

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 30 August 2026
Trinity 13**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Last week, Simon Peter declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God and Jesus told the twelve to tell no one. We wondered why he said this. Today, Peter says, 'Never, Lord!' in response to our Lord's warning. Why did he say this?

Enjoy stepping into Peter's shoes.

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to contemplate Peter's response to our Lord's warning, focus your thoughts on the one who was willing to die for us.

Above the voices of the world around me,
my hopes and dreams,
my cares and loves and fears,
the long-awaited call of Christ has found me,
the voice of Jesus echoes in my ears.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

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Never!

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 part two of the opening verse of our hymn.

'I gave my life to break the cords that bind you,
I rose from death to set your spirit free;
turn from your sins and put the past behind you,
take up your cross and come and follow me.'

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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 God's forgiveness.

Our verse is our Lord's invitation to us. It is why we follow him. For the peace – the freedom – the love – the forgiveness – the life that he gives to everyone who turns to him. He is our Saviour King and our Servant King. He was willing to give up everything – everything – to break the cords which could hold us back from living with love in our hearts for God and for our local and global neighbours. In setting us free, we bind ourselves to him. We dedicate our lives to him. It is not always easy to do so. We do still face temptations and frustrations. We can still face opposition when we try to speak truth to power or tolerance to hate.

*Ponder those two phrases: **Break the cords** and **Take up your cross and come and follow me**. Notice how our Lord's voice is echoing in your ears, speaking into your life. Receive of his grace and love and guidance.*

Part one of the next verse reminds us of our finite smallness compared to his infinite vastness. His Spirit will provide what we are lacking if we turn to him in prayerful humility.



What can I offer him who calls me to him?
Only the wastes of sin and self and shame;
a mind confused, a heart that never knew him,
a tongue unskilled at naming Jesus' name.

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Where did you find yourself in these words? Where did you experience the Son's love and his Father's loving affirmation? Give thanks for this.

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice and the globe.

Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God of life and love.

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer opens with words that speak of Psalm 139.

O Lord, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
For there is not a word on my tongue,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

Psalm 139:1, 3

God knows you, truly knows you. He knows how you are feeling today, what's on your heart. You cannot hide from him. He will not hide himself away from you. You can rely on him on your dark days. You can share with him on your sunny days. You can turn to him when you wish and, before a word leaves your lips, he is listening. This is so wonderful to contemplate, isn't it? Even when we let him down or misunderstand him, as Peter will do in our Gospel reading, he is for us. Pause to contemplate this and give thanks.



Yet at your call, and hungry for your blessing,
drawn by that cross which moves a heart of stone,
now Lord I come, my tale of sin confessing,
and in repentance turn to you alone.

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LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Jesus predicts his death

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'

Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. 'Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

Matthew 16:21-end

Never!

Simon Peter was on a high at the end of last week's Gospel reading: a spiritual high and a personal high. After long centuries of waiting, long centuries of living under foreign regimes, God's Messiah is here! Jesus is the one come to set us free! Alleluia! And he has chosen me as his Rock – the leader of his team. This is the gist of what Peter was thinking and feeling moments before today's passage.

But he has missed the vital message hidden within the giving of the keys. Jesus is handing these keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter because he (Jesus) won't be around to build his church. He is going to die – rise – leave and Peter will be left in charge of his team of Good News sharers. It is not what Peter was expecting. His dreams of Jesus as the Messiah, God's chosen one, rallying his people and leading them to freedom – spiritual or social freedom – are about to be dashed. How crushing this must have been for him. Feel his hurt as Jesus responds to his 'Lord, never!' with a bruising, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me.' In humility, he would have had to listen to what it will take to follow Jesus as he goes to the cross and to keep on sharing his message, God's invitation, in the face of persecution and prison.

The opening words of our final verse could have been Peter's. How might they be yours?



Lord, I believe; help now my unbelieving;
I come in faith because your promise stands.
Your word of pardon and of peace receiving,
all that I am I place within your hands.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

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But why did Peter say, 'Lord, never!'? Because our Lord's warning crushed Peter's vision for Jesus. In that instant, he forgets to pray as Jesus taught him to pray, 'Your will be done, not mine.' Peter the impetuous speaks before thinking why this must be. How it flows naturally on from the giving of the keys. Also, I like to think of this as a sign of his deep love for Jesus. How could he accept our Lord's death sentence? Could you?



Let me become what you shall choose to make me,
freed from the guilt and burden of my sins.
Jesus is mine, who never shall forsake me,
and in his love my new-born life begins.

Timothy Dudley-Smith - CCLI reported

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you are my Messiah – God’s own Son. You came to do your Father’s will – to die for me, to die for everyone. You set me free to love your Father and you with every fibre of my being. Thank you!

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you were willing to put your life on the line to show us how much your Father loves the world he made. He calls us his children. Lord, forgive us when we misunderstand his desire for our lives.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, Peter did not want you to suffer and die. I feel the same when someone I love receives a life limiting diagnosis. How can he or she die? Lord, help me to trust in your promise of life after life.

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.**