

**Mears Ashby and Hardwick
and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

Sunday 8 March 2026

Lent 3

As we journey on through Lent, our Gospel passage flows beautifully on from the story of Nicodemus and his re-birth. Today, we find Jesus in Samaria talking to a woman at a well. Jesus speaks of the water of re-birth – spiritual birth. The woman is re-born as Jesus reveals himself to be the Messiah she is seeking. She is a woman of faith. Jesus washes her life clean.

May you draw near to the one who washes away our own stains.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to meet with Jesus at the well of life,
open your heart to his life-giving waters.*



As water to the thirsty,
as beauty to the eyes,
as strength that follows weakness,
as truth instead of lies,
as songtime and springtime
and summertime to be,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

CCLI reported

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Prayers and Reflections
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Cleansing! Refreshing!

PREPARING OURSELVES

*Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love.
You may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here,
in this room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the
time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.*

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,
and through me.

Amen.

LETTING GO

*If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets,
with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to
God in the silence of your heart. And then, reflect on the words of this
second verse of our hymn.*

Like calm in place of clamour,
like peace that follows pain,
like meeting after parting,
like sunshine after rain,
like moonlight and starlight
and sunlight on the sea,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

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If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.

Feel our Lord's love and compassion, and receive of his forgiveness.

Walking beside a lake or stream, looking out on a sea, these can be places of peace and peaceful reflection. Our Lord is inviting us to walk with him, rest with him, and lay our burdens and cares on him. His gift to us is deep and abiding peace. All we have to do is draw near to him.

Take a moment to rest in his presence and contemplate these words of Scripture.

Jesus said, 'Come to me,
all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.'

Matthew 11:28

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER (The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across our villages and the worldwide Church. Add your voice to the earthly cycle of prayer to our God who always listens to our prayers.

Eternal God,
give us insight
to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer asks God to open our hearts and minds so that we can draw close to him. As we do so, we receive three gifts – we see more clearly his will and purpose for this season of our lives, we know what it is within ourselves that is harming us and we ask for help to let go of this burden, and this will lead us to a better version of ourselves. It is a cleansing prayer.

Allow our Lord to take you on this three stage Lenten journey of cleansing and refreshing.



As sleep that follows fever,
as gold instead of grey,
as freedom after bondage,
as sunrise to the day,
as home to the traveller
and all we long to see,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

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LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

The well of life

Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal

life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’

He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’ ‘I have no husband,’ she replied. Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.’ ‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’ ‘Woman,’ Jesus replied, ‘believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.’ The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you – I am he.’

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could this be the Messiah?’ They came out of the town and made their way towards him.

Meanwhile his disciples urged him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know nothing about.’ Then his disciples said to each other, ‘Could someone have brought him food?’ ‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, “It’s still four months until harvest”? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus

the saying “One sows and another reaps” is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.’

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I’ve ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’

John 4:5-42

Cleansing... Refreshing...

This is one of the most beautiful encounters in the Gospels. Jesus breaks through the social barriers to offer this ‘unclean’ woman a new beginning. She is unclean in the eyes of the Jewish authorities because she is a Samaritan. She is unclean in the eyes of her community because she is living with a man who is not her husband and she has had five husbands before him. Yet, in Jesus’ eyes, she is a woman worthy of redemption. She is a woman of faith who is waiting for the Messiah. She is one of God’s children – a beloved one.

Ponder how our Lord’s love breaks down barriers within ourselves, within our society. All are worthy of his welcome and ours.

Ponder too how God’s Spirit works through this mid-day meeting. As the sun burns down on Jesus and the woman, so the Spirit burns in her heart, stirring her soul as she sees that Jesus truly is God’s chosen one. She feels herself to be loved and forgiven. She is no longer unclean. She is free – free to go and share the good news with her neighbours.

She is re-born by the Spirit’s cleansing and refreshing waters.

Ponder which aspects of her story stir your heart. Give thanks to Jesus, our Lord, for he sees you and he loves you.

OUR PRAYERS

Here are some Lenten prayers. Feel free to add your own.

Lord Jesus, you waited at the well for this woman. You could see the burdens that she was carrying – her back story. In love, you gave her the water of life. Cleanse and refresh me too, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you wiped away all that made this woman 'unclean' in the eyes of her neighbours. You restored her back to her community. Lord, I think of all the divisions in our world today. Wash away, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you saw the hurt and shame in the woman's eyes, and you washed her clean. You filled her with love and joy and hope. As I think of the pain in the eyes of those dear to me, I lift up to you...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**