

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 29B

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A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Creative, Creator God, reveal yourself to me this day, through your eternal word.
Incarnate, living Jesus, reveal yourself through me in the love that I share this day.
Unexplainable, Holy Spirit, reveal yourself in me through the gifts that I use.
Three in One, be the life within me as I journey with you.

[Pause].

Oh Lord my God, I come to you in praise this day,
And take a moment to simply gaze on in wonder, noticing the beauty of your creation all
around me.

The beauty around me, the stars at night,
My forests, fields, seas and lofty mountains.

The animals, large and small, the people that I share this planet with.

My soul sings out and I am in awe and wonder...

Let me pause for a moment to recognise that I do not always live up to your calling on my
life, O God,

Knowing that sometimes I forget the wonder of your world.

I don't respect and protect the beauty that surrounds me.

I can be unthinking and uncaring towards the people I share this world with.

I am sorry.

I ask for your forgiveness.

Help me this day, breathe new life into my very soul.

As you breathe that new life into me, let me breathe deeply.

May I give thanks and appreciate all that I have.

Help me breathe new life and love into your world in any way I can.

Amen.

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

Hymn / song:

362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity - [YouTube](#)

[You may wish to listen to this piece of worship music before you turn to today's reading. Please note, Twelvebaskets does not own the copyright to this video, so please seek permission from the rights owner before using in public worship, including online].

Reading: Mark 10:35-45 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

In Mark chapter 10 we are introduced to two brothers - James and John, the sons of Zebedee, also known as the 'sons of thunder'. They come to Jesus with a request which could be interpreted, quite bluntly, as glory hunting.

“Teacher”, they say – we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

“What do you want me to do for you?” asks Jesus.

They reply “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory”.

They seem to be looking for some kind of special recognition, to potentially be seen as the most holy and blessed of disciples by everyone else. However, Jesus has other ideas. His response is suitably challenging, reflecting the upside-down nature of his kingdom and his refusal to conform to the world’s ideas of what glory and kingship mean, the ideas that James and John seem to have been swayed by.

For Jesus, greatness means becoming a servant and a slave – in a way which entails total and utter service, to the point of giving up your life.

In his commentary on Mark’s Gospel, Tom Wright also points out that aiming to be at Jesus’ left and right hand will soon come to mean something very different. Jesus will be crucified like a criminal and thieves will join him to die on the hill at Golgotha. It’s as if Jesus is saying to James and John – be very very careful what you wish for!

URC minister Terry Hinks has written a book called *God’s Passion: Praying with Mark*. In his reflection on this passage, he asks how this story would have gone down in the early church. Were there people in it like James and John? Was the inclusion of it designed to call out people who were seeking power and status rather than offering humble service? He writes: “for those in Mark’s church (and in our own) who wish to ape the ways of the Roman Empire, with absolute power, strict control and rigid hierarchy, this is a hard lesson to hear, but it is the way of Jesus.”

However the tale is retold, the message remains the same. Glory and power in the upside down kingdom of Jesus look very different to the glory and power that the world praises and values. Here, the glory is found in a commitment to following Jesus in radical service and self-giving love.

Spend some time today, or later this week, reflecting on the part you play in power structures in your community, church and wider world. Are you seeking after earthly, empire-building power, or something more Christ-like?

What might you need to change, pray about, or think about in order to let go of the ways of this world? How can you connect with the Jesus-call to shift the power and invert the power structures?

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine – [YouTube](#)

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Companion God, show me how to follow you, out in the world.

Fire me with your courage.

Touch me with your humility and bless me and all around me as I face the reality of our everyday service to others.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 21st October

- On this day in 1854, Florence Nightingale and a team of 38 nurses were sent to the Crimean War. The stories that emerged from the following months and years continue to shape and inspire people around the world today.
- Why not spend some time today praying for those involved in healthcare today, perhaps people you know, perhaps doctors or nurses you have been treated by, perhaps for the healthcare system more generally.

Tuesday 22nd October

- Today is the day that some church traditions mark the life and ministry of 'Salome', named in Mark's gospel as one of the women present at the crucifixion who also ministered to Jesus.
- She only has one brief mention in the gospel stories, so we can only guess at her story, but this gives us a prayer prompt to pray for all the people who often get overlooked, or whose stories are not told. Perhaps you'd like to think about where this is true for the people in your life, community and church, and offer them and their stories to God today.

Wednesday 23rd October

- Today, you may wish to pray this stanza from a hymn written by William Burleigh in the 1800s:
- Lead us, O Father, in the paths of peace
Without Thy guiding hand we go astray,
And doubts appal, and sorrows still increase;
Lead us through Christ, the true and living way.
Amen.

Thursday 24th October

- Take a moment to be still today. Listen to your breath. As you breath in, and out, notice and recognise the way that the Spirit of God is at work in you, and in the world around you.
- Take as long as you can, before returning to the rest of your day.

Friday 25th October

- Today marks the 'last day of the half-term' for many schools up and down the country, as most schools will be closed for the half-term break this week. Maybe that affects you and your family (or affects how busy or otherwise the streets near your house might be!) but take a moment to pray today, for all who need a break.
- Gracious God, today I hold in the comfort of your arms, the exhausted, the weary, the broken, the stressed and distressed people in my family, friendship circles and wider world.
- God of all grace, hold, heal and resolve, by your Spirit we pray,
Amen.

Saturday 26th October

- Holy and most blessed God,
Today is another opportunity for me to sit at your throne,
To learn of your ways,
To follow the path you have laid out for my feet.
Come close, that I may see you and be transformed,
By your Spirit, by the blessing of the Christ, I pray.
Amen.