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ORDINARY 25A

20th September 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Take time to find something in your home that you hold as precious and important. It may be a photograph, a flower or personal item.

Whatever you choose, consider:

- What is it that makes it important to you?
- What memories does it hold?
- How do you feel about it and what would happen if you lost it?

Now imagine that God is holding you as precious and important:

- Loving and caring for you and your unique character
- Following your journey of faith
- Wanting never to lose you

When you feel able put down your object and pick up again these written words. Come then to worship, knowing that whatever you offer in this moment is precious and important.

Reading: Matthew 20:1-16 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

If we're honest, this parable doesn't seem fair. Workers are hired throughout the day. Some begin at sunrise, others at midday, and still others in the final hour before the working day ends. Then, when evening comes, the landowner pays them all the same wage.

Immediately, we sympathise with those who worked longest. "Surely," we think, "they deserve more."

It is one of those moments when Jesus' stories expose something deep within us, perhaps something that comes to us inherently in our capitalist culture. We are very good at measuring: we measure effort, we measure success, we measure who has contributed most, we measure who deserves reward.

The kingdom of God, however, seems to operate by a different economy altogether. The landowner asks a searching question: "Are you envious because I am generous?"

That question lingers.

The workers who laboured all day have received exactly what was promised. Nothing has been taken from them. Their unhappiness comes not from injustice but from comparison.

How often does that happen in our own lives? Someone else's success makes us doubt our own worth. Someone else's blessing makes us forget our own gifts. We begin to

compare callings, achievements, recognition, or opportunities, and before long gratitude quietly slips away.

Jesus gently invites us to step out of that way of thinking.

This parable is not really about wages, it is about grace. Grace cannot be earned, it cannot be accumulated through longer service or greater achievement. Grace is always a gift.

For those of us seeking to follow Jesus today, this can be both unsettling and liberating. It means God's love is not a reward for getting life right. It means the newcomer belongs just as fully as the lifelong disciple. It means the person who finds faith late in life is welcomed just as warmly as the one who has served for decades. It means there is enough grace for everyone.

In a world shaped by competition and comparison, this is radically good news, but it also challenges us. Can we celebrate another person's blessing without feeling diminished ourselves? Can we rejoice when someone else is welcomed, forgiven, or given a second chance? Can we believe that God's generosity towards others does not reduce God's love for us?

The kingdom is not a competition, it is a celebration.

There is enough mercy, enough welcome, enough love, enough grace.

So today, you might like to reflect on these questions:

- Where are you comparing your life with someone else's?
- Is there someone whose blessing or success you struggle to celebrate?
- What would it mean to trust that God's generosity is abundant enough for everyone, including you?

The good news of the Gospel is that we do not stand before God trying to prove our worth. We stand alongside one another as people who have all been welcomed by grace. And perhaps that is the greatest miracle of all.

None of us has earned our place, yet every one of us is invited.

This week, may you find freedom from comparison, joy in the blessings of others, and deep confidence that you are loved, not because of how much you have achieved, but because God's generosity knows no limits. May your life become a reflection of that same abundant grace, freely received and freely shared.

Amen.

Hymn / Song

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

May you go from here, knowing yourself to be truly blessed,
Following in the steps of the heroes of history and the everyday disciples who have sought
to follow Jesus, to share love, to spread justice, to practice peace.
May you join in that pilgrimage today, in Jesus' name,
Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 21st September

- Today, pray for peace in the world.
- You might like to name before God places where there is war, violence, fear, or political tension.
- Prince of Peace, come among us. Make us people of peace. Amen.

Tuesday 22nd September

- Find a map of your local area.
- Using post it notes or bits of paper, or simply your finger, identify areas where the community is flourishing and areas of need.
- Ask God to continue working in these places.

Wednesday 23rd September

- God of justice, disturb me where I have become too comfortable. Help me to see those who are ignored, pushed aside, or treated unfairly.
- Give me courage to act with kindness and integrity. Amen.

Thursday 24th September

- Today, you might like to pray for worship across the world.
- Give thanks for Christians gathering in many languages, cultures, traditions, and circumstances.
- God of all people, unite us in love, humility, and hope. Amen.

Friday 25th September

- Today, pray for children and young people.
- Pray for those facing exams, friendship difficulties, anxiety, or uncertainty about the future.
- Loving God, may every young person know they are precious and full of possibility. Amen.

Saturday 26th September

- Hold a moment of stillness today.
Breathe in slowly and remember: you are loved by God.
Breathe out slowly and release what you do not need to carry.
Loving God, hold me in your peace. Amen.