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ORDINARY 12C

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A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Sit down, close your eyes and breathe three deep, slow breaths.

Keeping your eyes closed – pay attention to your breath for a minute or more and in doing so, when you breathe in, imagine you are breathing in the love of God.

When you open your eyes look around you, what do you notice in your room that reminds you of the love of God?

If this is something you can hold, hold it, if it is to be looked at, look at it. As you do so, remember that you are in the presence of God.

When you are ready, offer this time of worship to God:

“Around me and within me, Spirit of God I thank you for your presence here. I offer each breath in worship to you. Amen”

You may now wish to say the Lord’s Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: Luke 8:26-39 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

In today’s verses from Luke 8, we meet a man who is deeply afflicted – tormented not just in body and mind, but pushed to the very margins of society. He lives among the tombs, unclothed and alone, rejected and feared. And yet it is here, in this place of desolation, that Jesus goes deliberately to meet him.

This is no accidental encounter. Jesus crosses the sea and steps into a foreign, uncomfortable place to liberate someone who had long been written off. What happens next is dramatic: Jesus restores the man to health, dignity, and community. The man is clothed, in his right mind, and sitting at Jesus’ feet. But the transformation doesn’t stop there: Jesus then sends him out to share his story. “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”

For those of us on a journey of discipleship, this story challenges and inspires us in profound ways.

First, it reminds us that true discipleship involves going to the margins. Jesus seeks out the person that everyone else avoids. He crosses cultural, religious, and geographic boundaries to bring healing. If we take Jesus seriously, we too must be willing to step beyond what is comfortable or familiar to meet people where they are—especially those our society too easily labels, excludes, or fears. Who are the modern-day versions of this man among the tombs? And are we willing to see them, listen to them, and advocate for their wholeness?

Second, it’s a story of liberation. Jesus doesn’t just “fix” the man, he frees him. True discipleship isn’t about conforming people to religious norms, but about restoring them to

fullness of life. Are we allowing our faith to be a channel of liberation—for ourselves and for others? Or are we holding onto structures that keep people bound?

Third, the story reminds us that every person's testimony matters. When the man begs to stay with Jesus, Jesus instead sends him back into his community. Why? Because the man's story – his healing, his truth, his transformation – is now his witness. He doesn't need theological training or perfect understanding; he simply needs to speak from his experience of grace. We too are called to share how we've encountered God – not in polished, performative ways, but in honest testimony about the healing, inclusion, and hope we've experienced.

So today, consider:

- Who is on the margins in your community—and how might God be calling you toward them?
- What chains – internal or external – might still need breaking in your life or in the systems around you?
- And how can your story, your journey, be a witness to God's liberating grace?

Jesus meets us in the tomb places of life: not to leave us there, but to lead us into freedom, and to send us out to speak hope.

May we, like the healed man, go and tell how much God has done for us.

And may our discipleship always be a journey toward liberation, inclusion, and grace.

Responding in music

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy – [YouTube](#)

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Here I am Lord,
Present to your call to me,
Listening for your invitation to get involved in the Spirit of God,
Guide me this week, I pray,
Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 23rd June

- Today is International Widows Day – a UN day of action to address the injustice faced by many widows around the world.
- Today our prayers are for all who are bereaved, especially those who face discrimination because of the social status that comes with their bereavement.
- God of comfort, God of justice, God of radical, transformative inclusion, come close, I pray. Amen.

Tuesday 24th June

- As you get up and prepare for your day, repeat and reflect on the words:
- *Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee!*

Wednesday 25th June

- Yahweh is the Hebrew name for God – a name revealed to Moses in the book of Exodus. Take a moment today to sit still and breathe deeply. As you breathe in, think ‘Yah’ and as you breathe out think ‘weh’. Repeat this over and over, reflecting on God’s presence in every breathe we take.

Thursday 26th June

- Find 5 small pebbles, stones or shells. Take a large bowl and fill it with water. Wash each pebble, stone or shell in the water in turn and, for each one, share with God any worries or concerns you have at the moment. After you have washed each one, let it sink to the bottom of the glass or bowl and give this worry or concern over to God as you watch it do so.

Friday 27th June

- God of all grace,
- Today I give thanks for the relationships in my life – the people who care about me and care for me.
- Help me to appreciate them, and to invest in building community, because this is what you want for us, O God, to live together interdependently.
- Show me how to bring your love to those who I love,
Amen.

Saturday 28th June

- Today, consider all plants and flowers you see growing around you (either in a garden, local community or houseplants). Take time to look closely at the shape of the leaves and petals. Really look at the colours and patterns you can see. As you do so, reflect on the beauty of the natural world and thank God for all that it holds. If you do not have access to plants in this way, you might like to use photographs.