

15-21 May 2022

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

1.7m

people in need reached by our humanitarian programmes

57k

volunteers gave their time and talents during Christian Aid Week

12k

churches took part in fundraising activities

For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. The combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict, and drought have robbed communities of the power to provide for their children. It's unjust. This Christian Aid Week:

- We stand with the resilient women who are determined to lift their families out of hunger.
- We raise our voices to call for climate justice.
- We pray that families will stay strong during times of drought.
  - Together, we hope to restore justice to our world, and protect the future for our children and grandchildren.



### No voice over (video) – Zoom Service

<https://christianaid.resourcespace.com/pages/view.php?ref=6551&k=c5e5099242>

### Prayer

Creator, Son and Spirit, we gather together, online and/or in-person to seek Your presence in our time of worship. **WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOU**

Meet us at our point of deepest need. Connect us with the needs of others. Equip us to join in your creative work. Transform us more into your likeness. **WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

We gather with women and their communities all over the world (this Christian Aid Week). May their stories make us hungry for justice and even more impatient for change. **WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOUR JUSTICE**

We gather with all of creation; with the mountains and the hills. We shall burst into song, with the trees of the field we will clap our hands. **WE ARE HUNGRY TO PRAISE YOU.**

Establish the work of our hands, O God. We are your people so answer us, O God, from the streets of your city, from your river of life, from your throne in heaven. **SPEAK TO US, OH LORD.** Speak in words of power and mighty deeds. Speak to our cries of 'how long.'

How long will the bellies of children lie empty? How long will their mothers pray in vain? How long will temperatures rise beyond record? How long will the clouds fail to give rain? How long will the crop fields turn into dust? How long will the floods cover the plain?

How long will so few live with far too much? How long will so many be denied what they need? How long before the healing of nations? How long will injustice and suffering remain?

But heaven, we know, this is much of our making; our scapegoats, our alibis, they all know the truth: Our pointing the finger and prayers of 'how long' echo back on our piety and demand us to answer **HOW LONG, HOW LONG?** How long will indifference, inequality and injustice deny compassion, healing and fullness of life?

### Parable of the Sheep and the goats

(Matthew 25:34-40)

<sup>34</sup>“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’ <sup>35</sup> For **I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in <sup>36</sup> **I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ <sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘**Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**’****

### Reflection/ prayer bullets

Our reflection is in a form of five prayer points.

- First, join me, in prayer, to allow the words ‘I was ... and you’ in this parable to speak to us. Jesus says,

we visited Him in prison, we fed Him and we clothed Him. The words, 'I was... and you' invite us to see and sense Jesus in others, whose needs we have been privileged to meet. **May we continue to open the door to Jesus Christ, in everyone we meet.**

- Secondly, note that the people (mentioned in the parable above) on the King's right hand have in their lifetime, provided for the most basic of human needs in God's family.

Furthermore, they have done it for 'the least' - **not for the mighty and powerful, but for the least.** God loves us all equally, but has a special place in his presence for the least among us – the downtrodden, those who have been denied justice, the hurt and abused, the children...

One question we should ask ourselves as individuals and indeed as a community of faith is, are we selective in our giving of time, money, material or spiritual gifts? Prayers or even faith without action is not enough. As the counter-reformer and founder of the Society of Jesus, St Ignatius of Loyola said, 'Love is found in deeds rather than in words.'

- Thirdly, this parable calls us all reach out to our sisters and brothers (in church and community) who are vulnerable or in need. In and with Jesus, we look at our lives and ask, **how can we, the people of God, enhance the way we share our faith, gifts and time with others? We listen,** in this portion of scripture, to way Jesus is spurring us on unmistakably to deeper faith, greater compassion and the respectful sharing of His gospel, **in word and through our actions.**
- Fourthly, Jesus' identifies with the needy (referred to in the parable as 'the least') and asks us to imitate Him.

As one man said, 'Christians exist to love God and to love all the people Jesus loves and for whom He died'.

We may not be able to do much for others, especially those in need. But we **can pray for them (or with them),** reach out to them through **acts of loving kindness (like a simple phone call), treat them with respect and help to promote their dignity.**

John Maxwell, People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Jesus says – love one another, as I have loved you! – The love of Jesus is a love that places the interests of others before one's own.

- Lastly, during times like this of trouble and uncertainty, people often ask, where is God? How do we find him?

**With this parable Jesus provides the answer.** He is everywhere and with everyone around us, especially those in need. He is with all his brothers and sisters in suffering, grieving, hunger, prison and other locked places. We see Jesus in and through others and **whatsoever we do to or for others in need, we do it unto Him – for His glory and in a way that qualifies us to be for Him and with Him, here and hereafter.**  
Amen

### Prayer of thanksgiving and intercession

Creator God, cultivator of our faith, thank you for the privilege of living in this global garden planted to bear your fruit, to delight our tongues, to fill our bellies, to energise our bodies. You have given us life in all its fullness. You have given us life, yet millions still hunger.

Take our gifts of money and use them to help Christian Aid support communities throughout the world and partners who hunger to provide. But may our support not end here. May we be the seeds from which your kingdom grows.

But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Syria and all those other places to whom our hearts have become hardened through over familiarity. **THEY WILL HUNGER NO MORE AND THIRST NO MORE.**

In our hunger for justice, we pray for all those known to us who hunger to provide for those they love in our global community. **THE SUN WILL NOT STRIKE THEM, NOR ANY SCORCHING HEAT**

In our hunger, we pray for your little ones, children who go to bed hungry, whose parents struggle to provide for them in times of desperate drought. **GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES.** And in our hunger, we pray that you will fill us with your hope, your passion and your life, that we may go out from this place to give, act and pray. So, all who hunger to provide may be filled to overflowing. In the name of Christ, farmer, gardener and cultivator, AMEN.

### Closing hymn: God of all comfort (ZOOM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KxOYI67KPY>

### Benediction

In the name of God who plants the seed of justice: Be hungry. In the name of Christ who hangs on the tree of love: Be fruitful. And in the name of the Spirit who inspires God's will in our hearts and our lives: Be celebrated. You are Christ's people, here and throughout the world now and forever. Amen.