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ORDINARY 22A

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes while churches are closed.

A Free resource part funded by



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Call to worship

Gracious God, we are your people, seeking to know you more.

Gracious God, come amongst us, by your Spirit, that we might be transformed by our encounter with you.

Gracious God, may we go from this place, recognising you in every place and every moment.

Amen.¹

Hymn:156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn - [YouTube](#)

Prayers

As followers of the Jesus way we come to this time of worship. However we gather, be it in our homes, be it online, be it by ourselves or with others, we call upon Jesus to meet with us.

We will sing our praises, we will open our hearts and minds to the spirit of God, we will listen for God's still small voice to speak to us.

Today we offer our thanks for all that God has made and shared with us. Today we rejoice for the God of all creation knows us, cares for us and forgives us.

So in a moment of silence we say sorry. We call to mind all the times we have been less than we could or should have been.

[Pause]

Through God's grace we are loved.

Through God's grace we are forgiven.

Through God's grace we are called to pick up our cross and follow Jesus.

Amen²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Romans 12:9-21 - [Click for Reading](#)

Matthew 16:21-28 - [Click for Reading](#)

¹ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

² Prayers by Wayne Grewcock

Emma Dobson shares some thoughts on this week's readings.

In our reading from the book of Matthew, chapter 16, we come across a phrase you might have heard before. Jesus says that anyone who wants to be his disciple must, "take up their cross and follow me". It's a very tricky phrase, and it's hard to know exactly what it means. The truth is, it can mean lots of different things. If we imagine the Easter story, we can find some connections. Some of our Gospel accounts say that, before Jesus was crucified, he was forced to carry his cross a long way to the hill. Now, we've all seen pictures drawn to represent the crucifixion. They all show that the cross was bigger than Jesus himself. Imagine having to carry something so big and heavy. He was already in pain from the horrible things the soldiers had done to him, and then he had to carry that heavy cross a long way. It sounds so, so hard, doesn't it? So, when Jesus says we must take up our cross and follow him, do you think that will always be an easy thing to do?

I don't believe Jesus is saying that every step of being a disciple will be hard and painful - there will be moments of joy and celebration, for sure - but he is saying that it won't always be easy. There will be challenges. There will be things we are called to do that may be heavy on our hearts or minds.

Like I said, this phrase can mean different things, and we can look at it from different angles, depending on where in the year this reading falls, what's going on in the world at the time we read it, and which other readings this passage is paired up with. The reading paired up with it this week is from Romans chapter 12. When I read this, knowing that the 'partner message' is to take up my cross and follow Jesus, I believe that the words from Romans are telling me one of the ways I can do this; one of the challenges I will be faced with as a disciple of Jesus. Parts of this section from Romans say:

- V 9: Your love must be real. Hate what is evil. Hold on to what is good.

- V 14: Wish good for those who do bad things to you. Wish them well and do not curse them.

- V17-18: If someone does wrong to you, do not pay them back by doing wrong to them. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. Do your best to live in peace with everyone.

- V20-21 But you should do this:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if your enemy is thirsty, give him a drink.

Do not let evil defeat you. Defeat evil by doing good.

That sounds really hard, doesn't it? Maybe, for lots of us, enemy is a pretty strong word. However, we've all come across people we find it really hard to like. People who have hurt us, perhaps, or hurt someone we love. People who make decisions that lead to others being treated unfairly. People who make careless choices and don't say sorry. People who make us feel small, stupid or unimportant. This passage from Romans tells us we should love them. Not just put up with them, or tolerate

them, or ignore them - love them. That's not an easy thing to do. So, what does it mean? What does it mean to love those who hurt us? I don't think Jesus wants us to love them like we love our families and best friends. It's not like that. We don't have to make them our best friends, or completely let them off the hook for the things they've done.

What I believe we're called to do, is to remember the people who hurt us are only human, just like us. Instead of hurting them back, we should deal fairly with the bad things they do. Jesus doesn't want us to let them get away with the hurtful things they do, but sometimes he wants us to be prepared to offer them forgiveness, another chance.³

But maybe for you it is something completely different.

In a moment of quiet ask God to clear your doubts, your fears and your concerns.

Seek the Holy spirit, and pray for strength, for clarity and for guidance.

In Jesu's name commit your lives to follow the way of Jesus.

[Pause]

Holy spirit work in us and through us we pray. Amen⁴

Prayers of intercession

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we come to you as the one who created the laws and offered grace in abundance.

Lord, we pray for our Christian brothers and sisters around the world,
We 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.

[Pause]

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.

³ Reflection written by Emma Dobson

⁴ Additional thoughts by Wayne Grewcock

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.

Lord, bring healing and reconciliation to marriages and peace to those who have
experienced broken relationships.

Lord, repair trust and build bridges of communication so love may flow.

[Pause]

Lord, teach us to love our neighbour,
In a moment of silence, we think of those who we would consider a neighbour and
place them into your hands

[Pause]

Lord, teach us to be quick to forgive and acknowledge our own mistakes.
Above all else, inspire us to live in the likeness of your Son Jesus Christ.
In your mercy, hear our prayer,
Amen.⁵

Hymn: 504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go from this place inspired,
Go from this place renewed,
Go from this place with the Spirit of God alongside, within and all around you,
Go from this place, a child of the Living God.
Amen.⁶

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Matthew Forsyth

⁶ Blessing by Tim Baker