

# twelvebaskets

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## LENT 3C

20th March 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening Prayers

Gracious God,  
When did I see you hungry?  
I think I would remember that.

When did I see you needing clothes?  
I'm sure I wouldn't forget.

When were you thirsty and I didn't give you a drink?  
That doesn't sound like me.

When were you sick and in prison, and I didn't look after you?  
My schedule has been pretty busy but I know that would be important.

Oh, I see. It was in the hunger of my neighbour,  
The refugee family needing clothes,  
The homeless man sat outside the station,  
And the young person down the road caught up with a bad crowd.

Perhaps I didn't look hard enough.  
Perhaps it felt like too much.  
Lord, give me a chance to look again.  
I will look for the least and give my most.  
I will look for your face in the faces of those around me.  
I will open my heart as an invitation to you,  
And beyond.  
I will look around and see.  
I will look around and do.

God of Wisdom, hear my prayer.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

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

### Hymn:

158 STF – Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders - [YouTube](#)

**Readings:** [Isaiah 55:1-9](#); [Luke 13:1-9](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Opening prayers written by All We Can – from their *Let Wisdom Speak* Lent resource

## Response to the reading

This week's passages remind us that God offers each of us an invitation – an invitation into eternal life. In the Gospel reading, we hear that this invitation is set before everyone, that they might choose to live differently and not to perish as those around them do. Instead, if they live differently they can bear fruit, like the fig tree in the parable. And, as the gardener in the parable is patient with the fig tree, God is patient with us. When the tree is not showing signs of the purpose for which it is planted, the gardener implores the owner not just to wait for the tree, but to surround it with the things it needs to thrive. With the right conditions and enough time, he is confident that it will blossom and fulfil its potential.

What does it look like for us to choose eternal life? What are the things we need around us, that in time we might bear the fruit of our faithfulness and trust in God? Perhaps for us, by surrounding ourselves with relationships which show us more of who God is, we might begin to bear fruit. We can open ourselves up to encountering God in the stranger, choosing to see life instead of danger in the world around us. And, as we see God in the stranger, we can take action, responding to the needs of others. By opening ourselves up, we have the opportunity to bear the fruit of God's love and faithfulness, as we show it to one another.

Around the world, millions of people are displaced from their homes. In Ukraine, over 4 million people are at risk of displacement because of the tragic conflict. In Afghanistan, the humanitarian crisis that has been raging for almost a year is leaving many people desperate and without resources. Whilst sometimes these crises can feel far away, we still have the opportunity to not just observe, but to respond, and to bear the fruit of God's love.<sup>2</sup>

### Got a few minutes?

Take this quick quiz from UNHCR, to find out how much you know about forced displacement. As you do so, consider: how might I be open to welcoming the stranger?

Take the quiz here: [https://www.unhcr.org/neu/wp\\_quiz/unhcr-global-trends-quiz-how-much-do-you-know-about-forced-displacement](https://www.unhcr.org/neu/wp_quiz/unhcr-global-trends-quiz-how-much-do-you-know-about-forced-displacement)

### Got a little longer?

The Nationality & Borders Bill is currently making its way through parliament. This new legislation will severely limit the way the UK responds to people seeking sanctuary. Instead of offering welcome, the government are proposing we close the door on people who have a legitimate claim for sanctuary.

Take some time to find out about the Bill, and then write to your MP to ask them to support amendments which stop punishing refugees and start opening up routes for welcome. You can find everything you need, including a template letter to send to your MP, here:

[www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/nationalityandbordersbill](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/nationalityandbordersbill)

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<sup>2</sup> Reflection written by the Joint Public Issues Team

## **Blessing**

God sends us out to a hurting world  
to offer the grace, healing and forgiveness  
that was shown in the life of Jesus  
and is confirmed by the Spirit within us.  
Let us go with God.  
Amen.<sup>3</sup>

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week**

### **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March**

At this time know that God goes with you  
The God that is refuge and strength  
The God that knows what it is to be human and divine  
The God who knows you and cares for you  
The God who shows you how to live  
Take your understanding of the God whom we love and share it with others so that  
they too can witness to his wondrous love.  
Amen.

### **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

Use this space to be still and hold a moment of quiet.  
Listen to your thoughts, to your body.  
Where is hurting at the moment? Where is there tiredness? Where is there tension?  
As you breathe in and out, pay attention to these aches and pains, which you  
probably try to ignore a lot of the time.  
Lord, hold me in my weaknesses, help me to rest, to unwind, to unplug.  
Help me to recognise my body as your temple, as a place where my personality and  
your Spirit meet.  
Complete in me the work you have begun, O Lord.  
Amen.

### **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

God came in Jesus for you  
God came in Jesus so that all may know the true meaning of his love for the world  
So get ready to share the love of God with others  
Live like Jesus  
Knowing that God goes before, with you and in you  
Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

### **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

Lord, teach me the way of your statutes,  
And I will keep them to the end.  
Grant me insight that I may keep your law,  
And observe it wholeheartedly.  
Guide me in the path of your commands,  
For in them is my delight.  
Bend my heart to your decrees,  
And not to wrongful gain.  
Amen. (From Psalm 119).

### **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Today, why not pray for leaders and politicians around the world. It might help you to write down some names of people in leadership, and then to spend some time praying for anything you know about them, their lives and the challenges they face. It could be local councillors, Members of Parliament, world leaders or other figures in positions of power, who need to remember the way of grace.

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

This weekend, look for opportunities to pray as part of your normal, everyday life. When you are walking, could you pray that God will guide your footsteps for the next steps in your walk of discipleship. When you are washing up, you could pray that God will clean out the areas of your life that feel wrong and messed up. When you are reading emails, you could pray for each of the people who have emailed you, and pray about your responses. When you are watching TV, at the end of a programme, turn the TV off for a few minutes before moving on to the next thing, and think about any prompts from the programme you've just watched that might be encouraging you to pray. (For example, if it was a police drama, you might choose to pray for the police and all working to bring safety to our society).