

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 23 August 2026
Trinity 12**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Two months on from celebrating Sywell's patron saints – St. Peter and St. Paul – we are back answering the question that Jesus asks his team, 'Who do you say I am?' When Peter gets the answer spot on, Jesus says something surprising to his team, 'Don't tell anyone.' Why did he say this?

Enjoy pondering this puzzle.

Every blessing,

Revd Katrina

Vicar

Phone No. 01604 812907

Mobile No. 07710 464675

E-mail: katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk

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As you prepare to ponder the question, 'Why did he say this?', recommit yourself to following Jesus.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this our song shall ever be;
for we have no hope, nor Saviour,
if we have not hope in thee.

William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)

Prayers and Reflections for use at home on Trinity 12

Why did he say this?

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your 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.

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,
I place my hopes and dreams,
my fears and concerns,
into your safe and loving hands.
Enfold me with your love,
make my heart beat in time with yours;
in Jesus' name,
I pray. **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 next verse.

All for Jesus, thou wilt give us
strength to serve thee, hour by hour;
none can move us from thy presence
whilst we trust thy love and power.

William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)



*If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.
Feel God's forgiveness.*

Our verse is a prayer to stay close to Jesus so that his teaching guides us, inspires us and strengthens us. It suggests that, even when we are finding daily life a struggle, we can still live for him. We can still serve him – witness to him – by the way that we live. Simply live. For this can be a source of strength and inspiration to others. A blessing.

Pause to think about this.

It might be that you are inspiring family or friends by the grace and peace and gentleness that you are displaying in the face of pain, sorrow or adversity. It could be that you are showing courage or radiating hope in the face of difficulties. It might be that you are looking outwards from your own frailties and showing kindness to others.

How are you being a Christ-like blessing?

Think too of those who are inspiring and strengthening you by being Christ-like in the face of life's challenges.

Give thanks to God for them.



Receive of our Lord's spiritual gifts as you feed on this next verse.

Ponder how you will serve him today.

*All for Jesus, at thine altar
thou wilt give us sweet content;
there, dear Lord, we shall receive thee
in the solemn sacrament.*

William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER (The Collect)

Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God whose love is unbreakable.

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer reminds us that God is on our side. He is for us – with us – within us. When we are tuned into him, we can see life's deeper meaning, we can sense his deeper purpose for our lives. We can discover how to live life fully and experience inner peace and joy even when our life feels full of problems and questions. Like holding a set of rosary beads, we are being called to contemplate each of our prayer's key words one at a time. Slowly ponder each of these words prayerfully.

What is God saying to you?

How is his Spirit opening your heart? Your eyes?

Open yourself to him.

GOD – SENT – SON – SAVE – GOODNESS – GRACE – THANKFULNESS



All for Jesus, thou hast loved us;
all for Jesus, thou hast died;
all for Jesus, thou art with us;
all for Jesus crucified.

William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

You are the Messiah!

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'

They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Matthew 16:13-20

Why did he say this?

To help us understand why Jesus might have said to his team, 'Do not tell anyone that I am the Messiah', we need to look at the setting for this passage – biblically and geographically.

Jesus is on the move. He has crossed the Sea of Galilee and has gone north to Caesarea Philippi. Who drove him there? You won't be surprised to hear that it was the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Both of these religious parties wanted to keep control of the Jewish faith. Both were being thorns in Jesus' side because he was a thorn in theirs!

They had heard Jesus preach and teach. They had seen him perform miracles and heal the sick. Yet still they wanted more. More proof that he is who he says he is – sent by God – his chosen one. They ask him for a sign from heaven. Hasn't his whole ministry been a sign from heaven?

I think so. But they couldn't see it. Didn't want to believe it. It is why Jesus left Galilee and went away to this region outside of their reach. To think prayerfully about his next steps. To prepare himself for Jerusalem, to test his team's readiness for the greatest of all challenges. Holy Week, that make or break week, and the cross.

He chose a spiritual city – Caesarea Philippi – but one where worship was offered to the Greek god Pan. It will have reminded him of the scale of the mission facing his Church. There are so many eyes to open, hearts to win and lives to transform. Will they be ready for this?

This was to be an absolutely crucial conversation. 'Who do you say I am?' Jesus asks. Silently, he is saying to them, 'You have heard me preach the greatest of all sermons on God's love and forgiveness. You've listened to parable after parable about his kingdom. You have seen me touch the sick and bring the dead to life. You were there when I fed the 5,000 and then the 4,000. I have calmed storms and troubled minds. You do not need any more signs. You know who I am – by whose authority I do this – who sent me. You can answer this.' And Simon Peter does.

It is time. Time to set out for Jerusalem and the final duel with those who will keep on denying who he is – the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the elders of the Jewish faith. And this gives us the answer to the question we have been pondering, 'Why did Jesus order his disciples to tell no one that he is the Messiah?' Surely, Jesus wants everyone to know that he is God's chosen one. Yes, he does, but not yet. First, he needs to come face to face with his key opponents, win their hearts and minds, or die trying. Then, and only then, it will be the disciples turn to say, 'Jesus is the Messiah, God's own Son. Listen as we tell you about him and his love.'



All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this the church's song must be,
till, at last, we all are gathered
one in love and one in thee.

William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, you are the Messiah – the Lord of my life – God’s own Son.
You are the one who daily inspires me. Even when life is tough,
you are there for me. For this, Lord, I praise you. Accept my love.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you are the world’s Messiah – Christ our King. Global leaders
are accountable to you alone for their actions. To show compassion,
to seek peace is to build your kingdom. Lord, open the eyes...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you are our Messiah – our Servant King, who came to be
with the lost and the broken. By the power of your love, one word –
one look – one touch can transform a life. Lord, come, be with...

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.**