

DSW Written Service Sunday 28th
September 2025

A Prayer of Approach

Loving God, as we prepare to worship you,
Help us to come with open hearts and minds:
Ready to hear what you want to say to us
today; ready to sing your praises for the faith
we have found; ready to pray to you in trust
and hope; ready to honour you in all we do and
say and are, In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
Who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in:

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;
And give him the glory - great things he has
done.*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives:
Refrain

Great things he has taught us, great things he
has done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:
Refrain

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)

Prayers of Adoration & Confession

Eternal God, you are the source of all blessing,
you created this wonderful world and each of
us in your image;
You have blessed us with the beauty of your
creation;
You have freed us from the power of sin and
death, through your Son Jesus Christ, who lived
and taught your ways of love and grace.
You have blessed us with the gift of your Holy
Spirit, your presence within us, teaching and
empowering us to do things we can't do in our
own strength.

We praise and adore you. But even as we
contemplate your amazing love and grace, we
become aware that we've fallen short of the
ways of love you call us to in Jesus.
We call to mind things we've said and done
which we wish we hadn't, and things we haven't
said or done, which we wish we had.
We come to say we're truly sorry and ask for
your forgiveness.
Help us, Lord, to accept your gracious promise
of forgiveness and a fresh start with you.
Empower us to share your love and grace with
everyone we meet, knowing that we and they
are forgiven and loved by you.
In Jesus' name. Amen

Reading: Luke 16:19-31(CEV)

There was once a rich man who wore
expensive clothes and every day ate the best
food. But a poor beggar named Lazarus was
brought to the gate of the rich man's house. He
was happy just to eat the scraps that fell from
the rich man's table. His body was covered with
sores, and dogs kept coming up to lick
them. The poor man died, and angels took him
to the place of honour next to Abraham.
The rich man also died and was buried. He
went to hell and was suffering terribly. When
he looked up and saw Abraham far off and
Lazarus at his side, he said to Abraham, "Have
pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in
water and touch my tongue. I'm suffering
terribly in this fire."

Abraham answered, "My friend, remember that
while you lived, you had everything good, and
Lazarus had everything bad. Now he is happy,
and you are in pain. And besides, there is a
deep ditch between us, and no one from either
side can cross over."

But the rich man said, "Abraham, then please
send Lazarus to my father's home. Let him
warn my five brothers, so they won't come to
this horrible place."

Abraham answered, "Your brothers can read
what Moses and the prophets wrote. They
should pay attention to that."

Then the rich man said, "No, that's not enough!
If only someone from the dead would go to
them, they would listen and turn to God."

So Abraham said, "If they won't pay attention
to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen
even to someone who comes back from the
dead."

Reflection

I wonder what strikes you as you read Luke's account of this rather challenging story Jesus told to the Pharisees? Where do we see ourselves in this story, and where our sympathies might lie?

Maybe it seems a bit harsh that the rich man's pleas for help for himself and his brothers aren't answered? Or maybe it feels right that someone who has overlooked the misery of this poor man who was literally on his doorstep for so long, should find himself in a similar position when he comes to his day of reckoning? After all, he and his brothers were all aware of the teachings of the Old Testament prophets about God's call to look after the poor and oppressed.

Interestingly only the poor man in this story is named. We're not told the name of the rich man which carries a certain irony given his apparent inability to see Lazarus as a human being.

Jesus's story reminds us that the Bible makes clear that God's heart is for the poor and marginalised, those who are oppressed by the behaviour of the rich. Being rich in itself isn't the problem, it's how we use our wealth that matters.

Writing to Timothy, Paul reminds him that "we didn't bring anything into this world, and we won't take anything with us when we leave". We often use similar words at funerals and in everyday life we say: "You can't take it with you when you die!"

As Paul points out, it's the love of money that's dangerous because it hardens our attitudes and affects our ability to "see" others who are less well off as human beings who matter, rather than just as problems or nuisances or worse.

Jesus had a lot to say about attitudes to money, as did the Old Testament prophets who came before him.

When he told the rich man who asked what he should do to obey God, to go and sell what he owned and give the money to the poor, Jesus "looked at him with love", because he knew this man was so attached to his money and possessions that he couldn't bring himself to

give all that up and put his trust in God and follow Jesus.

The chasm in Jesus' story reminds us of the chasm that still exists in our world today between the rich and poor. 75% of the population of the world still live in poverty and the gap between the world's richest and poorest is getting bigger!

Lazarus was invisible to the rich man, and we might ask where the "invisible poor" are in our neighbourhood, and our world?

And how do we respond to them?

In the global context we would be classed as rich because we have somewhere safe to sleep and enough to eat and access to clean water and health provision, while millions of people in our world do not.

God sees every person as precious and as disciples of Jesus we're called to see them all through His eyes of love and compassion, to speak out and act against the injustice we see around us, to make consumer choices that will make a significant difference and positively change the current imbalance of wealth and resources, and to pray for changed hearts and minds among those who have power & influence in the world, so that transformation will come.

It was encouraging to read recently about Yvon Chouinard, the 83-year-old billionaire owner of Patagonia outdoor clothing company. A keen mountain climber and nature lover, he decided in 1970, after buying a rugby shirt on a climbing trip to Scotland, which he wore constantly on his return to the US, to find a way to source similar clothing for his fellow climbers. He founded a company to import them which later expanded into providing other outdoor clothing and equipment.

When he was added to the Forbes list of the world's richest people, he took it as a sign that he'd failed in his life's mission to make the world a better and fairer place.

So he decided to give away all of the shares in his company, Patagonia, to a trust that will use future profits to help fight the climate crisis.

In a message to staff & customers he said "Earth is now our only shareholder. Instead of 'going public', you could say we're 'going

purpose'. Instead of extracting value from nature and transforming it into wealth for investors, we'll use the wealth Patagonia creates to protect the source of all wealth."

We probably aren't in a position to make a gesture like that, but we can make small but significant choices every day which will make a difference to our world and help to redistribute the wealth and resources of our world more fairly.

We can continue to share the good news that real and abundant life comes not from manmade wealth but from a deep and personal relationship with the God who demonstrated his love for all people in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, through the power of his Holy Spirit.

We can be aware of the poor in our midst and do our bit whenever we can to help them in practical ways.

And we can pray each day that God will fill us with his Spirit, his heart of love, his desire for justice, as he empowers us to be his agents of transformation in our world.

Hymn

Beauty for brokenness,
Hope for despair,
Lord, in Your suffering world
This is our prayer:
Bread for the children,
Justice, joy, peace;
Sunrise to sunset,
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,
Cures for their ills,
Work for the craftsman,
Trade for their skills;
Land for the dispossessed,
Rights for the weak,
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor,
Friend of the weak,
Give us compassion we pray:
Melt our cold hearts,
Let tears fall like rain;
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars,

Havens from fear,
Cities for sanctuary,
Freedoms to share;
Peace to the killing-fields,
Scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
His cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned—
Our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
Carelessness, greed;
Make us content with
The things that we need.

God of the poor,....

Lighten our darkness,
Breathe on this flame
Until Your justice
Burns brightly again;
Until the nations
Learn of Your ways,
Seek Your salvation
And bring You their praise.

God of the poor,....

Graham Kendrick (b.1950) © 1993 Make Way Music.

Prayers for others (taken from ROOTS material)

Loving God, **we pray for those who wait at the gate:**

For those who wait at the gate in poverty, reliant on foodbanks, unable to afford to turn their heating on, walking the streets to save using fuel at home.

We pray for all those who live in poverty and need, that those who have will see and respond to the needs of those who have not. Loving God, **we pray for those who wait at the gate**

For those who wait at the gate because they have nowhere else to wait; for those whose homes have been destroyed by flood, or bombing; for those who can't afford a home. We pray for all who are homeless or whose homes are insanitary or unsatisfactory

Loving God, ***we pray for those who wait at the gate***

For those who wait at the gate in sadness and grief, whose lives have been changed by the death of a loved one, who struggle to cope, and for those who can't find a way to fit in.

Loving God, ***we pray for those who wait at the gate***

For those who wait at the gate of the church, because they've been rejected and fear they may be turned away again, for those who don't know how to find your love and grace. Help us to make our churches places of welcome where no-one is turned away and all are welcome and encouraged to experience the grace and peace that you offer. Give us eyes to see those in need and hearts to respond in the name of our Saviour Jesus. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Community of Christ,
who make the Cross your own,
live out your creed and risk your life
for God alone:
the God who wears your face,
to whom all worlds belong,
whose children are of every race
and every song.

Community of Christ,
look past the Church's door
and see the refugee, the hungry,
and the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed,
the jobless in your street,
take towel and water, that you wash
your neighbour's feet.

Community of Christ,
through whom the word must sound --
cry out for justice and for peace
the whole world round:
disarm the powers that war
and all that can destroy,
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish
into joy.

When menace melts away,
so shall God's will be done,
the climate of the world be peace
and Christ its Sun;
our currency be love
and kindness our law,
our food and faith be shared as one
forevermore.

Shirley Erena Murray (b.1931) © 1992 Hope Publishing Company

Blessing

Loving Living God,
Send us into the world filled with your grace
and generosity,
To share with others the tender compassion of
the God of love who created and redeemed us
in the name of Jesus our Christ,
And may the blessing of God, our creator
redeemer and sustainer be with us all always.
Amen.

*Rev Jane Wilson
September 2025*