

# twelvebaskets

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## LENT 4C

30th March 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening Prayers

Use the following words to help centre yourself in the moment. Say them out loud, or speak them in your mind:

*Jesus, open my heart.*

Prepare yourself to hear God's word in a new way

*Jesus, open my heart.*

Listen for God's voice, calling you to serve others and love radically:

*Jesus, open my heart.*

Hold the joys, regrets and frustrations from the week, and look ahead to the opportunities next week will bring:

*Jesus, open my heart*

Hold the people you share your life with, and the challenges that come with relationships and friendships:

*Jesus, open my heart.*

Rest a moment in the quiet.

*Jesus, open my heart.*

Amen.

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

**Reading:** Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 – [Click for reading](#)

## Responding to the reading

Today's gospel reading is the famous Parable of the Prodigal Son, a story rich with themes of redemption, forgiveness, and the boundless nature of God's grace.

How is the story speaking to you this week? What do you need to take away into your own life? If you've heard this story dozens of times before, is there anything new that strikes you?

Take a moment to reflect, then read on...

The story opens with the younger son demanding his share of the inheritance while his father is still alive, an act that in cultural context, is not only presumptuous but deeply hurtful. It's basically the equivalent of saying 'I wish you were dead'.

Despite this, the father grants his son's request. Here, the father's actions foreshadow the story's deeper message about grace: it is given not because it is earned, but because it is freely offered out of love. Reflect on your own understanding of grace. Have there been times when you've felt unworthy of God's love or forgiveness? How does this story challenge conventional views of worthiness and merit?

As the younger son squanders his wealth and hits rock bottom, his decision to return home is driven by desperation. Yet, it's in this moment of utter destitution that he prepares to ask for forgiveness, hoping merely to be treated as one of his father's hired servants. He turns around (the literal meaning of 'to repent') and returns to the Father's house. Think about moments in your own life when you've felt distant from God or from your community. What does it mean to turn back? How does the father's response upon seeing his son from a distance, running to him and embracing him, deepen your understanding of God's readiness to welcome and forgive?

The father's reaction to his son's return is extravagant and unconditional: he orders the best robe, a ring, and sandals to be brought for his son, along with preparations for a celebratory feast. This is grace in action: an unmerited favour that restores not just relationship but also identity and status.

Are there relationships in your life in need of restoration? How can you move towards others with the same kind of grace that the father demonstrates?

This parable not only invites us to rejoice in the grace we have received but challenges us to extend that grace to others. It asks us to consider:

- How do I respond to God's lavish grace in my life?
- Where might I need to extend forgiveness and celebration where I have so far offered only resentment or judgment?
- How can I more fully embody the father's example of grace and welcome in my community?

### **Hymn:**

357 STF – Jesus – the name high over all – [YouTube](#)

### **Blessing**

May you go out and seek a better world,  
May you go with the Spirit of God in our hearts,  
May you show God's love to the people you meet.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers**

### **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March**

- Challenge and inspire me, O God  
Shape my response to your grace, I pray,  
That I might hear your invitation to me this day,  
And join with you in your love for the community around me. Amen.

## **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April**

- Today is April Fool's Day – a day for light-hearted fun and enjoyment, especially if you are a fan of practical jokes.
- As you go through the day, try to think about the things in your life, or in the world around you that might make God laugh. Could you join in with divine joy where you see or notice it?

## **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

- Hold a moment of stillness. In the quiet, can you spend a few minutes in peace, holding space for God to speak to you. Listen and notice anything you think you need to respond to.

## **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

- Lord of all grace,  
Today I know myself blessed,  
And recognise that I have received much.  
Help me to live a thankful, grateful life, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

- God whose table is always open,  
Help me to hear the invitation to take my place today,  
To see what is mine to do,  
And to extend that same invitation to others. Amen.

## **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April**

- The UK is experiencing a housing emergency – more and more people are affected by poor and unsuitable housing, and the number of people sleeping rough in England is now at 4,667, nearly 1,000 more than this time last year. There is much work to be done to resolve the structural issues that are causing these challenges for people – today let us pray for all working towards a solution, as well as those affected by the sharp end of the crisis.