

twelvebaskets

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EPIPHANY 7C

23rd February 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening 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 again these written words.

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

Amen.

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

Readings: Luke 6:27-38 – [Click for reading](#)

Hymn:

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving - [YouTube](#)

Responding to the readings

How thankful do you feel today?

This is a strange season, isn't it? The excitement of Christmas and New Year seems a distant memory. The days are still short. The weather often unpleasant. Easter seems a long way off...

But we have so much to be thankful for – have you noticed? I know that I don't always take the time to give thanks, to recognise the blessings I have received, to be grateful. Do you?

Shall we do it right now? Why not take some time to write out the things that you are grateful for, right now? Make a list as long as you dare, or have time for.

There is plenty of evidence that little practices of gratitude make a huge difference in terms of our mental health and wellbeing. The ability to notice that there are things to be thankful for can be transformative for how we interact with the world, especially in the midst of anxiety, pain and grief.

And yet, we take a great deal for granted, don't we?

What do you think are some of the things that you take for granted? What opportunities for being grateful are you missing?

So today, the invitation is simple: practice gratitude.

As the theological Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say is "thank you", that will be enough.' Not because our lives end with thank you, but because in the act of thanking, we are changed into more grateful, more loving people. That is why we teach our children better manners. That is why it's helpful to keep a 'gratitude journal'. That is why we give thanks for God's love for us.

As we, once again, learn the lesson of not taking things for granted, let us do the same with love. Let us not take love for granted. Let's give love a chance.

So, as Jesus says in Luke 6 – we have to practice love. Love for our 'enemies'. Love for those who curse us. Love is not just a comfortable blanket that we can wrap our friends and family in – that's easy, that's not difficult (at least, not most of the time!). Love, in the Jesus imagination, is radical – it reaches across boundaries and breaks through borders. It punches a hole in the walls of exclusion and exclusivity. It bridges the gulf of social order and institutional segregation.

'Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back'.

That's a kind of gratitude, a kind of generosity, a kind of love that changes things.

Wherever you are right now, I just invite you to say those two simple words aloud:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Blessing

Give love to your enemies, do good to those who hate you;

Live as true sons and daughters of your heavenly father;

The blessing of the one who came, who comes and who will come again, go with you.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 24th February

- Write a note or a message to a friend with a Bible verse in it that you think might be relevant to your life. Tell them you're thinking of them, and pray about them as they receive it.

Tuesday 25th February

- Think about the fruits of the spirit. Pick one of them that you don't feel you are very good at, or that needs some intentional work. Spend some time praying about this, and then practice it for a whole day in all you do.

Wednesday 26th February

- Make a cup of tea or coffee, or something else to drink. As you drink it, imagine all the places and people that are responsible for making it, from source to your lips. Thank God for them, the source of all life.

Thursday 27th February

- Listen to the sound of babies laughing – [Cute And Funny Baby Laughing Hysterically | 5-Minute Fails - YouTube](#) – pray thanks to God for happiness and life.

Friday 28th February

- Sit silently for ten minutes and let your mind wander. Offer any thoughts and feelings to God.

Saturday 1st March

- Draw around the shape of your hand. Write on it the things that you're carrying that feel like burdens. Offer them to God in prayer, remembering that God carries your burdens with you.