

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 11 October 2026
Trinity 19**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Today, we have the last of three parables aimed at the religious leaders. 'If you don't accept me,' Jesus is saying, 'this will be the consequence.' Today's parable outlines the spiritual consequence. There will be no place at God's banquet. It is an opportunity to ponder how we prepare our hearts for worship.

Enjoy being present with God.

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to be fully present with God – Father, Son and Spirit, contemplate this verse from the Book of Hours.



God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at mine end,
and at my departing.

Book of Hours (1514)

Prayers and Reflections
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Being Present

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 opening verse.

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

George Matheson (1842-1906)



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.

As we prepare to contemplate the third of our Lord's parables, our verse invites us to come into the circle of our Lord's love and rest in his gentle, attentive divine presence. We are encouraged to be simply with him. Our life is his, his life is ours. Into the depths of this phrase we dive.

Ponder what it means to be fully at one with Lord and to open your heart, wholly and completely. If you hide nothing from him, you might find that life is richer and fuller as our verse says.

Take the time to contemplate this. If you wish, you can drink in the words of this psalm of spiritual love and longing.

Lord, I long for you, I look for you,
I watch for you, I wait for you.
I thirst for you, O my Lord,
Like someone in the desert seeking an oasis,
Like a wilderness beast seeking a stream.
I long for your presence,
I look for your love,
I watch for your coming,
I wait for your call.
Come, Lord, and satisfy me.
Come quench my thirst,
Come refresh and renew me.
Lord, I long for you, I look for you,
I watch for you, I wait for you.

David Adams (2004)

Experience our Lord's promise of life in all its abundant fullness – spiritual fullness.



O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

George Matheson (1842-1906)

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

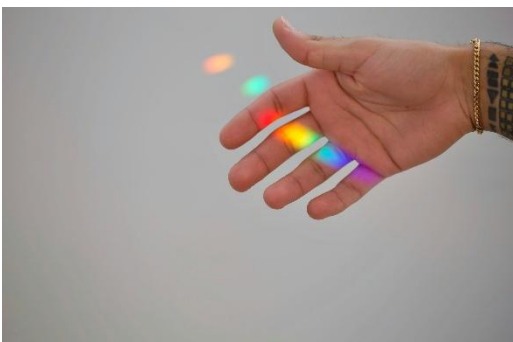
Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice and the globe.

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

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer speaks of the verses in Lamentations where, in the midst of deep despair and desperation, a voice of hope recalls God's faithfulness and love. Even though Jerusalem is in ruins, there is hope. Every morning, God's love is for us. He is merciful towards us. Nothing can stop him loving us or separate us from his love.

In every season of our lives, we can trust in him. Each day, he gives us freely of his love. Pause to absorb this. Pray for those who need to know this as deeply as you do.



O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

'Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

'But they paid no attention and went off – one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, ill-treated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

'Then he said to his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find." So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, "How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?" The man was speechless.

'Then the king told the attendants, "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

'For many are invited, but few are chosen.'

Being present...

Jesus is well-known for being over-the-top in the telling of his parables. We see this in the way that the guests (the elders) respond to the king's servants (the prophets) and in the king's (God's) angry response. Jesus is saying to the religious leaders, 'If you reject me, you reject God's invitation and you will not have a place at his table in his kingdom.' Heaven is often likened to a banquet. It is a spiritual judgement.

*Instead, his kingdom will be opened wide. All who say 'Yes' to Jesus, God's Son, may come in. The surprise comes at the end of the parable, where one poor man is singled out for not wearing appropriate clothes. When I thought about this, these opening lines from a beautiful prayer of humble access came to me – **Most merciful Lord, your love compels us to come in. Our hands were unclean, our hearts were unprepared; we were not fit even to eat the crumbs from under your table. But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation, and share your bread with sinners.***

It is a prayer that can be prayed as we prepare ourselves to come up to communion and receive spiritual feeding at our Lord's table. The man at the wedding banquet was not rejected for wearing the wrong clothes, rather because he had not prepared himself to receive of his king's gracious hospitality. This parable and the prayer of humble of access are powerful reminders to prepare our hearts and souls to receive of God's grace and love. We need to be ready to be in his presence – at home, at church or in heaven. Ready, we receive.

God's love compels us to be fully present – attentive – when we turn up to pray and praise him, especially when we feel unworthy of his love.



O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

George Matheson (1842-1906)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you invite me to come and spend time in your presence, to sit at your feet and listen. Lord, teach me to come with a heart ready to praise and a soul ready to receive. For I am yours.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, it is easier for a poor person to believe in your selfless love, your Father's gracious love. Lord, I think of those who are self-reliant, trusting solely in their own talents. Open their hearts to your presence...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you can see into the hearts of those who are struggling with worries or ill-health or the frailties of old age. You offer the gift of peace, deep and abiding inner peace. Lord, come and 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.**