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ORDINARY 24A

13th September 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Just take a moment to quieten yourself, make sure you are sitting as comfortably as you can, have a bit of a wriggle if you need to.

Close your eyes and take a breath,

Take another breath, a deeper breath, in through your nose and out through your mouth,

Together let's try to breathe in for a count of four, hold for a count of two, then breath out slowly for a count of four, just repeat a couple of times.

Imagine you are sitting on a river's edge, in your mind's eye imagine the river, the trees, plants, birds and animals all around.

Can you hear the sounds, feel a gentle breeze. Listen carefully can you hear the river, the tinkling sound as it journeys on, making its way to the sea.

What is weighing you down?

What would you like to let go of?

Can you imagine placing one or two of your concerns in the river, letting go.

As you imagine letting go, you might like to pray:

Lord, often I hold on too tightly to things I can't control, holding onto hurts, regrets, fears, help me release my grip, this and every day.

As I worship you, this day, God of the full rainbow,

Help me to see something of your kaleidoscope of wonder and joy,

This and every day, I pray.

Amen.

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

Reading: Matthew 18:21-35 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Peter asks what seems like a generous question:

"Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

Seven sounds more than reasonable, surely there must be a limit, right?

But Jesus replies:

"Not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

He is not asking Peter to keep a tally until he reaches a particular number. He is inviting him into a completely different way of living.

Jesus then tells the story of a servant who is forgiven an unimaginably large debt. It is a debt he could never hope to repay. The king simply chooses mercy. Yet almost immediately, that same servant refuses mercy to someone who owes him a tiny fraction of the amount. It is a story of astonishing contradiction: having received grace, the man cannot bring himself to offer it.

At first glance, this parable can feel uncomfortable, especially if we have been deeply hurt by others. It is important to remember that forgiveness is never permission for abuse, nor is it an invitation to remain in unsafe relationships. Jesus never asks people to ignore injustice or pretend that harm has not happened.

Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation requires truth, accountability, and, where possible, repentance. Forgiveness begins somewhere quieter. It is the slow work of refusing to let another person's actions define our future. It is choosing, often over and over again, not to allow bitterness to become the deepest truth about us.

That is not easy. Sometimes forgiveness comes quickly, but more often it arrives in small steps, over months or years, helped by prayer, honesty, support, and grace.

Perhaps the heart of this parable is not, "Try harder to forgive." Perhaps it is, "Remember how deeply you are forgiven."

When we recognise that we ourselves live by grace, that every day we receive mercy we have not earned, this can slowly reshape the way we see other people. Grace becomes less like a possession we guard and more like a gift that keeps flowing. Because people who know they are deeply loved become people who find it easier to love. People who know they have been forgiven become people who can begin the long journey of forgiving.

So today, you might like to reflect on these questions:

- Is there someone whose actions still have too much power over your heart?
- Where do you most need to receive God's forgiveness for yourself?
- How might God's grace help you take one small step towards freedom, without denying the reality of what has happened?

Forgiveness is not about pretending the wound never existed. Rather, it is about trusting that the wound does not have to write the final chapter of your story. The grace of God is always writing something new.

May you know yourself to be held in the limitless mercy of God. May you have the wisdom to keep healthy boundaries where they are needed, the courage to begin the slow work of forgiveness where it is possible, and the freedom that comes from living not under the weight of resentment, but in the light of God's abundant grace.

Hymn / Song

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Holy, creative God,
Help me to follow in your ways this week,
That I might set myself apart from the systems of greed and corruption that rage in your world,
And join in with the story of love, grace and peace, that flows from your heart,
This and every day,
Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 14th September

- God of all grace,
Come and be known to me here, by your grace,
Show me how to put your love to work in the world,
Show me how to be a part of all that is good and wholesome and right,
Show me how to share the good news of your love with people I meet,
Show me how to follow you.
Amen.

Tuesday 15th September

- Today is World Lymphoma Awareness Day. So, our prayers are for all the people affected by this increasingly common form of cancer: nearly 1,000 people are diagnosed with this disease every day.
- Let us pray for all who live with the disease, all who care for them, all who are seeking a cure, all the research that is happening into how we can cure this illness, all who are living with the grief and the pain of having a friend or family member who is suffering.
- Come, O God of healing, God of hope, God of love. Amen.

Wednesday 16th September

- Loving God, today I pray for relationships: for the people I know and their relationship to me, and the people I know whose relationships are strained and under pressure.
- In the midst of division and doubt, come, God of love, God of healing, God of hope. Amen.

Thursday 17th September

- Living God, as we head into this weekend, I pray for all the people and situations that have been on my mind this week. The stories known to me personally and the ones I've picked up on the news and from elsewhere.
- I pray that I may know what it is that I am called to do as part of the response, and how I can enable and equip others to respond too.
- Show me what is mine to do, Lord God. Amen.

Friday 18th September

- God of all blessings,
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,
For the flavours and the smells,
The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.
- I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready meals in my freezer.
- And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for. Amen.

Saturday 19th September

- God of compassion, help me to be gentle today.
Where I am tempted to rush, slow me down.
Where I am tempted to judge, soften my heart.
Where I am tempted to ignore, help me to notice. Amen.