

# twelvebaskets

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## **ADVENT 2C**

**8th December 2024**

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening Prayers

Still your heart, quieten your mind,  
Let go your flickering anxious thoughts.

Today I come to worship you, Lord God, in the middle of a season that for many feels hectic and frantic and stressful - and for others, lonely and quiet and sad.

Today, as I come to you in worship, Lord God, I bring myself, just as I am.

*In the stillness of the next few moments, just think of a word - or perhaps more than one - to describe how you are feeling today. How might you summarise where you are today?*

*If you've got an easy way to write the word or words down, you could do that. Or you can just repeat them in your mind or under your breath.*

*Offer these words as prayer. Offer yourself, just as you are, as prayer.*

I am here, Lord.

*[Hold a time of stillness.]*

I am here Lord, fully myself.

I give you thanks for all I have received.

I am sorry for all I have failed to do.

I am grateful that you forgive and accept me, just as I am.

Thank you, Holy God.

I am here to worship, bringing my whole self to you. May you use me and my own unique calling, to build your Kingdom here on Earth.

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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

**Readings:** Luke 3:1-6 - [Click for Reading](#)

### **Hymn:**

169 STF – Come thou long-expected Jesus – [YouTube](#)

## **Responding to the reading**

Do you ever feel like you are on the outside? Like you don't quite belong? Like this group perhaps 'isn't for you'?

Most of us probably have this feeling at some point or other during our lives – the sense of being marginalised. Sadly, many people in our world experience that more than others, because of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity or background.

If that's you, then may you take heart from the story of John the Baptist! He is a reminder that there is a space for everyone in God's kingdom. In this story, the outcast, the eccentric,

the bizarre guy with the locust-eating habit finds himself heralded and blessed, as the one making space for the coming of the son of God, the arrival of the Christian religion, and the transformation of human history.

John steps out of the shadows, and acts as the model for us all. No matter how wild, no matter how eccentric, no matter how much you might feel like you don't 'fit in', Jesus is calling you. *We* have a part to play. *You* have a part to play. Are you ready?

How can we be more like John? Firstly, we can point people towards Jesus. John the Baptist is ordained to make a path in the wilderness, to point out the significance of the person who is following him, to baptise Jesus and bless his ministry. He himself is not the light, but he has come to testify to the light, to point people towards the light.

Are there people around you, in your family, in your community, on your Facebook-friends-list, who you could point towards Jesus today? Are there people you could demonstrate Jesus' love, truth and hope towards today? This week? In the months ahead?

Why don't you take a moment now to think of someone, or a situation, in which you can play the John the Baptist role in the week ahead. Helping someone in your life to see Jesus. You might like to write it down, to make a note in your phone, or just spend this moment praying for that person or situation, it might even be yourself...

*Take time to do this.*

The second way we can learn from John the Baptist is to find ways to step outside the systems and structures of modern life, in order to show how they are failing people and causing hurt. John the Baptist is a disruptor. He sees the injustices and inequalities of his time, he sees the way the religious institutions have become part of the way that the status quo is maintained. And, rather than take part in that, he chooses to step outside of it. He heads into the wilderness, he becomes the New Testament's 'wild man', and ultimately he upsets the authorities so much he is killed by the royal household.

We can't all take on that role and we are not all called to put our lives at risk in pursuit of a revolutionary agenda. But, as Christians, we are invited to hear Jesus' words about being 'in the world but not of it' and to examine our relationship with the status quo, the establishment figures of our time, the systems and structures that create fortunes for a few wealthy shareholders and leave millions in abject poverty. We may not be able to fully remove ourselves from those systems and structures, we may not be able to wear animal skins and head for the wilderness, but to what extent are you able to step outside of those systems today? How are you able to call out injustice where you see it?

Are you able to change your banking habits, your shopping arrangements, your travel plans, to challenge the status quo and call into doubt those who enable injustice and abuse to continue?

## **Blessing**

Go out with courage, to change the things that are unjust and unkind.

Go out with grace, to practice forgiveness and openness.

Go out with hope, believing a better world is possible.

Go out from this moment, knowing that you are richly and unconditionally loved.

Amen.

# Prayers and Prayer Pointers

## Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December

- God of all grace,  
Thank you for the gift of this day. May I use this moment, this space, this day, as if it were a gift from you.  
May I see the opportunities to share your love with those around me.  
Thank you for your love from me. Show me how to love you and how to express that love in the way I live my life. Amen.

## Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December

- Look up a hymn or worship song on YouTube and sit and listen (you could use the one from this Sunday's worship, above, or look for your own).
- Don't do anything else while your 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.

## Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December

- 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.

## Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December

- On this day in 2015, the Paris Agreement was signed – a landmark moment in the global effort to combat the climate crisis. 9 years later, we have just finished COP 29, and there is still much work to do: politically, practically and in terms of imagination.
- Today our prayers are for the planet, and for all of us, that we can take the radical action required to change the story, to help us save our planet from ourselves. And for courage for you to be able to do what is in your power to change.

## Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December

- Christmas is a time of much gift-giving and gift-buying. Whether you are buying lots of gifts this year, or just choosing out a few things for a few people, use today to make your gift-giving a prayerful process. If you are wrapping gifts today, or buying something new, take a moment to pray for the person you are buying or wrapping for. Or, if you are one of those really organised people, go to the cupboard where the gifts are stored and hold one or two in your hands and pray for the people you will give them to.
- Try to move away from a way of thinking about presents as an exchange, and more as a means of grace, as you pray.

## Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December

- On this day in 1918, the first general election in which women were allowed to vote took place in the UK. Since then, we have continued to make progress on gender equality, but we are not there yet. And there are a number of other areas where we still need to address social inequalities and treatment of people.
- Today we pray for all who have been discriminated against, and all who are working to tackle injustice. Show us how to play our part in creating a safer, kinder way of building society.