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LENT 2C

13h March 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Centering Prayers

Take time to find something in your home that you hold as precious and important. It may be a photograph, a flower or personal item.

Whatever you choose, consider:

- What is it that makes it important to you?
- What memories does it hold?
- How do you feel about it and what would happen if you lost it?

Now imagine that God is holding you as precious and important

- Loving and caring for you and your unique character
- Following your journey of faith
- Wanting never to lose you.

When you feel able, put down your object and pick up these written words.

Come then to worship, knowing that whatever you offer in this moment is precious and important. Amen.¹

Hymn: 664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service, each in our own way -
[YouTube](#)

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version most familiar or comfortable to you.

Readings: [Philippians 3:17 – 4:1](#); [Luke 13:31-35](#)

Reflections on the reading

Today marks the second Sunday of Lent, the next marker on our journey to Easter where we will celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Have you decided to mark Lent this year? Maybe you have given something up, taken something on or chosen, consciously or not, to not mark it in a particular way. If you have decided to mark Lent in a particular way, I wonder how it's going and how you are feeling? Are you managing to keep up with the commitment you have made? Do you feel you are doing well or maybe struggling a bit?

When we think about what we are doing with an aspect of our discipleship it is often easy to see what we are not doing, to identify the "failures", to say where we've missed an opportunity to pray or share our faith. Whilst Lent is a time for self-reflection and penitence as we prepare for Easter, we have to be careful that we don't find ourselves in a place where we only see the negatives, the have nots, the "failures". Our life with God has many more have dones, blessings and celebrations than have nots and missed opportunities.

¹ Centering prayers written by Jane Bingham

Sandy Williams, in her Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary, reminds us that the letter to the Philippians is written to a context where Paul was opposing a commonly held belief that Christians from a pagan background should conform to Jewish Law and that God's goodness is only available through living to the law.

In the current passage and preceding verses Paul presents an alternative measure of how to live which is rooted in God's goodness and supremely in the death and resurrection of Jesus. In verses 12 to 16 Paul invites us to 'press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus (3:14)'. In the verses we've read Paul goes on to contrast those who live as enemies of Christ whose end is destruction with those who live lives for Christ whose citizenship is in heaven. This contrast and these verses are a reminder that as we think about the goodness of God in our lives that the complete goodness of God is available to everyone through Christ. As long as we are walking with Jesus we will know that goodness, become children of God and citizens of heaven.

In light of all Paul has said he calls the church in Philippi and us as readers of the letter to 'stand firm in the Lord in this way (4:1)'. The way that Paul is referring to is life lived standing firm with Jesus in which we will both know the goodness of God and continually draw closer to God. Not through having our failures or have not moments revealed, but by discovering more and more of God's love for us and being shaped by that.

As you journey through Lent, whether you have committed to giving something up, taking something on or not I invite you to reflect on where you are acknowledging the goodness of God and where you are inviting God to take you deeper into his goodness and love. As you reflect on God's goodness also reflect on how you are responding to God's love in Christ. Are you standing firm on Christ above everything else?

There are many different ways you could respond to today's invitation to stand firm on Christ, you could sit with God and simply acknowledge his goodness, you could keep a journal of where you have seen God's goodness at work through answered prayer, protection from "enemies", you could walk in the beauty of God's creation with another disciple and share together. How we reflect, how we acknowledge God's goodness in our lives isn't important, what is important is that we do. As we take time to acknowledge God's goodness, to let God shape us, to remember the work of Jesus, we stand firm in Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, the one whose love knows no limits.

As you continue to journey through Lent I hope these readings have shown you that reflecting on our journey with God in this season of penitence and preparation is not about a list of where we have fallen short or got it wrong. Lent is an opportunity to celebrate the goodness of God and to let God's goodness show us how we might know more of God through God's shaping of us which will, in turn, enable us to stand even more firmly with Christ

May God Bless you as you journey with God this Lent. Amen.²

² Reflection written by David Goodall

Blessing

Go out in peace, and see the world made anew.

Go out to meet with a community, a family, a society crying out for some love, looking to encounter the living God.

Go out to discover God's spirit is at work throughout our world, and be transformed by your encounter with that same Spirit.

Go, by the grace of God.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 14th March

- God of all blessings,
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,
For the flavours and the smells,
The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.
- I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready meals in my freezer.
And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for.
Thank you Lord, for you are good to me.

Amen.

Tuesday 15th March

- On this day in 2019, around 1.4 million young people went on strike in over 120 countries to protest about climate change. This became the 'Friday for Futures' movement, and continues to focus attention on how radical change is required for the planet to survive.
- Today, let us pray for the planet. For our businesses, politicians, and ourselves as we all must work together to secure a better future for our earth.
- As you pray, think about some actions you could take to help build a better world, a safer environment.

Wednesday 16th March

- If you can, go on a prayer walk. Or ask someone to help you make a journey around your neighbourhood – just the few houses near you would be fine, or go on a longer trip if you'd like to take in a whole estate or community.
- As you travel past each house, pray for the people who live there – just in your mind, or under your breath. Hold their situations, whether you know them or not, in your heart.

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Thursday 17th March

- Be still, for the presence of the Lord is here in this place.
Be still, and know that I am God.
Be still.
Be still.
- Perhaps you find stillness easily, perhaps you find it really hard. Today, mark out some time for stillness. Perhaps you could light a candle, and just hold a few minutes of quiet. Listen for the still, small voice...

Friday 18th March

- Gracious God, I come to you as one of your people, seeking to know you more.
- Gracious God, come here today, by your Spirit, that I might be transformed by an encounter with you.
- Gracious God, may I rise from this place, recognising you in every place and every moment of my life.
Amen.

Saturday 19th March

(Prayer by Matthew Forsyth)

- Lord of life, bring peace and safety to our world, in particular to the places of the world where laws have been leveraged for revenge and gain.
- Open paths of reconciliation and heal the brokenness,
Repair the war torn cities and countries and make a way for those who have been displaced to find a place to call home again.
- We pray for the 65 million plus refugees around the world who are on their journey.
Lord, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger,
- Bless those who work to bring them relief.
In Jesus' name I pray,
Amen.

Sunday 20th March

(Prayer by Matthew Forsyth)

- Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I am coming to you today, to you - the one who created the laws of the universes and who offers grace in abundance.
Lord, today I pray for Christian brothers and sisters around the world,
I lift them to you as they seek to follow the commandments of your gospel and great commission,
May they be strengthened and emboldened for the mission you have called them to,
Cleanse and mould your church into the likeness of Christ.
And show me my place in that cleansing and moulding.
Amen.