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## ORDINARY 26A

1st October 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

## Opening Prayers

Here in this place, the Lord of all is made known.

Now, at this time, the Spirit of the divine is present.

Today, as I worship, Christ comes to worship with me.

Show me how to worship you in Spirit and Truth, Lord God,

Amen.

*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: "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 21:23-32** – [Click for reading](#)

### Responding by singing

465 STF – Guide me, O thou great Jehovah - [YouTube](#)

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded - [YouTube](#)

### Responding to the reading

*"But... we've always done it that way."*

How often have you heard that sentence in your life? Are you someone who says it a lot? Or more likely to roll your eyes when someone else says it?

There is a story about a church where someone dared to ask the question: "why do we stand when the offering is brought forward?" No-one could answer it.

The tradition that had developed from further back than anyone could remember is that when the offering had been collected during the service, the music started playing and then everyone in the congregation would stand as it was brought forward to the front and the offering prayer would then be duly delivered, and everyone would sit down. I know this does happen in a number of churches, but certainly not all of them.

Incidentally, after chewing it over in a long conversation, the church decided that standing for the offering was a physical expression of the people offering themselves to God and the mission to which they are called. Everyone quite liked that and stood with just a little more enthusiasm from then on! Thankfully also, this resulted in some significant changes in the church to make the welcome much more authentic and relaxed.

Jesus tackles this issue head on in today's gospel reading. In one of his simpler and most straight forward parables he draws a clear distinction between the decision to have the integrity to change your mind and the policy to say you will do something then simply not bother. Inherent in the "right" path is the decision to admit you were wrong in your first assumption and this is often the part people have the most problem with. Jesus is clear about which is right.

Do you, do we, as a church, a society, a world, have the courage to change...

Do you sense a situation in your life where you may need the "courage to change"?

- Personally?
- At church?
- At work?
- With close friends and family?
- With the way you choose to spend your time?

*[You may wish to find someone you can trust to talk about these questions with. Why not take a good stretch of time over it and talk over dinner, or a coffee].*

### **Responding in prayer**

(Using some of the lines from the Beatitudes).

***Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

There are so many people who experience feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness, for a complicated set of reasons.

Do you know anyone who feels like this right now? - Can you reach out?

Do you feel like this right now? - Can you be open to others reaching out?

Jesus brought a gospel message to turn the world upside down, and he told us that those who feel unworthy are blessed. Help us to help them feel a true sense of worth.

Help me Lord Jesus, to change my mind and heart for good.

***Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.***

The world has many people who exist under the radar. Passive, unassuming, and serene, and sometimes they are eclipsed by the bold and unyielding.

Do you know anyone who feels like this right now? - Can you reach out?

Do you feel like this right now? - Can you be open to others reaching out?

Jesus brought a gospel message to turn the world upside down, and he told us that those who feel insignificant are blessed. Help us to help them feel brave.

Help me Lord Jesus, to change my mind and heart for good.

***Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.***

Every day someone's loved ones are lost. Those left behind are facing a changed life, an emptiness and a myriad of emotions threatening to tear them apart.

Do you know anyone who feels like this right now? - Can you reach out?

Do you feel like this right now? - Can you be open to others reaching out?

Jesus brought a gospel message to turn the world upside down, and he told us that those who mourn are blessed. Help us to help them feel and nurture a glimmer of hope.

Help me Lord Jesus, to change my mind and heart for good.

Amen.

### **Closing song:**

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide - [YouTube](#)

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### **Blessing**

Go forward with a heart renewed by grace, and may the Holy Spirit empower you to live a life that reflects the love of Christ to the world.

Amen.

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week**

### **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October**

- Thank you Lord, for making me who I am.  
Sorry that sometimes I complain about bits of me, of my personality, my body, my selfhood. Help me to learn to love myself, and to be the best version of me that I can be in your world.  
Amen.

### **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

- Go outdoors and find something natural: a stone, leaf, flower, or something else. Consider the ways God has made this thing and then reflect on how you too are wonderfully made by God. What does this mean to you?

### **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October**

- Open your Bible at the Psalms and read one as a prayer to God. What resonates with you? Consider in what ways these old words feel new to you and offer them to God.

### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October**

- What injustices make you angry in the world? Consider the ways you see God as a God of justice and pray that God will work through those injustices. You might like to have a look at the All We Can website to help you find words to pray – [allwecan.org.uk/pray](http://allwecan.org.uk/pray)

### **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October**

- Today is the first day of 3Generate – the national Methodist Youth assembly in Birmingham, where over 1,200 children, young people and their youth leaders will gather in the NEC in Birmingham for a long weekend.
- You may wish to pray for all who are attending, for the Spirit of God to be at work in that gathering, and for safe travels and hopeful encounters.

### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October**

- God of all grace,  
This weekend, show me how to live for you. Help me be transformed and renewed by your love, your grace, your wisdom and your hope at work in my life.
- May I use this and every day as an opportunity to learn more of your love, and share that love with those around me.
- In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.