

twelvebaskets

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LENT 3C

23rd March 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Holy, holy Lord,
Today I come into your presence,
Seeking to worship you and find encouragement for my journey through life.
Come, by your Spirit, O God.
Come to set me free, by your love,
Set me free to be someone who is called to follow in your name,
And to bring love, hope, peace and joy to those around me.

'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'
Give me a new song today. And set me free, from all my pain and guilt,
Set me free to worship you,
O God.

Gracious, loving God,
I come to meet with you and ask you to hold me in your love,
This and every day,

Amen.

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

Readings: Luke 13:1-9 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Being thirsty is something we can all relate to, and is used often in poetry and songs as an analogy for other situations where we feel longing. What images or metaphors occur to you when you think about thirst?

Do you, perhaps think of Melissa Etheridge's 'Bring Me Some Water' released in 1988?
"Somebody bring me some water; Can't you see I'm burning alive?"

She was going through some personal turmoil and expressed it in this way. The song is emotional and powerful, it is a joy to listen to.

Or perhaps you think of Frodo and Sam on Mount Doom, running out of water at the end of Lord of Rings. Or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink'!

The Old Testament reading set for today comes from Isaiah, and invokes our thoughts about 'thirsting'. The prophet speak of thirst in similar terms and uses how it feels to have a raging thirst, and also the sense of having that thirst quenched as a means to convey their message about God.

Our spiritual thirst is the urge we have to be better, to think clearer, to know ourselves more, and of course to feel closer to God. God is always moving closer to us, and in many different ways we "thirst" to know that more and more, and feel that sense of peace within us.

Somebody bring me some water... please...

In an apparently unconnected gospel reading, Luke tells of two different threads from Jesus' teaching and reports on the interactions with those around him. But perhaps in this story of the fig tree, we have the return of this theme of thirsting, as we consider this poor, wilted, undernourished tree.

Typically – Jesus doesn't explain the who's who of this story.

What if, in this reading, you are the tree?

When did you last feel unproductive? As you hear this question, you may be reminiscing about years gone by, you might be thinking back to last week or looking at a calendar. Or maybe you are looking at your watch. Perhaps it's very easy to relate to this picture of yourself as a non-fruit bearing tree and can even think of times today when you have felt less than productive!

So who is represented by the vineyard owner in this scenario? Maybe what, rather than who. Maybe the pressure we feel to perform and the sense that we are being scrutinised and judged in this way comes from work pressures, our family obligations... or worse still – pressure from within our self. We so often tell ourselves we're not good enough...not strong enough... not productive enough... or think that other people are thinking those things about us.

This of course leaves the role of the gardener – and maybe this is God. Here we can visualise a God who is patient and understanding. A God who values the tree for what it is, not for what it is producing. A God who is keen to rake around in the roots of the tree, spread some fertiliser, and see what happens... give it some room to breathe. A God who shows grace and mercy to the tree. A God who knows the tree can and will flourish if it is given a chance.

A God who wants to grant "one more year".

One more day?

One more month?

One more season?

One more decade?

One more lifetime?

A God who is always patient.

Always gracious.

Always loving.

When I think of THIS God... I kind of like to think he was probably fobbing the vineyard owner off with his "one more year" assessment. I reckon when that year is up he would be just as happy to give it another year... and another one... maybe as long as it might take for the tree to "find itself" and flourish.

For our spiritual thirst to improve and move forward can only be fulfilled if we can have the graceful offer of room to breathe and be ourselves... to discover our beautiful, personal potential.

Hymn:

152 STF – This is the day that the Lord has made – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Your grace has found me here, O Lord,
Your grace has set me free from guilt and worry,
And into the midst of all that this week will bring,
Guide me by your Spirit, O God,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 24th March

- 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 25th March

- Go outdoors and find something natural: a stone, leaf, flower, or something else. Consider the ways God has made this thing and then reflect on how you too are wonderfully made by God. What does this mean to you?

Wednesday 26th March

- Look up a hymn or worship song on YouTube or in a hymn book and sit and listen or read the words aloud: don't do anything else while you listen. Let your mind, body and soul tune into God through the music in prayer.

Thursday 27th March

- Light a candle. Jesus is the light of the world. Pray about the places you experience darkness in your life, that Jesus light might shine there.

Friday 28th March

- Go litter picking. Each bit of litter you pick up is working to bring God's Kingdom in that place. As you pick up the litter, pray about what it might mean for God's will for this place to be done.

Saturday 29th March

- Think about how God is at work in the lives of everyone. You can see God shining out from all people. Remember this with the next person you speak to, and give thanks for the glimpses of God you see in them.