

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 20A

20th August 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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

Opening Prayer

Take time to read this prayer:

God of all creation

I worship you.

You know me - what I need, what I rejoice in, what I'm nervous about

You see me – as the unique individual you created with all my little habits and characteristics.

You hear me – when I pray aloud or silently,

You meet me – here and now and I am content,

God of all creation,

I worship you.

Amen

Wonder to yourself if you are really able to say the words.

Imagine what it would be like to hear someone else say them for you.

Notice how you feel as you read them.

Take time to tell God what you've discovered.

Then when you are ready and if you feel able say them aloud:

God of all creation

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You see me – as the unique individual you created with all my little habits and characteristics.

You hear me – when I pray aloud or silently,

You meet me – here and now and I am content,

God of all creation,

I worship you.

Amen.

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

Hymn:

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand, Kyrie eleison - [YouTube](#)

Readings: Matthew 15: 21-28 – [Click for reading](#)

Response to the reading

When a woman who is not Jewish asks Jesus for help, he initially keeps silent, seemingly ignoring her, perhaps preferring silence to refusing help. But the shouting continues, this is a desperate woman, pleading for the life of her daughter, she's not about to give up and go away, however much the disciples wish she would. Maybe Jesus wishes that too – he seems to be thinking aloud as he says, perhaps only intending the disciples to hear, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'.

Is Jesus wondering what to do, how to react to this foreigner, how to reconcile her moving plight with his own understanding of his mission?

She leaves him no option of turning away, for she kneels right in front of him and begs for help. It's a remarkable story and one on which many commentaries have been written and many sermons preached, for it is, perhaps, a vital stepping-stone from one way of thinking to another. Maybe we too hear the challenge to consider our own preconceived ideas. Have we turned away from helping someone because they are not 'one of us'? Not a blood relation, perhaps, or not of our economic class, or social group, or colour of skin? Or they have different views from us on things that matter, carbon footprint, gay rights, feminism, political persuasion? Do we need to recognise, and perhaps, like Jesus, say aloud what is holding us back and then look again and see the humanity, see the image of God, see the faith in the face of another, and change the way in which we respond?

How can you address some of your own prejudices today, this week and beyond? Is there a book you need to read, a conversation you need to have, a change you can recognise and make in yourself?

Hymn:

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell - [YouTube](#)

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you - [YouTube](#)

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

Blessing

Go in grace, and know that you are called,
Go in love, to find that calling and pursue it,
Go in the Spirit of the Living God, to grow and learn and be transformed,
Seeking justice in our world, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 21st August

- Listen to this version of Amazing Grace (or read through the words to this famous hymn if you don't have access to the internet): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoYGIYdwMVs>
- How do they speak to you today? How do you need to hear reassurance of God's grace?

Tuesday 22nd August

- Today is the UN's International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief.
- Let us give thanks for the ability to worship in freedom, and pray for all who do not enjoy that same freedom.

Wednesday 23rd August

- On this day in 1991, the World Wide Web was opened to the public.
- Today, we pray for all who experience bullying and oppression via the internet, and for all who have the power to change the systems and structures that monitor internet trolls, abusers and scammers. May your will be done, even online, O God.

Thursday 24th August

- Find a ribbon or a piece of string. Tie a knot in it, and think of a person you know who needs prayer.
- Tie two more knots praying for two more people. Put the string somewhere you'll notice it throughout the day where it'll remind you to pray for the three people.

Friday 25th August

- Return to the prayer from this Sunday's Vine at Home. How does it feel to pray it out loud now?

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God of all creation,

I worship you.

Amen.

Saturday 26th August

- Sit silently for ten minutes and let your mind wander. Offer any thoughts and feelings to God.