

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

Sunday 13 October 2024

Trinity 20

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Today, we see the love that Jesus has for a rich man as he sets him an impossible challenge - let go of your wealth and place your life in God's hands. It is a huge ask, isn't it? God may not be asking us to do the same, but there is always something about ourselves that he is inviting us to change.

Enjoy pondering what this is as you draw closer to him!

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to ponder our Lord's request to let go and follow him, open your heart and your will to him.



My God, accept my heart this day,
and make it always thine,
that I from thee no more may stray,
no more from thee decline.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Trinity 20
Get close!

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 second verse.

Before the cross of him who died,
behold, I prostrate fall;
let every sin be crucified,
and Christ be all in all.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)



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 our Lord's challenge to the rich man, 'Give up everything you own and follow me!', it is good to be drawn to the foot of the cross. Here, we are reminded of all that Jesus was willing to give up for us and for this rich man. He gave up his place in heaven at his Father's side, and the status that comes from being God's own Son. He was born into a family that had little in the way of wealth. He gave up even this to go from village to village sharing the good news of his Father's love and grace and forgiveness. He was willing to face up to the opposition of the elders, and die to save us. What was Jesus willing to do for love? Everything!

Offer your response to his giving. What are you willing to give to him?

In words that echo your baptism, where you were anointed with the sign of the cross in holy oil as a follower of Jesus, accept the forgiveness (and love) our Lord gives. You are his. You have a place in his kingdom on earth as well as in heaven.



*Anoint me with thy heavenly grace,
and seal me for thine own;
that I may see thy glorious face,
and worship near thy throne.*

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

Our psalm verse is an invitation to ponder all that our Lord gives daily, and how you draw close to him.

*Satisfy us with your loving-kindness in the morning,
that we may rejoice and be glad in all our days.*

Psalm 90:14

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

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

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

God, our light and our salvation:

illuminate our lives,

that we may see your goodness in the land of the living,

and looking on your beauty

may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer invites us to see God's light in two ways. Firstly, as a light who can lighten our darkness and show us glimmers of hope in our dark times. It is he who makes our hearts sing with joy and praise when we see the glorious beauty of the world around us, and when we experience the wondrous beauty of the love and care of others. Despite all the doom and gloom in the world news, God's world is a good place to live. God's love is with us, and for us, and in us. God's light is like the brightest of blue skies on an autumn's morning - glorious! uplifting!

But... secondly, God's light is like a spotlight or torch. It shines into the darker corners of our lives. It shows up the faults and flaws within us, exposes the things about ourselves that we'd like to keep hidden. Today, God is inviting us to look with him into those corners. What do you see? What is he inviting you to change about yourself?

Let go and let his Spirit give you a divine makeover. If our daily lives are our offering to our Lord, our gifts should be fitting for our King.

Contemplate this with our penultimate verse.



Let every thought and work and word
to thee be ever given:

Then life shall be thy service, Lord,
and death the gate of heaven.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

The rich and the kingdom of God

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good – except God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother."' "

'Teacher,' he declared, 'all these I have kept since I was a boy.'

Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!'

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?'

Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.'

Then Peter spoke up, 'We have left everything to follow you!'

'Truly I tell you,' Jesus replied, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes,

brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.’

Mark 10:17-31

Depending on God...

So far today, we have looked at all that Jesus gave up for us, and then contemplated what we would give up for him. We have allowed God’s light to shine into our lives, illuminating our darker corners, and invited God’s Spirit in to transform these parts of ourselves. Now, it is time for us to let go and give to God what is God’s, the worship of our lives.

In echoes of the penultimate verse of our hymn: Let every thought and work and word to thee be ever given. Everything that we have is God’s gift to us; gifts that he wants us to use wisely and with love. Everything we are is thanks to God’s gift of life, and his gift of second chances through the forgiveness of the cross.

How will you offer your life to him? A life that reflects the beauty of Jesus, who looked into the eyes of this rich man and loved him. Loved him even though his wealth meant more to him than God’s love and care, as this quote highlights to us.

How easy it is for a poor man to depend on God!

What else has he to depend on?

And how hard it is for a rich man to depend on God!

All his possessions call out to him: “Depend on us!”

Rabbi Moshe Leib

What do you need to let go of to get closer to our Lord Jesus? It could be letting go of a worry that stops you trusting him completely. It could be letting go of your own abilities to solve a situation, and - instead - trust in his guiding. Whatever it is, offer it to the Lord in prayer and praise.



All glory to the Father be,
all glory to the Son,
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,
while endless ages run.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you are inviting me to draw close to you and trust in your guiding of my life. You gave all of yourself for me, help me not to hold back on my giving of my life. In love, I place myself in your hands.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, it is easier for a poor person to depend on God's providing, to believe in his love and care. Lord, I think of those who rely on their own talents, who depend on their wealth. Help them to let go...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you looked into the eyes of this rich man. You saw his desire to do good in his daily life. You saw too what was holding him back from life in all its fullness - his wealth. Pain can do this too, so 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.**