with communities of grace and people of healing, to share and love for all.

May you be part of a people of hope and faith,

In Jesus' name,

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 3rd October

- Open your Bible at the Psalms and read one as a prayer to God.
- What resonates with you? Consider in what ways these old words feel new to you and offer them to God.

Tuesday 4th October

- Today is celebrated as the feast day of Francis of Assisi, the Catholic friar who founded the Franciscan order within the Catholic church, and was renowned for his love of nature and the natural world.
- Today, spend some time outside, finding a garden or park, and sit for a while, paying attention to the wildlife that comes and goes around you.
- Give thanks for creation, and the way God expresses something of God's-self to us.

Wednesday 5th October

- On this day in 1999, the Ladbroke Grove rail crash in west London killed 31 people.
- Today we pray for all those who are grieving loved ones, particularly those who have lost people suddenly, in an accident, on the roads, or similarly. In the pain, we pray to you, comforting and healing God. Amen.

Thursday 6th October

- Light a candle.
- Jesus, you are the light of the world.
- Today, pray about the places you experience darkness in your life, that Jesus light might shine divine light into those spaces and places.

Friday 7th October

- God of all grace,
Thank you for all that we have received – thank you that everything we have is gift.
Help me to appreciate all that I have and am.
Help me to live from a place of grace.
- Come amongst me, God of all grace.
Amen.

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Saturday 8th October

- Look up a hymn or worship song on YouTube and sit and listen (you could use one of the ones from this Sunday's worship, above, or look for your own).
- Don't do anything else while you listen.
Let your hands fall to your sides or rest in your lap. Let your mind, body and soul tune into God through the music in prayer.