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ORDINARY 28B

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes

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Call to worship

Gracious God, your love has called us here,
And here we come, to meet with you,
To be transformed by your Spirit,
And to take courage to go out into a world in need,
In Jesus' name,

Amen.¹

Hymn:

81 STF – Now thank we all our God - [Now thank we all our God | Lyrics](#)

Opening Prayers

Through the changing of the seasons, we gather
to worship you O God.

We bring our worries and our hopes this day,
we bring them all before the Lord.

From all directions on the compass,
every walk of life,
we are here,
we are one family,
united by the eternal love of Christ.

Brothers and Sisters, siblings in Christ,
let us sing of love and praise as we worship together,
Amen.²

Now let us say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Job 23:1-9, 16-17 - [Click for reading](#)

Hebrews 4:12-16 - [Click for reading](#)

Mark 10:17-31 - [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the readings - what are you called to?

Often, our church services and Bible studies and so much of the language around church and following Jesus tends to suggest there is 'only one answer.' How many of us have made the joke that, in Sunday school, the answer was always 'Jesus'?

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Tim Annan-Hood

But the history of Biblical scholarship and the changing and developing study of the Bible, of the Christian faith and of hermeneutics shows us that all is not fixed. There isn't just one answer, and often the Bible itself is full of contradictions and uncertainties. As Karl Barth described – we are invited to 'inhabit the strange new world of the Bible', and there discover that it has much to teach us by that the teaching is rarely simple or black-and-white. So much is bound up with context, some appears not to be.

If possible in your setting, break into groups to reflect on these questions:

- Do you think there are contradictions in the Bible?
- If so, why might they be there? If not, what convinces you of this?
- How do we use any apparent contradictions to help us further our understanding of God and how we should live?

Be gentle with each other in course of the conversation – we come to our engagement with the Bible from different places and many of us have very personal approaches to Scripture: some of our attitudes have been shaped from very early ages and by people we hold dear and respect. As you have the conversation, particularly listen out for people who have a different opinion from you. How could they be your teacher today?

[Give space for the conversation in groups, and some feedback to the whole congregation if appropriate].

Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you for your gift of the The Word. We thank you for the Bible, and for the Word who became (and becomes) flesh and lives among us, Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the way the figure of Jesus and the words of the Scriptures help to shape us, guide us, mould us and inspire us as we seek to follow you.

Help us to continue to engage with, learn from and be uplifted by the Scriptures, that we might use your words to us as part of our ongoing journey of discipleship. And may we find ways to share the wisdom and grace contained within our Bibles with those around us.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Let us open our hearts and be vulnerable before Jesus as we share what is on our hearts.

[If it is your practice, there is time indicated below to share prayer needs communally].

“Even today my complaint is bitter: his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.”

Like Job, we come today with heavy hearts and angry words. We cry out in anguish, hoping that someone, anyone will hear us. We weep for those around us who are suffering. Let us remember those who are actively dealing with conflict or the effects of prolonged war. Those who have been separated from their families because of the pandemic. Those who are uncertain about their employment. Those who sit waiting for results. In this moment of silence, let us share these concerns and those we bring with us today with God.

[Time of silence or to share prayer concerns].

As we communicate our concerns with our fellow siblings in Christ and with God, may we find help that leads to peace.

May that peace guide us, protect us, and bring us one day closer to rejoicing with the Lord.

Until that day, let us pray together, to you O Lord.
And come amongst us, by your Spirit,

Amen.³

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart - [Be thou my vision | Matt Beckingham](#)

Blessing

We rise from this space, knowing that the Word of God is ablaze in our hearts,
We go to seek the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living,
And to seek peace and pursue it, all around us.

In Jesus' name, we pray for the courage and grace to follow your call on our lives, O God,

Amen.⁴

³ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Annan-Hood

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker