

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 13B

A complete Sunday service ready to use  
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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**Ordinary 13 - Year B**  
30th June 2024



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**103 STF – God is Love: let heaven adore him OR**

**67 STF – This, this is the God we adore**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**318 STF – Christ, our king before creation OR**

**429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy**

Readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-49; Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

**Hymn:**

**610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR**

**459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**344 STF – He became poor that we may be rich OR**

**713 STF – Show me how to stand for justice**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**470 STF – Lord for the years your love has kept and guided OR**

**638 STF – Through all the changing scenes of life**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on [www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).

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## **Call to worship**

As we gather in your name Lord,  
We notice your presence amongst us.  
As we turn aside from the business of the day,  
Come close by your Spirit.  
We come, to worship.  
Come, Lord Jesus.  
Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

103 STF – God is Love: let heaven adore him OR  
67 STF – This, this is the God we adore

## **Opening Prayers**

Let us perform a ‘body prayer’ together.

Start by placing your hands on your head and say: “God, give us open minds today to hear what you have to say to us”.

Then place your hands on your heart and say “God, open our hearts to feel the Holy Spirit moving in us today”.

Then open your hands wide before you and say “God, give us the confidence and commitment to act in response to what we feel and hear today”.

Thank you God, for loving us, just as we are, our whole selves. Help us to follow in your way this day, and always.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord’s Prayer**

### **All Age Talk**

In the middle of the Bible, lies this remarkable set of poems, which we call The Psalms. They are thousands of years old and explore a whole range of human emotions and experiences. The Psalms are a special part of our tradition – people have turned to them in times of difficulty, in times of happiness, to sing as songs of praise or to share as poems about grief.

If you don’t know the Psalms, or haven’t read them before – I can recommend it!

Today, one of the Psalms we are focusing on is Psalm 130, which explores what our relationship with God looks like when we are going through a hard time. It describes how we ‘wait for the Lord’. Perhaps you know something about this, perhaps you’ve had a

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Abi Jarvis

difficult time this year or in recent weeks and days? Does it sometimes feel like you have been cut-off from God?

It's worth reading the whole Psalm, but here are two of the verses:

"I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Today, or this week, if you are having a hard time, it can be helpful to take comfort from the fact that – for thousands of years – people have read this Psalm to each other and relied on the courage it gives them. You can join in with that 'great cloud of witnesses' and 'wait for the Lord' too.

Let us put our whole hope in God

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

318 STF – Christ, our king before creation OR

429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy

**Readings:** 1 Samuel 17:32-49; Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

### **Hymn:**

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide

### **Reflections on the readings**

One of the benefits of a lectionary is that you can spot connections and big picture themes between different Bible books that you might not notice if you just read it through from cover to cover.

*If you haven't already read the passages out loud, ask four different people to read each passage. Discuss in pairs or threes – what themes do you see across the passages?*

But on the flip side, the lack of context around each passage can mean that we miss critical information to understand what's been written. So let's take a look at the passages more deeply.

*Ask pairs to look at the text around each passage (ie the full chapter or couple of chapters), read them, and discuss what's going on. Report back to the whole group so that everyone has a sense of the context of each passage. Does this context make you see the passages differently?*

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Of course, as well as common themes, reading short passages from different parts of the Bible can also bring up contradictions that might leave us confused about who the Bible says God is, or how we should respond to God's love in the world.

In these four passages we see different examples of how God and God's people act in the world:

- In 1 Samuel, David makes his own decision about what to do. He does so "in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (17:45) but God does not seem to take any explicit action in this story.
- In the book of Job, Job seems to be completely helpless as God and Satan act around him. In chapter 38, God reminds Job of God's awesome power in creating the world and setting boundaries on how the fearsome forces of nature would work.
- In 2 Corinthians, Paul suggests we work "together with God", and that God is there to help us. He does not pretend this might be easy but suggests we can act in "the power of God".
- In Mark 4, Jesus acts directly and miraculously, responding to the disciples' fears by calming the wind (a reminder of God's power over nature in Job).

*Pause: does anyone have a different interpretation of how God or God's people act in these passages?*

The question of God's active role in the world is one that can be particularly pressing when we are in times or places of suffering and injustice, as David and Job both were. We wonder why God doesn't intervene to stop these things from happening. Some people may even believe that God has caused these things to 'happen for a reason', though I believe this is counter to the loving nature of God.

Lots of very thoughtful and prayerful people have written and said lots about God's action in the world and how God's followers interact with this. In their book *A theological introduction to the Old Testament* (more interesting than the name might suggest!) the theologians Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen (two of whom are Methodists) suggest that Job's friends think that "righteousness => [leads to] prosperity. Wickedness => [leads to] misery...Job suffers so he must have sinned." Job's friends are like people today who quote endless Proverbs and random happy verses from the Bible and think that means that nothing bad ever happens to a good Christian.

But Job's friends are wrong – experiencing suffering or joy does not reflect whether we are good or bad people. And it does not affect God's love for us. In 2 Corinthians, Paul urges the Corinthians "not to receive God's grace in vain" – they've already got the grace! The suffering he goes on to speak about is not something they, or we, must endure in order to receive God's love. Paul instead asks the Corinthians to consider how they live and behave, having received that grace.

Going back to Job, the theologians note that "The crisis is not about God's power. It is about God's justice." The belief of Job's friends – bad things only happen to bad people – is one that today perpetuates colonialism, unjust economic structures, and unjust policies. It suggests that there is a reason some people have power, money and privilege and others don't. But we know from Paul's words in 2 Corinthians, and from so many other Bible stories, that God loves everyone, regardless of how much money or power they have.

So what do we do in response to God's love, in pursuit of God's justice? We can be fearful of the things that threaten to overpower us, left helpless like the disciples. We can do nothing, assured of our own personal salvation, like the Corinthians. We can be angry at injustice, like Job, who ultimately trusted in God to bring justice. Or we can be bold, like David, and act to change things ourselves, in both small and big ways. Most of us have probably responded in all these ways at one time or another.

How might God be encouraging you to respond to God's love for you, your friends and family, and our shared world, today? Where might God be encouraging you to trust God?

*In pairs or threes, share ways you feel God has encouraged you to act in the world and places where you feel encouraged to trust God.*

There is no easy answer to the fact that suffering is a part of life. But however you feel today, whether you're inspired into action or angry about what's happening to you or other people, remember that God's love for you and for the people around you is overwhelming.

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

344 STF – He became poor that we may be rich OR

713 STF – Show me how to stand for justice

### **Prayers of intercession**

#### *For ourselves*

Think of a situation where you feel helpless. Take a series of deep breaths. As you breath in, say a name for God (out loud or in silence). This might be simply 'God' or 'Jesus' or something like 'Comforter', 'Lord', or 'Creator'. As you breath out, pray a simple one-phrase prayer, such as 'Help me to trust' or 'inspire me to act'.

Finish by all saying together, out loud, "Thank you God for loving me no matter what".

#### *For our friends and family*

In advance, collect some small pieces of paper (around the size of a mobile phone) and a bowl or bucket of water. Give each person 2-3 pieces of paper and some coloured pencils or pens (ideally water soluble). Write your prayers onto these scraps, then fold or scrunch them up and put them into the water. As the writing dissolves, know God has heard your prayers.

#### *For those further away*

In advance, find some battery-powered tea lights and maps, images or symbols of different places in the world where people are suffering (including within the UK). Print these or add them to a PowerPoint presentation. Give out the candles, or place them in a central place. As you show each image, say a short sentence explaining what is happening in that place. Ask one or two people to come forward for each image, light a candle and say a single sentence (out loud if they are confident to do so) either asking for God's action or asking God to give us wisdom on how we might act.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Abi Jarvis

<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Abi Jarvis

## **We will now take up the offering.**

Even as we realise that we have received so much, we are challenged to meet generosity with generosity. Stamp out the selfish streak in us, O God, that we might freely give of all that we have received in order that justice may be done, and the world may see your love.

In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.<sup>6</sup>

## **Hymn:**

470 STF – Lord for the years your love has kept and guided OR

638 STF – Through all the changing scenes of life

## **Blessing**

Jesus the Christ is restoring the whole of creation,  
Holding all things together.

Today, as we go from this place, we choose to play our part in that restoration.  
And may the peace of God go with you, every single step of the way.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker