

St Thomas Methodist Church, Exeter

October 2025

Weekly Worship Resources

You are invited each week to offer prayers for others, and speak aloud, or think about, the words of the Lord's Prayer ...

Prayers of intercession

Hold before God in love, the people of the world: communities, families and individuals whose needs have been made known to you via the news media ...:

Hold before God in love, the people of this country: communities, families and individuals whose needs have become known to you via the news media or because you know people living elsewhere in this country ...:

Hold before God in love, the people of your own community, your family and friends. Name those known to you who are in any need at this time ...:

Loving God, I pray that society may become characterised by the desire to serve one another; to help the weak and seek the common good. Help me to work out my place in the community of those who follow Jesus, and bless me to be a blessing to others. Amen

Lord's Prayer [modern form]

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

05 October – A treasured story

Addressing him as a beloved child, Paul reminds Timothy of the gift of faith that is in him, one shared by his mother and grandmother before him. Paul urges Timothy to be bold in guarding this good treasure and to not be ashamed of Jesus or his apostle and teacher, Paul himself. Like Timothy, we are fortunate to have had faith passed on to us by others. How can we in turn pass it on?

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Proper 22 Year C

Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4; Psalm 37.1-9; **2 Timothy 1.1-14**; Luke 17.5-10

2 Timothy 1. 1-14 [NRSVUE]

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

3 I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day the deposit I have entrusted to him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.



Thought for the week:

Do you have any 'treasures' at home? How do you look after them? To treasure something might mean to hold it close, to keep it safe and perhaps only use it on a special occasion. You might keep it in a safe, away from prying eyes or clumsy hands. But what does it mean to

treasure God's story? Do we hold that close to keep it safe? Should we lock it in a safe? The treasure surely comes from sharing the story, sharing the words and, of course, there is enough for everyone so there are no concerns about running out. Think of all the people who passed on the treasure to Timothy – Lois his grandmother, Eunice his mother and Paul himself.

What if we share the words and our treasure isn't valued by others? How do we cope with the rejection of our treasure? We will, of course, still have the treasure for ourselves and we can know that we have tried to share the treasured story – this is as much as we are asked to do. God will work out the rest with that person. In God's time, they may also come to share our treasure. So, share away – be free and generous with the treasure, much like the farmer that Jesus told us about in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:14-15). When he sowed seeds in the field, he tossed them near and far, from side to side, seemingly without a care in the world. So let us in the same manner toss the treasure around and let God work on its growth.

A prayer of adoration

Father, we adore you, timeless, unchanging Rock of Ages.

Jesus, we adore you, face of the Father made known to us.

Holy Spirit, we adore you, comforter and counsellor.

Holy Trinity of treasured traditions, faith and inspiration, we worship you in word and deed. Amen

12 October – Unchained!

Paul has been imprisoned and chained for sharing the gospel of Jesus but he encourages Timothy that God's Word is not shackled, and that he should not be ashamed of preaching it.

Today we think about those who 'unchained' the Word of God for us and how we can 'unchain' it for others.

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Proper 23 Year C

2 Kings 5.1-3,7-15c; Psalm 111; **2 Timothy 2.8-15**; Luke 17.11-19

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David — that is my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful — he cannot deny himself.

A Worker Approved by God

14 Remind them of this, and warn them before the Lord that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.



Thought for the week

Viewers of the *Harry Potter* films will have seen scenes where books are literally chained to their shelves. But this was not a screen trick –

these scenes were filmed in Duke Humfrey's Library in Oxford. In the early Middle Ages, monastery libraries developed this chaining system, reflecting the fact that the manuscripts that were created through labour-intensive methods were valuable possessions. Hereford Cathedral's 17th-century chained library is the largest to survive with all its chains, rods and locks intact. To us, it may seem crazy that a book was of such value that it needed to be chained up – most of us have easy access to books and, once read, we may pass them on to friends or work colleagues.

But perhaps some books are 'chained' because they never make it off a shelf to be read. The Bible is still the world's bestselling book, with an estimated 5-7 billion copies sold. How many of those have been read? How many have just sat on a shelf?

If we are to 'rightly explain the word of truth', as Paul exhorts Timothy to do, we need to understand it ourselves. If we follow the lectionary, we hear the Bible read on a three-year cycle, ensuring that we all hear the important parts of Jesus' life and that of the Early Church. But there are parts of the Bible that are not covered by the lectionary, often parts that theologians are still in dispute over. And we may find it difficult to get at the truth when we are reading the words in a different context and in a different language to the original.

So how are we to share the 'truth' of the Bible? We need to read it, dwell on it and ask God for understanding. If we don't bother to read it, it may as well be chained to the wall.

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

Heavenly Father, we confess that we enchain ourselves with worries and fears, cares and concerns.

Our mindsets become manacles that hinder us from serving you. We drag ourselves through days instead of casting our cares on you. We look to you as we shrug off the chains that bind us, and we recommit to living life in the fullness of the glorious freedom won for us by Jesus.

Your forgiveness loosens our chains, O God.

The burden of guilt that had us bound falls away; we are free to love and serve, as your unchained children. Amen

19 October – A toolbox for faith

Timothy is encouraged to remain steadfast in the faith and teachings that have been handed on to him. In a famous verse, Paul reminds him that all Scripture is inspired by God and is needed to equip believers. Paul urges Timothy to be persistent in teaching the truth, despite the sufferings that may come.

Today we explore the importance of the Bible as a toolbox for our faith. Just as a worker needs the right tools for the job at hand, we need to be equipped to serve God in the world. Do we have the right tools to do so?

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Proper 24 Year C

Genesis 32.22-31; Psalm 121; **2 Timothy 3.14–4.5**; Luke 18.1-8

2 Timothy 3.14–4.5

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, be sober in everything,

endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.



Thought for the week

Different things can be used to help guide us: a map, a recipe, an instruction book, the stars. Some of these may be flawed – sometimes recipes contain mistakes, or we fail to follow them correctly, ruining the dish; the stars are only helpful as a guidance system if it isn't cloudy. The Bible is the only thing that can help us with our whole lives. It has directions on most of the important topics we will encounter, if we know where to look.

The Bible can be our toolbox for life. Every worker or crafter likes to have all the tools they need. The Bible contains all the tools we need

for life. For example, the Gospel reading for today (Luke 18:1-8) urges us to be persistent – just as a saw keeps cutting until the task is done. Ephesians 4:2 advises us to be humble – that could be linked with a spanner, a tool that will undo and tighten – sometimes we need to be willing to change direction too. Proverbs 12:17 implores us to be honest and not be a false witness. This could be linked with a screwdriver – it drives a screw home securely so it cannot be moved – just as we need to stick to the truth sometimes and not be swayed to be a false witness.

In the Epistle reading, Timothy is reminded that ‘All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful’. Do we have the tools we need so that we are ‘equipped for every good work’?

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Almighty God, we praise you for the powerful words of Scripture, which endure from age to age in order that we may endure also. Thank you for entrusting your sacred books to us in the Bible, so that we might study and learn from them, enlightened by the Holy Spirit in our efforts to understand your message of guidance to us. We praise you for the strength your Word gives us to persevere when our faith is sorely tried by the ways of the world. All thanks and praise be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

26 October – God stood by me

In prison awaiting trial and reflecting on his life and ministry, Paul has confidence that his suffering and desertion by supporters has not been in vain. He has fought the good fight and a crown of righteousness awaits him. In his lowest moments, people failed him but God stood by him.

Today we learn from Paul’s example – God will always stand by us when we stay close to him, even in the most difficult times.

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Proper 25 Year C

Jeremiah 14.7-10,19-22; Psalm 84.1-7; **2 Timothy 4.6-8,16-18**; Luke 18.9-14

2 Timothy 4. 6-8, 16-18

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

16 At my first defence no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.



Thought for the week

Sports people often stand by each other. At the 2024 Olympic tennis tournament, British player Dan Evans sacrificed the opportunity to

defend his title in Washington DC to play alongside Andy Murray in his final ever tournament. Evans knew how much the Olympics meant to Murray and wanted to give him a good send-off. They didn't win a medal and Evans lost more than 110 ranking points because he didn't defend his title. As one commentator said: 'Not all heroes wear capes (or win medals and majors)'.

Even on opposing teams, at the Olympics you see athletes appreciating the talents of others in their field. Many of us can relate to standing by a freezing football pitch or a humid poolside cheering our children on in their activities. Paul himself used the image of the athletics stadium in his second letter to Timothy: 'I have fought the fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness' (similar to a gold medal).

Reading this, you would think that the Epistles would be full of examples of the fledgling church standing together to resist the persecution and hatred of the Roman and Jewish authorities. But in today's Epistle reading, Paul paints a rather different picture. There is a clear sense that Paul had to run this race on his own. When he was imprisoned for his faith no one came to support him. In fact, he says that they deserted him. It's hard to imagine Paul, a respected teacher and church planter, being alone and defenceless at his time of need, mirroring the moment when his Lord and Master stood before the Sanhedrin or prayed in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. It can happen to us too – when we are suffering for our faith, standing up for what we believe in the schoolyard or workplace, we may suddenly find ourselves terribly alone. Everyone else seems to have melted away. It may only be small comfort to know that when this happens we are following in the footsteps of the heroes of the faith.

Paul's friends may have let him down, but to him this only emphasised how much more God was still on his side. As Paul said in verse 17: 'The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.' He wanted to encourage Timothy to be confident in the Lord in tough times. And these words are for us too: if the Lord stood by Paul and rescued him

from every evil attack, he will also do so for us. This doesn't mean that our lives will be trouble-free. But, as Paul writes to Timothy, even when the life of faith is hard, it's still worth following. Perseverance wins God's approval. We have not been abandoned by God. We can picture God standing on the sidelines and cheering us on. But more than that we can envisage him fighting the lions and demons of our lives with a sword, a light sabre or whatever his weapon of choice is. But he's not just on the sidelines or on our team. He is beside us: like the tennis doubles partners, supporting and working alongside us, carrying our yoke and whispering encouragement into our ears as we sprint together to the finish line.

A sending out prayer

Go with God, encouraged by his presence.

Go and look for him in the joys and in the sorrows.

Go and share his love with others.

Go in the knowledge that he stands beside you.

Go in peace. Amen

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