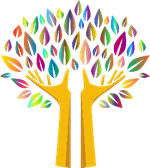
**Sunday 25th September ‘At Home’ Worship**

**Life before Death**

(Sourced from Roots worship resources)

**Call to worship**

Praise the Lord! Come, praise the Lord!  
**Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!**  
Praise the Lord, all creation – sun, moon and shining stars,  
**Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!**  
Praise the Lord, sea and land, animals, birds and all nature,  
**Everything in heaven and earth, praise God!**  
Rulers and nations, young and old together,  
**Everything everywhere, praise the Lord! Amen.**

**A gathering prayer**

We gather to approach our God.  
A God of justice and of love.  
A God who hears the cries of those in need,  
and who calls us to live in loving ways.  
May we draw near to God;  
may God draw near to us:  
Father, Son, Spirit – the triune One.  
**Amen.**

**Song** [Tell Out My Soul (Tune: Woodlands - 4vv) [with lyrics for congregations] - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vz-FkqobgXY)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
Tender to me the promise of His Word;  
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!  
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
His holy Name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!  
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.  
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
To children's children and forevermore!

Songwriters: Timothy Dudley-smith, Walter Greatorex.

**Saying Sorry to God**

Take time to say sorry to God for those things which lie heavy on your heart.

St Paul says

‘Be imitators of God;

love as Christ loved; do not grieve the Holy Spirit;

put away all anger and bitterness,

all slander and malice.’

So let us confess our sins to God, who forgives us in Christ. **Amen** *cf Ephesians 4.30 – 5.1*

**Assurance of forgiveness**

Through the blood of the Lamb, we are forgiven and cleansed.  
Let us praise God for his Son, the Lamb,  
who through the cross paid the price for our sins.  
Thanks be to the Lamb of God. **Amen.**

**Prayer for the Day**

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;  
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,  
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,  
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**Bible passage**



# **Luke 16:19-31** **New International Version**

### The Rich Man and Lazarus

**19**“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. **20**At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores **21**and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

**22**“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. **23**In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. **24**So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

**25**“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. **26**And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

**27**“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, **28**for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

**29**“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

**30**“‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

**31**“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

**Thought for the Day taken from the Roots publication**

**Children may like to do the activity sheet**

A taxi driver and a long-serving minister arrived together in heaven. St Peter, welcoming the cabby, gave her a white silk robe and staff of gold. The minister was excited; if that’s what a cabby got, what would he receive? But Peter brought out a brown hessian robe and a wooden staff. The minister, hurt and confused, asked why he was being treated so poorly. St Peter explained that it was decided on impact assessment – in the minister’s years of preaching long sermons most people had been put to sleep, whereas the cabby’s driving had driven hundreds to prayer!

Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus is rather like this joke. The ordinary people listening would have been falling around in laughter. Jesus tells it to some Pharisees ‘who loved money’. The caricature of poor Lazarus, begging for scraps, would have suggested someone who deserved to be destitute. So why isn’t the rich man in heaven? The story challenges the religious people: Which do they value most – their love of God or their wealthy lifestyle? It’s not a new teaching; Moses and the prophets had also required it – love justice and mercy.

In short, the message is that those who love God need to have the same values as God. They should care more about the poor and hungry than about their own wealth or place in heaven. The very fact that Lazarus was left at the gate proved that the rich man didn’t live by God’s principles. In the story, Abraham says that they knew what Moses and the prophets said, but it made no difference. It’s not lost on us that Jesus, now on his way to die in Jerusalem, ends the parable with the comment that even someone coming back from the dead wouldn’t make them change their ways.

I wonder what Jesus would say to us today. How do our lives reflect God’s kingdom values? Sometimes we can think that Jesus died and rose again just so that we can go to heaven when we die. Isn’t that what the rich man thought? But Jesus’ teaching is about the kingdom of God being here among us, now, as well as in the future. As he taught us, so we pray: ‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’. This has been Jesus’ message since the first time he spoke in a synagogue in Nazareth. He has come to bring good news to the poor, release to captives and so much more. These are God’s kingdom values.

Jesus’ parable challenged the Pharisees, but it challenges us too. How are we building God’s kingdom? We might start with our local neighbourhood – who are the people we haven’t noticed? What ways are there of showing practical love? Or, if we look further afield, do we care that we, in the so-called developed nations, live in relative luxury while elsewhere people die of starvation?

If you were to meet St Peter today, what kind of robe and staff would you get? Or to put it another way, does what we believe really show in our lives – or do we need to do something different?

## **Song** [And Can It Be - Stuart Townend [with lyrics] - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu2uA6U4Fxg)

AND can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me

'TIs mystery all! The Immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the first-born seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.  
'TIs mercy all! let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above So free,  
So infinite His grace Emptied  
Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me 1

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening  
Ray— I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was  
Free,I rose,went forth,and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown,through Christ,my own

## ****We pray for others****

## ***Take time to silently pray for people and situations which are on your heart.***

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

For those who wait at the gate in poverty, seeking essentials from foodbanks, unable to afford to turn their heating on, walking the streets to save using fuel at home. We pray for all in poverty and need that those who have will see and respond to the needs of those who have not. We especially ask that you will bless those who are planning winter warmth projects to provide support for those struggling as a result of spiralling fuel costs.

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; for those whose home has been bombed; for those who cannot afford a home. We pray for all who are homeless or whose homes are insanitary or unsatisfactory. We commend to you those charities that seek to provide aid to those in Pakistan, for those who welcome refugees, for those who provide emergency shelter.

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

For those who wait at the gate in sadness and grief, for those whose lives have been torn apart by the death of a loved one, for those who struggle to cope, for those who can't find a way to fit in. We pray for all those for whom the recent period of national mourning has brought to the surface grief they were seeking to ignore that they may find the comfort and strength that your presence offers.

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

For those who wait at the gate of the church, for those who have been rejected, for those who fear they will be turned away, for those who don’t know how to access your strength and love. We pray that our churches may be inviting places of welcome where no-one is turned away and all are helped to experience the grace and peace that you offer. As we enter the gate of our homes, our churches, our lives, give us eyes to see those in need and hearts to respond in the name of our Saviour Jesus. **Amen.**

**Song** A special recording of ‘we are marching’ [We Are Marching in the Light of God (Siyahamba) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQwmjLjoPKQ)

We Are Marching In The Light Of God  
We Are Marching In The Light Of God  
We Are Marching In The Light Of God  
We Are Marching In The Light Of God  
We Are Marching Marching  
We Are Marching Oh Oh  
We Are Marching In The Light Of God  
(repeat)

We Are Living In The Love Of God  
………

We Are Moving In The Power Of God……

## A sending out prayer

## Lord, we know that your kingdom exists wherever injustice is challenged, wherever the oppressed are set free, wherever the hungry are fed, wherever the helpless helped and foreigners welcomed. Help us to work for this, wherever we are this week

**Amen.**

## ****Go with God 24/7****

During this week, talk with two other people about ways you can put your Christian principles into action. Ask them to join you.

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