

PRISONS WEEK 2024

MARK 10:21 JESUS LOOKED AT HIM AND LOVED HIM...

(NIV) the reading for 13th October 2024, Prisons Sunday

Compassion sums up our prayers for this Prisons Week, from the Latin 'passio' to suffer, and 'com' together with. We stand alongside and with those impacted by the criminal justice system, as hearts and minds are opened to enter into people's pain, struggles, fears and longings.

Over these coming days, we pray not only for offenders and victims of crime (recognising that many people in prison are both) - we pray also for families, friends, prison staff, chaplains, police, probation and all who make decisions which impact people's lives.

We are all created in the image of God who came to earth to be with us and to enter into our pain and suffering as well as our joys and delight. So, in these days ahead we will pause to reflect on Jesus Christ's encounters with people when he walked on earth, and his compassion, always offering hope and the possibility of transformation even in places of suffering.

Compassion is not a passive word but a word which implies a response. As we are moved by people's stories and circumstances of struggle and longing, may the Holy Spirit prompt us not only to pray but also stir us to act in practical ways, however large or small, as we offer to God who we are, our context, time, resources and voice.

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek Bishop of Gloucester and Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons

THE PRISONS WEEK PRAYER

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen

DAY 1 JESUS LOOKED AT HIM AND LOVED HIM. Mark 10:21

God and Heavenly Father, please show us how we can give freely and willingly of what we possess, including our time, to serve and support those you love and care about connected with the prison system – prisoners, their families, victims of crime, and those who serve in prisons as officers, chaplains and in many other ways. Always remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”. Amen. **Staff – Good News for Everyone**

DAY 2 'ZACCHAEUS COME DOWN IMMEDIATELY. I MUST STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TODAY'. Luke 19:5

Welcoming God, you call us all to sit and eat with you. You know our faults before we can confess them and yet you still love us. Thank you for calling us from the places where we hide and for loving us. We pray for all those affected by prison; be with them when they are in pain, feeling sad, angry, lonely, or betrayed.

Thank you that you stay with those who others reject. Give them eyes to see you when in places of darkness. Let them see your spark of light, receive your love, and seek to do good wherever they are. May they accept your invitation Jesus, follow your example, and know that your love can restore and transform their lives. Amen. **Staff – Churches Together in England**

DAY 3 'IF YOU KNEW...WHO IT IS THAT ASKS YOU FOR A DRINK, YOU WOULD HAVE ASKED HIM AND HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU LIVING WATER'. John 4:10

Thank you, Jesus, that you came and looked for me and stayed with me when no-one else would. When I was avoiding others and hating myself. When I couldn't see how to get out of the dark place I was in. My heart jumps a beat every time I think of you waiting patiently for me. Only you can look right into my soul and know my heart. Even knowing everything about me – what people have done to me, what I've done to them – you still want to pull me up and out of that hideous shame. You've shown me that God's love is more powerful than anything and lasts forever. I want others to know it too.

Blessed Lord, your love and healing day after day quenches my thirst. Thank you for believing in me, for loving me. Amen. **Staff - Spurgeons**

DAY 4 'I SAW YOU WHILE YOU WERE STILL UNDER THE FIG TREE BEFORE PHILIP CALLED YOU'.

John 1:48

Dear Lord, There are times when I think I am alone, unseen, unheard and unloved, but you are there with me always. You know me and as you say in the scripture, you see me. When I sit in quiet contemplation you are there with me, you hear my innermost thoughts, you know my sorrows and regrets.

I know that you are good and as I love you, I know that you also love me. I know that you are ever present and can change the lives of those who follow you. Help me to remember that you were shunned, ignored and disregarded, but change is possible and in you, I can lead a new life. Amen. **Staff – Mothers' Union**

DAY 5 'TAKE HEART DAUGHTER, YOUR FAITH HAS HEALED YOU'. Matthew 9:22

I come to you as one afflicted for years – shunned from friends and peers. I looked for help everywhere but that just added to my despair. I need to push through the crowd of doubt with prayer, but I feel unworthy. Lord, I reach for you like the lady in Matthew. Lord let me touch the outer limits of you so you can help me as you do. Oh Jesus Christ I'm scared you'll refuse my prayer, tell me off and not care. But Lord I am there in that story – will you say, and let it be true, 'take heart my son your faith has healed you'.

Resident – The Nehemiah project

DAY 6 'YOU ARE WORRIED AND UPSET ABOUT MANY THINGS BUT ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDED'.

Luke 10:41

Lord Jesus, grant me wisdom and courage to find that place of balance in my life, between doing and being. There is so much hurt and need in this world that your Spirit calls me to acknowledge and respond to. Yet I know without receiving from you I become lost in busyness and have nothing to offer. So as I come to you for myself Lord, I also remember all those who seek to serve and support others, feed them and fill them to overflowing that all people will know your saving power.

Amen. **Prison Chaplain**

DAY 7 'BUT MANY WHO ARE FIRST WILL BE LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST'. Mark 10:31

Come Lord, break into this world of ours and reorder our understanding; where the hurt and damaged find healing, the oppressed are granted justice, and the stranger is welcomed. Stir up within us your compassion. Give us a new heart, a new vision of who we are as your people and how you call us to live with one another. Hear our prayers for change; that your Kingdom may come here in our homes, our places of work, our prisons and our communities. Amen. **Trustee – Yellow Ribbon**



For nearly 50 years, Prisons Week has encouraged Christians everywhere to pray for prisoners and their families, victims of crime and their communities and those working or volunteering in the criminal justice system. Please pray each day during Prisons Week but also ask yourself if there is one thing that you as an individual, or as a church, can do to help any of the people for whom you are praying.

For more information, to donate, or to order more leaflets please use the contact details below.

campaign designed by www.spreadcreative.com