

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 21C

24th August 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

God is everywhere,
In this space and all spaces,
In this time and all times.

God is waiting to meet you and is ready to welcome you,
Just as it has been for all eternity,
So be still.

Pause

Get ready to notice the Spirit working,
Through words on the page,
Through sounds around you,
Through familiar and unfamiliar smells,
Through all that you see when you look up from what you are reading,
Through the touch of your hands as you hold them together to pray.

So be still.

Pause

If you feel able speak aloud the following words:

God of all time and space I notice you here. I am ready.

Amen

Opening hymn / song

88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! – [YouTube](#)

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

Reading: Luke 13:10-17 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

God's grace is at the heart of so much that the gospels are trying to communicate, and that comes across in today's story too. We continue our journey through Luke and today encounter a woman who has been bent over for eighteen years, so long that her body has been shaped by her pain. She is unnamed, unnoticed, and unable to stand up straight. But Jesus sees her.

That detail alone is worth pausing on: Jesus sees her.

In a world that often overlooks the vulnerable, especially women burdened by suffering, Jesus notices. He stops teaching. He calls her forward. And in front of everyone – perhaps

in the midst of skeptical stares and religious scrutiny – he lays his hands on her and heals her.

She stands up straight.

What a powerful image of grace: not just healing her body, but restoring her dignity. She moves from the margins to the centre, from bent and burdened to upright and whole. Her healing isn't only about physical relief, it's a reclaiming of her full humanity.

But not everyone is happy. The synagogue leader is indignant. It's the Sabbath, after all, a day for rest, not healing. And here, Jesus offers us a radical reminder: compassion does not clock off. Love is not bound by rules. Grace doesn't follow our timetables.

This moment reminds us that grace always prioritises people over systems. That our faith must be flexible enough to respond to real human need, even if that means breaking tradition, disrupting expectations, or confronting resistance.

Jesus doesn't shame the leaders, but he calls out their inconsistency. "You would untie your ox or donkey on the Sabbath to lead it to water, why shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham, be set free too?"

Here, discipleship looks like standing with those the world has bowed down, those who are unseen, unheard, or burdened. It means asking: What rules, what unspoken norms, what inherited traditions do we hold onto that might be keeping someone else from healing or inclusion?

And it also means asking ourselves: Where do we feel bent over? Where have shame, hardship, or silence kept us from standing tall? The good news is this: Jesus sees you, too. And the invitation is the same: come forward, be touched by grace, and rise.

So today, ask yourself:

- Who in your community needs to be seen and lifted up?
- What burdens, in yourself or others, need releasing?
- How can you shape a faith that makes room for healing, even when it disrupts what's expected?

If you have the opportunity to discuss these questions and your responses to them with people you trust, then take that opportunity this week. You might even like to jot them down in a notebook or on your phone and take them with you to visit a neighbour, a friend, someone from your church or community.

Discipleship means living in a way that reflects Jesus' heart: noticing the overlooked, loosening the binds, and standing tall together in love.

May you be brave enough to come forward, bold enough to speak grace, and free enough to live it.

Responding in music

Listen to one or both of these hymns as you reflect on all that you've read today. How is God speaking to you through these words?

132 STF – O God, our help in ages past – [YouTube](#)

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

Blessing

May the way ahead seem clear to you as you rise from this place,
May the Lord of light open doors for you and create opportunities to join in with the great story of love.

And may peace reign in your heart, always

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 25th August

- Doing the garden or simply sitting in it:
- Pray for the created world and the cycles of life within it. For the way seeds grow and crops are harvested. For the way plants are part of the life cycle of insects and birds. For the delicate balance within creation. Share with God your joy at something you've seen. Share with God your concerns about the imbalance across the planet.
- Ask – What is mine to do?

Tuesday 26th August

- On this day in 1768, Captain James Cook set sail from England on board HMS Endeavour. All that followed is not to be celebrated and many mistakes were made by those early adventurers and the politicians that followed in their wake, but perhaps today we can celebrate all who are driven by a spirit of discovery.
- Holy God, as we seek to discover more of you, and your world, and as we recognise the need to change and embrace the 'new', help us to have that spirit of adventure that takes us out of our comfort zones and brings us closer to you, Amen.

Wednesday 27th August

- Going to bed:
- As you go to bed today, think about those people you encountered in some way during the day. Ask God to make clear to you who needs to feel and know their love. Think about how that can happen and the part you might play. Ask yourself about how you might invite them to join your faith family.

Thursday 28th August

- Today is celebrated in some traditions as the Feast Day of St Augustine of Hippo, one of the most important thinkers in the early Christian church (he was alive between 354 and 430AD).
- Augustine of Hippo was one of the first thinkers to champion the perfect unity of body and soul that makes up the human being – including the need for us to celebrate and show respect for our bodies, as it is a part of God's creation. Perhaps today we still need to hear his ancient wisdom.
- Why not pray for yourself today, for your body and your attitude towards it.

Friday 29th August

- Going in or out of a door:
- Pray for the welcome people receive when they come to your church space and the worship that takes place there. In particular give thanks for those who lead it. Musicians, Preachers, Worship Leaders and AV providers. Ask God about what they want us to know and learn and what part you can play in making people welcome.

Saturday 30th August

- Lord of all light, as we come towards the end of the summer months, we thank you for the gift of long days and sunshine, for summer holidays and breaks from traditional routine.
- As we return to the autumn, to the start of September, to the beginning of term-time, help us to hear your invitation to follow in your ways, to listen to your prompting, to be guided by your grace.
- I pray this for myself, for those around me, and for the whole world.
Amen.