

The Kingdom of God

Grace, mercy and peace
From God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all – wherever we are.

Sing: (*click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube*)

Jesus, Lover of My Soul.

Almighty God,
To whom all hearts are open,
All desires known,
And from whom no secrets are hidden:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
That we may perfectly love you,
And worthily magnify your holy name;
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Gathering our thoughts, we remember and confess:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said;
The first commandment is this;
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only
Lord. You shall love the Lord your God
With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your
Mind, and with all your strength.'
The second is this, 'Love your neighbour
as yourself.' There is no other commandment
greater than these. On these two commandments
hang all the law and the prophets.

1 You search out **my path** and **my lying down** and are acquainted with all **my ways**.
Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, **O LORD you know it** altogether.
You hem me in, behind and before, and lay **your hand upon me.** *Ps139:3-6*

Most merciful God,
 Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 we confess that we have sinned
 in thought, word and deed.
 We have not loved you with our whole heart.
 We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
 In your mercy
 forgive what we have been,
 help us to amend what we are,
 and direct what we shall be;
 that we may do justly,
 love mercy,
 and walk humbly with you, our God.
 Amen.

May almighty God have mercy on us and forgive us our sins and
 bring us to everlasting life. Amen

*Take a few moments to sit and think about receiving that
 unconditional offering of forgiveness through grace.*

Collect

God, our judge and saviour,
 Teach us to be open to your truth
 And to trust in your love,
 That we may live each day
 With confidence in the salvation which is given
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 You search out **my path** and **my lying down** and are acquainted with all **my ways**.
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Old Testament Reading: Exodus 32:1-14 – The Golden Calf

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring,

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and they shall inherit it forever.' " And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14 – The Parable of the Wedding Feast

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast." ' But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

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Louisa Messenger explores our bible reading:

In the eighties as part of my ministry , I was a prison visitor at Leyhill open prison. On the wall out side of their beautiful chapel was a poster which read Jesus Christ requests the pleasure of your company to his feast held here all welcome.

It reminded me that the invite of God is to a feast every bit as joyful as a wedding. To think of Christianity as gloomy and giving up of every thing which brings laughter , sunshine , and happy fellowship is to mistake its whole nature. It is to joy that Christians are invited . Jesus said I have come to bring life and bring it abundantly . So when we do not accept the invite then it's the joy that we miss.

The parable reminds us that the things which made people who had been invited not accept were not necessarily bad in them selves . One man went to his estate , the other to his business. They did not off on a wild binge or an immoral adventure . They went off to carry out the tasks of administering their busy lives.

It is very easy to be so busy with things of the present that the things of eternity are forgotten, and we don't get to hear that still small voice of calm. In the Exodus reading set for today we read how God was so gracious to those people who he had lead to safety from Egypt and who were now acting in the wrong way. Moses pleaded with God not to punish them and he showed mercy and did not.

Gods invite is to grace.

Those people who were gathered in from the high ways and byways had no claim on the king at all, they could never by any stretch of the imagination have expected an invitation to the wedding feast , still less having ever deserved one.

It came to them from nothing other than the wide armed , open hearted . generous hospitality of the king. It was grace which offered the invite and grace which gathered them in.

This invite is there for us today and if we could bring a friend that would be wonderful!. The last shall be first and the first shall be last.

Thank you lord Jesus for the invite to your feast, may we accept it with joy and hope in our hearts.

The Lord Jesus invites us to his feast , evening dress optional , come as you are, a much loved welcome guest. amen

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Sing: (*click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube*)

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Let us declare our faith with confidence:

Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.
We believe in God the Father,
who created all things:
for by his will they were created
and have their being.

We believe in God the Son,
who was slain:
for with his blood,
he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.

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Mike Smith leads us as we pray for the needs of the world, the church, and for our family, friends' & our neighbours':

Use these prayers to help inspire and encourage your own prayers this week:

In the power of your Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father:

For the health and well-being of our friends and family: we thank you for all those whom you have protected from the Coronavirus and we pray that all who are fearful and anxious may be at peace and free from worry.

For all those who are suffering mentally, physically, or emotionally we pray for the healing power of Jesus to heal them. Let them know and experience the peace and power of Jesus.

Protect, encourage and sustain all those working in our local hospitals, care homes and pharmacies, and their families. Give them the peace, strength and comfort they need at the moment to treat and nurse for all those in their care.

We also pray for those in our local schools: Brockworth Primary Academy, Castle Hill Primary School, Coopers Edge School and Henley Bank High School. Heavenly Father would you increase your spirit in these places that all that go through these places would both know and experience your peace and hope, keep all those who work there protected.

Think of a situation or region in the world that needs to see justice. Pray for the leaders and the people to be united to find peace with justice.

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Merciful Father,
 accept these prayers
 for the sake of your Son,
 our Saviour Jesus Christ.
 Amen.

We pray with confidence as our saviour has 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.
 Lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
 now and forever. Amen.

Sing: (*click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King

Numbers 6:24-26

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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