

Prayers 21 04 18

Gracious Deliverer receive our gratitude and praise today.

You gift us with freedom

And you encourage us to use it to choose life, from the life and death choices, ever before us,

Too often we choose death

Making you sad more than angry

You wait for us with a forgiving heart, longing for us to return to knowing that we are loved by you and therefore loveable.

You hear us when we call out to you from the place where death has led us – caught in our own nets

You see us while we are still far off

You run to us with welcoming embrace

You clothe us with love that covers the full multitude of our sin

You claim us family – as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever – calling us beloved

You prepare a room for us filled with your generous mercy where we can rest and recover from our failures, betrayals and denial of your love.

Refusing to be determined by our past, you call us again – trusting that this time we can be faithful

You remind us that you need us – that our lives matter – that how our little lives count – count even in the large scheme of things

You gift us with responsibility – and with it you affirm our dignity and worth

And you do all this over and over again – more than 70x7, you repeatedly deliver us from evil – from our evil

For this we sing your praises. For this our hearts overflow with great gratitude...in the knowledge that when our own hearts condemn us – you are greater than our heart.

And for this reason, we return today, confident to be met by your mercy...to be met by your forgiving love – your forgiving love that sets us free – your forgiving love that resurrects us to new life and changed living in thought, word and deed.

May your mercy touch and release our patterns of thinking that keep us captive to a diminished sense of self and of others. When we are tempted to think of ourselves and others as less than beautifully beloved, as less than wondrously made and of priceless worth. Touch our eyes with your mercy again and again until we see ourselves and others clearly. Touch and heal the thought within us that makes us believe we are less than or more than everyone else. That we are worse than or better than. Go deeper and remove our compulsion to compare and compete with others rather than encourage and celebrate.

May your mercy touch our vocabulary – that our words may be true. Neither censored by fear, nor embellished by exaggeration. Words that are spoken in such a way that allow room for the words of others. Welcoming words. Affirming words. Words that create a spaciousness. Words that decentre us and centre others. Words that invite participation. Words that build and bridge rather than words that silence, divide and exclude, leaving others on the periphery. Words that bring light to the darkness and resurrection where death is entrenched.

May your mercy saturate our deeds – that we will act gently and justly in all things. Release our deeds from thoughtless hurry – where we are in such a rush that we miss all possibility of honoured connection with those around us. May our deeds be of service to your dream of justice and shalom in the world. May they favour those that society is bias against. May our deeds turn up-side-down the unjust hierarchies that determine a person's life by their place of birth, colour of skin....

By your mercy, resurrect us today we pray. Open us by your spirit to be receptive to your inner workings where we can't reach but so desperately need healing. Give us the assurance through your Spirit that in you we are a new creation. That from now on our lives can begin over. That even though we are old, we can be born again. That our lives and relationships and society and world can be resurrected to new life. Give us this assurance we pray. And more than this assurance – free us from fear to give our lives as a living sacrifice in your service – of life and love. Amen.