

# Daily Prayer

*Feria*

*Wednesday, October 21, 2020*

*We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys.*

*We begin by saying*

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:  
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

*Psalm 96.9*

## **The First Reading**

For surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now

be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

*Ephesians 3.2-12*

## **The Psalm**

I was glad when they said to me, ♦  
‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’

And now our feet are standing ♦  
within your gates, O Jerusalem;

Jerusalem, built as a city ♦  
that is at unity in itself.

Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, ♦  
as is decreed for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there are set the thrones of judgement, ♦  
the thrones of the house of David.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ♦  
‘May they prosper who love you.

‘Peace be within your walls ♦  
and tranquillity within your palaces.’

For my kindred and companions’ sake, ♦  
I will pray that peace be with you.

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, ♦  
I will seek to do you good.

*Psalm 122*

## The Gospel Reading

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Peter said, 'Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?' And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says to himself, "My master is delayed in coming", and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful. That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. But one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

Luke 12:35-48

*We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?*

## **The Reflection**

Susan Haig

*We Are So Loved, We Love in Return! - A Reflection on Luke 12:35-48*

In this passage Jesus uses a parable to instruct his friends about their tasks and spiritual and material stances towards life during the in-between time before the master (Jesus himself) returns to his people at the end of time. The message is about vigilance and attentiveness and the proper use of material possessions while the master is absent. But the tone shifts from that of commandment – or is it blessing? – to the harsh and punitive consequences for those who are either lazy or abusive of others. The ending is so harsh and paints such a demanding, vengeful portrait of God that it's difficult to hear and to know how to understand what Jesus is saying to his friends. Which is a pity because we are still waiting. We very much need to know how to live and love in the meantime.

I think the key to understanding the message is in that word “love.” I say that because this parable is best interpreted in the context of the entire Good News, and also because there's a clear hint in the promise Jesus makes to them in a verse earlier in the chapter. He says in verse 32: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” This gracious promise involves the bestowal of all good thing upon Jesus' friends, and so everything that follows needs to be read through the lens of that abundant grace.

The passage begins with the beautiful metaphor of the servants who are eagerly awaiting their master's return from the wedding feast. They are so eager that they have the door open

the second he knocks! Of course, they are. They are waiting for their beloved. Think of this not so much as obligation or command as the natural yearning of beloved for the beloved. Think of the enthusiastic anticipation of children waiting for the winter's first snowfall or for Santa (or, if more pious, for baby Jesus); a teenager waiting for the opportunity to drive; a gardener waiting for the first harbingers of spring; lovers watching and waiting to be reunited. It is that last allusion that captures it the best.

Jesus' friends could hardly wait for him to return – and this eager, alert anticipation is not so much what Jesus is commanding but the stance or attitude that he is labelling as blessed. (Just as his words in the Beatitudes are not to be heard as commandments but as behaviours that make the doers blessed folk.) They are blessed and the master is also so eager to be reunited that he wastes no time in having them sit down to table, serving them himself. Lovers reunited and now feasting together. Yes, that is blessed!

But the owner of the house then morphs into a thief in the night, suggesting that the blessings of this love match between Jesus and us, between his Abba and us, are lost, stolen in fact, when we are not paying attention. We snooze, we lose. Something which is so very precious and awesome is squandered. It is the opposite of blessed and such a waste of the love that flows in abundance to us. It's such a crazy, nonsensical response. Just as letting your house be broken into is a crazy, nonsensical response!

This sense of loss and missed opportunity is then developed at length in the next portion of our passage. Jesus uses harsh and exaggerated images in order to make his point that as beloved friends we are entrusted and blessed with so much and thus a loving, faithful, conscientious response towards this loving master and his gifts to us is in order. St. Luke has a special interest in the

faithful use of material possessions and develops this at length in his telling of the Gospel, a concern that is plainly evident here.

This aspect of our living calls and tugs on us – sometimes uncomfortably. It challenges us to realize and live out the fact that, when following the Way of Christ, there are never divisions between the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and material, Sunday and the workaday world. It forces us to wrestle with thorny issues and try to answer challenging questions. How are we spending our time? Will we be at work in the vineyards of the Kingdom when Jesus arrives? (One of my favourite fridge magnets says: “Jesus is coming. Look busy!”) How we treat every other person is also vitally important. Are we abusive? Do we exercise our power with love and for the benefit of others? Do we share our power, our knowledge, our status, our wealth and material possessions?

These questions and challenges may make us uneasy because even when we love and are grateful to our beloved our own interests can get in the way. Perhaps embedded here is another blessing: the uneasy conscience. An uneasy conscience also keeps us alert. Alert and sensitive to the needs and desires of our beloved and to the needs and rhythms of our relationship.

The last words of the passage capture both the love the beloved has for us expressed through the bestowal of the gifts we have received, which includes the gift of his trust in us, and the loving natural response that he eagerly awaits and hopes for from us, his beloved friends and servants.

It is such a Good News story.

*When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle*

## The Canticle ~ Song of Thanksgiving

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defence, \*  
and he will be my Saviour.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*  
from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \*

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name;

make his deeds known among the peoples; \*  
see that they remember that his name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*  
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of  
Israel.

*Isaiah 12.2-6*

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)  
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

## The Intercessions

Let us pray to the Lord,  
who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,  
that all who are fearful and anxious  
may be at peace and free from worry:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the isolated and housebound,  
that we may be alert to their needs,  
and care for them in their vulnerability:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our homes and families,  
our schools and young people,  
and all in any kind of need or distress:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For a blessing on our local community,  
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,  
where all are known and cared for:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*We conclude our prayers*

Almighty and everliving God,  
increase in us your gift of faith,  
that forsaking what lies behind  
and reaching out to what is before,  
we may run the way of your commandments  
and win the crown of everlasting joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



*[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen

*We conclude*

May God bless the work of our hands.  
Amen.

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The Psalm and The Concluding Sentence are found in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*. ©The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Intercessions are from the Church of England Coronavirus resources.

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