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ORDINARY 30B

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes

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Call to worship

Amongst the brokenness, here we are Lord.
Amongst the pain of our world, here we are Lord.
Believing in hope and resurrection, here we are Lord.
Trusting in you and seeking to love you more, here we are Lord.
We have come, come Lord Jesus.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance - [YouTube](#)

Opening Prayers. *[You will need a piece of paper and pen/pencil].*

Firstly, I invite you to tear or cut your piece of paper in half – the easiest way to do this is fold it in half, then open it out and tear carefully along the fold. The two halves will represent the two different halves of our prayers.

Now hopefully you have two, roughly equal, pieces of paper in front of you. Take one half of the paper and use it to write down the things you want to ‘hand over to God’ today. You will have all sorts of difficulties and challenges going on. There will be things you are worried about, people you are fearful for, the guilt you feel for mistakes you’ve made, for the times you have hurt someone, situations in your own life that are really difficult at the moment, grief you are carrying, illness you are dealing with, physical, mental or emotional pain you are bearing.

When this time of devotion is over, when you return to your day, and the week ahead, those things will still be there, they are going to need you – and perhaps you are going to need them – in the hours, days and weeks to come. But, just for now, just for a moment, let’s try to unburden. Jesus says: ‘come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.’

Just take a few moments now to do that, be as honest as you feel you can.

Now, as we pray, let’s screw up the piece of paper, and put it in a bin. This is our way of laying our burdens before God, of taking a moment just to de-stress, to unwind, to say ‘I hand it over to you, Lord God’. Let’s place our paper-burden in the prayer-bin now...

Now we have unburdened, we have confessed, we can hear the voice of Jesus saying to us ‘your sins are forgiven’. All that we hold too tightly, all our mistakes, all our worries and fears, they often make it harder for us to know that we are loved, accepted just as we are. Listen to that encouragement now – you are accepted, accepted just as you are, in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

Thanksgiving and praise

Now we come to the other half of the piece of paper. Having said sorry, having accepted our own weakness and all the things that fill our head with negative emotions and concerns, we take a moment to focus on all that is good.

We are going to have the other half of this piece of paper in front of us for the rest of the service, put it somewhere you can see it. So, before we do so, I invite you to spend a few moments writing down or drawing something that you would like to keep in your mind. If you've 'unburdened' the things you want rid of, these are the positive thoughts you want to keep hold of.

Perhaps you want to write a thank you to God for some way in which you have been blessed, perhaps you want to remind yourself that you are loved and accepted, perhaps you simply want to write down that God is love, perhaps there is some other message or thought of hope that you want to keep in mind as we worship, and in the coming week.

Let's just take a few moments to write or draw a message of hope for ourselves.

These messages form our prayers of thanks and praise to God, as we recognise the hope, the love, the joy in the world and our lives. Remember to put your second piece of paper somewhere where you can see it.

And so, as we have said our prayers of confession and thanksgiving, or prayers of praise and our offering up of burdens, we say, Amen.

Amen.²

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Job 42:1-6, 10-17 – [Click for reading](#)

Hebrews 7:23-28 – [Click for reading](#)

Mark 10:46-52 – [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the reading

This is an excerpt from today's resources in The Vine. To read the full sermon and make use of the other resources, your circuit can subscribe to The Vine – email us to find out more – thevine@twelvebaskets.co.uk

The book of Job is one of the places in the Bible that openly addresses the question of suffering, and attempts to make sense of why this man has suffered so much. The central section of Job is a long poem in which Job is in dialogue with his friends, who offer a varied degree of bad advice about how to deal with grief and suffering. And now, here at the end of the story that the lectionary has been following over the past

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

month, we have the final part of the poem, and a few paragraphs of the narrative that has been added either side of this poem, in an attempt to interpret and make sense of it. Bible scholars debate about whether the narrative chapters at the beginning and end of Job were added later and whether they try to change the meaning of the story, but what is clear from these verses is that there is a great deal of contradiction and confusion in Job's response to God's appearance at the end of the story.

The first lesson this passage has to share with us is: that is okay! Confusion and contradiction are rife in the book of Job, and indeed across many areas of the Bible that deal with difficult subjects. Yet, too often, across the course of Christian history, we have tried to make the answers simple, we have said to those in grief 'it is part of God's plan', or those living in pain 'you should pray about it more often'. We have simplified complicated human stories into 'good and bad', 'right and wrong', 'Godly or ungodly'. If Job teaches us anything, it is that things are more complicated than they seem!

Even as we pray for a better world, the dawning of a new morning, we recognise it is our responsibility to be a part of that. Even as he is healed, Bartimaeus demonstrates what good discipleship looks like – he sets off to follow Jesus. As we encounter a God who comes to us in our most broken, most painful places, perhaps we learn to follow him, to demonstrate that brokenness is real, but in the end, love wins.³

Prayers of intercession

Let us open our hearts and be vulnerable before Jesus as we share what is on our hearts.

[If it is your practice, there is time indicated below to share prayer needs communally]

"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all"

Each of us gathered today brings with us burdens that other people cannot see. These worries, hurts and concerns are carried by each of us daily. They are insubstantial yet may feel like a boulder on our chests. We carry them alone out of fear, worry or because we have been told to keep those concerns to ourselves. Yet Christ comes before you and invites you to take that weight off you. To give you a chance to catch your breath. A caring ear is waiting to hear all your fears. A gentle arm is ready to hold you and say, "We can do this together." Through the love of Jesus, all things are possible. In this moment, let us share those burdens.

[Time of silence or to share prayer concerns]

May the Lord be close to you and those you love this week.

May the Lord strength and keep you, bolstering you to ask for help, and be ready to help when asked.

³ Reflection written by Tim Baker

And when times and worries begin to press upon you, may you be bolstered in prayer, by the Spirit of God who is here amongst us as we pray, as we worship, as live our lives.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling - [YouTube](#)

Or you can enjoy the National Methodist Choir singing Love Divine to Howard Goodall's alternative tune here: [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Amongst the pain, there is comfort. Amongst the suffering, there is hope. Amongst the brokenness, there is love. In a world of death, we are the people of resurrection. Go in peace and bring love to a world in need.

Amen.⁵

⁴ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Annan-Hood

⁵ Additional prayers by Tim Baker