

+WEEKLY SERMON

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When we ask for fish...

As I write this reflection, I'm down in Devon. The sun is out, and the sea is blue, but alas, I'm here for work and not a holiday. I am hoping to get myself into the holiday spirit by getting myself some fish and chips for tea. I know that's not the healthiest dinner, but I can be confident that it's not going to be a deep-fried snake. That would be somewhat unexpected, and I wouldn't enjoy it.

In our gospel passage this Sunday Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray. His lesson contains the familiar words of the Lord's prayer. A prayer that is radical in its re-ordering of the world: debts are forgiven, the hungry are fed, and justice breaks through into our unjust societies. Perhaps though, we are a little too familiar with it and lose sight of exactly how much it turns the world upside down.

Looking at our world, you could be forgiven for thinking that we'd asked for a fish and been given a snake instead. It is injustice that seems to reign supreme. Wars and terrorism, racial attacks and organised crime are rife. Yet, Jesus is clear: God the father knows how to give good gifts. War, violence, drug problems, racism and hatred of all kinds are not gifts from God. Jesus is calling us to stand against these evils.

His message is simple, but bold. He is calling us to be the hands and feet of justice. When we pray for the reordering of our world, he is calling us to work for peace, he is calling us to love our neighbours and our communities, he is calling us to love the stranger and the foreigner. He is calling for us to make a difference.

The Lord's prayer is not a gentle voice encouraging us, but a warrior call, driving us to transformative action. Praying it is an opportunity to be part of God's plan for a world transformed.

Let's not lose sight of the radical call of the Lord's prayer on our lives because we repeat it so often.

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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES