

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 12A

21st June 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

If you have a candle, find it and something to light it. Put it somewhere you can see it. If you do not have a candle, use a lamp.

As you light the candle, or light the lamp, say these words:

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out”

Sit in silence and notice the light and the shadows in the room.

When you are ready, offer this time of worship to God. You might like to say these words out loud as you do so:

“Jesus, you are the light of the world, the light of my life, I offer this time to you in worship and prayer and praise.

Amen”

You may now wish to say the Lord’s Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Reading: Matthew 10: 24-39 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

This passage from Matthew 10 is not an easy reading.

Jesus speaks of fear, conflict, division, persecution, and taking up the cross. He says things that can sound harsh, even disturbing: “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” He speaks of family members divided against one another. He tells his followers that whoever does not take up the cross is not worthy of him.

This is not the gentle Jesus many of us find easier to follow. So, what do we do with a passage like this?

Perhaps the first thing is to be honest: discipleship is not always comfortable. Jesus is not calling us into conflict for conflict’s sake. He is not glorifying division, violence, or suffering. But he is telling the truth: a life shaped by God’s justice, mercy, and love will sometimes clash with the values of the world around us.

If we follow Jesus seriously, if we stand with the marginalised, speak truth to power, choose forgiveness over revenge, generosity over greed, and love over fear; then there may be cost. We may be misunderstood. We may face resistance. We may even find tension with people close to us, and with others who are also seeking to follow Jesus, but interpreting his teachings differently.

Jesus does not pretend otherwise, he doesn’t hide from this reality. In the middle of this difficult passage, however, he also says: “Do not be afraid.”

He says it again and again. Do not be afraid of those who threaten you. Do not be afraid because the truth will come to light. Do not be afraid because you are known and valued by God. Even the sparrows are held in God’s care, and you are of more value than many sparrows.

This passage is an important, if challenging, reminder that love is not always soft. Sometimes love is courageous, sometimes love needs to tell the truth in a difficult conversation. Sometimes love refuses to stay silent when people are harmed, excluded, or forgotten.

Taking up the cross does not mean accepting abuse or seeking suffering. It means choosing the way of Jesus even when it is costly. It means refusing to let comfort be our highest goal. It means losing the life built on fear, ego, and self-protection, in order to find a deeper life rooted in grace.

So today, reflect on this:

- Where is fear stopping you from living or speaking with love and integrity?
- What truth might God be inviting you to bring into the light?
- What might you need to let go of in order to follow Jesus more freely?

This is a challenging reading because Jesus takes discipleship seriously. But it is also a hopeful reading, because he does not send us into costly love alone.

You are seen. You are known. You are held. You are loved.

May you have courage when the way is difficult, tenderness when the world feels harsh, and trust that the God who cares for every sparrow also cares deeply for you.

Hymn / Song:

109 STF – In the darkness of the still night - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Living, loving God,
Let me live the gospel truth of resurrection and new life this day,
This week, and on into the weeks ahead.
As I rise from this place, this space, this moment of worship,
May your Spirit continue to bless my living and my loving,
In Jesus' name I bring these, and all my prayers, O God,
Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 22nd June

- God of the journey, walk with me into this week.
- Help me not to rush past the people or moments where you may be present.
- Show me how to live with attention and love. Amen.

Tuesday 23rd June

- Today, pray for those struggling with money worries.
- Pray for people facing debt, unemployment, insecure work, rising costs, or difficult decisions.
- God of provision, bring help, hope, and practical support. Amen.

Wednesday 24th June

- Think about someone you find difficult.
- Without forcing warm feelings, hold them before God.
- Ask for wisdom, boundaries where needed, and the grace to see their humanity.

Thursday 25th June

- God of mercy, help me to forgive where forgiveness is possible.
- Help me to seek reconciliation where it is safe and right.
- Help me also to honour healthy boundaries where they are needed. Amen.

Friday 26th June

- Today, pray for the earth.
- Pray for rivers, oceans, forests, fields, animals, and all communities affected by climate change.
- Creator God, teach us to live more gently with your world. Amen.

Saturday 27th June

- Take a slow breath and remember that you do not have to carry everything alone.
- Offer one worry to God today.
- God of peace, hold what feels too heavy for me. Amen