

COTLE PRAYER MANUAL II

Opening Prayers

We give thanks unto Him who is the Doer of all good, God the Father of our Lord, and our God, and our Savior Jesus Christ,

For that He has protected us; that He has helped us; that He has preserved us; that He has accepted us to Himself; that He has spared us; that He has taken us by the hand and has brought us to this hour.

Therefore, do we pray Him, that He will keep us this, holy day, and all the days of our life; in all the peace of the Almighty Lord our God.¹

Prayer

¹ St. Gregory, *The Divine EYXOAOΓION, and the Divine Liturgy of S. Gregory the Theologian*, trans. S. C. Malan, vol. VI, Original Documents of the Coptic Church (London: D. Nutt, 1875), 3.

Holy, Holy, Holy are You in very truth, O Lord our God, Who formed us, and created us and placed us in the paradise of joy;

But, when Adam transgressed Your commandment through the wiles of the serpent, and we fell from everlasting life, and thrust ourselves out of the paradise of joy:

You did not cast us off behind You, but You visited us continually through Your prophets:

And in the end of days You revealed Yourself to us—to us who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death—through Your Only Begotten Son, our Lord and our God, and our Savior Jesus Christ;

Who took flesh from the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and taught us the way of salvation;

And granted us the birth from above through water and the Spirit; and made us a people gathered together, that we should be made holy through Your Holy Spirit.

O You who loved Your own, who were in the world, You gave Him to save us from death that had dominion over us.

Who took us out of it, that is, out of our sins; He went down into hell from the Cross; He rose again from among the dead on the third day; He went up into the heavens; and sat down at Your right hand, O Father; He limited the day of repentance, revealing in Himself the coming judgment in justice of the habitable world; when He will render unto everyone according to his works.²

*He brought down to us this great mystery of godliness;*³ when He determined to deliver Himself unto death for the life of the world. Amen

² S. Gregory, *The Divine EYXOΛOΓION, and the Divine Liturgy of S. Gregory the Theologian*, trans. S. C. Malan, vol. VI, Original Documents of the Coptic Church (London: D. Nutt, 1875), 21–23.

Hymn To the Ascended Christ

It is in truth worthy and just to sing unto You, to bless You, to minister unto You, to worship You, to give You glory, who alone art the God of truth, the Lover of man.

The Ineffable,
The Invisible,
The Infinite,
The Eternal,
The Everlasting,
The One without time,
The Immeasurable,
The Unsearchable,
The One without confusion,
Who created all things,
Who redeemed all things,
Who forgives our sins,
Who redeems our life from destruction,
Who crowns us with mercies and compassion.
You are He to whom the angels sing,
Whom the archangels' worship,
You are He whom the rulers bless; unto whom the dominions cry.
You are He whom the powers give glory,
You are He to whom the thrones give honor;
The thousands of thousands that stand before You;
The myriads of myriads who do Your service;
You are He whom things invisible do bless;
You are He whom things visible worship.
Which all obey Your word, O Lord!³

³ S. Gregory, *The Divine EYXOΛOΓION, and the Divine Liturgy of S. Gregory the Theologian*, trans. S. C. Malan, vol. VI, Original Documents of the Coptic Church (London: D. Nutt, 1875), 52–53.

You, O my Master, have turned the punishment into salvation; like a good shepherd You have gone after that which was lost.
Like a true father You entreated me, me who was fallen.
You bound me with all remedies that led to life;
You are He that sent all the prophets for me who was weak:
You gave me the Law for help;
You are He who ministered salvation to me, who had transgressed Your law;
Like the true Light, You rose on those who were lost, and on the ignorant.⁴

Have mercy on me O Lord.

You who are forever, You came to us upon earth, You came into the Virgin's womb.
You who are God Infinite, You did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped
But You lowered Thyself, took the form of a servant;
You took my nature upon Yourself; You fulfilled Your Law upon me;
You showed me the rising from my fall;²
You give forgiveness to those who were held captive in hell.
You cast out the curse of the law;
You abolished sin in the flesh.
You showed me the strength of Your power.
You gave sight to the eyes of the blind.
You raised the dead out of the grave.
You established my nature by Your word.
You revealed to me the dispensation of Your compassions;
You took upon Yourself the insults of the wicked ones.
You gave Your back to the scourgers.
You gave Your cheeks to the slaps. Because of me, O my master, You did not turn away
Your face from the spittles.⁵

O Chieftain-Warrior and Lord, the Victor over Hell! In that I am delivered from eternal death, as Your creature and servant I offer unto You songs of praise and devotion; but inasmuch as You have mercy ineffable, from all calamity deliver me, crying unto You:
O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy upon me!

⁴ S. Gregory, *The Divine EYXOΛOΓION, and the Divine Liturgy of S. Gregory the Theologian*, trans. S. C. Malan, vol. VI, Original Documents of the Coptic Church (London: D. Nutt, 1875), 57.

⁵ S. Gregory, *The Divine EYXOΛOΓION, and the Divine Liturgy of S. Gregory the Theologian*, trans. S. C. Malan, vol. VI, Original Documents of the Coptic Church (London: D. Nutt, 1875), 57–58.

Hymn

O Creator of Angels and Lord of Hosts! As in times past You opened ear and tongue to the Deaf and Dumb, so open now my perplexed mind and tongue to the praise of Your All-purest Name, that I may cry unto You:

O Jesus All-Wonderful, Angels' Astonishment!
O Jesus All-Powerful, Forefathers' Deliverance!
O Jesus All-Sweetest, Patriarchs' Exaltation!
O Jesus All-Glorious, Kings' Stronghold!
O Jesus All-Beloved, Prophets' Fulfillment!
O Jesus All-Marvelous, Martyrs' Sustenance!
O Jesus All-peaceful, Monks' Joyfulness!
O Jesus All-Gracious, Presbyters' Sweetness!
O Jesus All-Merciful, Fasters' Abstinence!
O Jesus All-Tenderest, Saints' Rejoicing!
O Jesus All-Honorable, Virgins' Chastity!
O Jesus Everlasting, Sinners' Salvation!
O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy upon me!⁶

⁶ "Russian Day" Committee, *The Orthodox Prayer Book: English*, Third Edition. (South Canaan, PA; Luzerne County, PA; Lackawanna County, PA: St. Tikhon's Press; "Russian Day" Committee, 2010), 414–418.

St. Augustine: Lord Jesus – Let me Know Myself

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know You,
And desire nothing save only You.
Let me hate myself and love You.
Let me do everything for the sake of You.
Let me humble myself and exalt You.
Let me think of nothing except You.
Let me die to myself and live in You.
Let me accept whatever happens as from You.
Let me banish self and follow You,
And ever desire to follow You.
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in You,
That I may deserve to be defended by You.
Let me fear for myself, let me fear You,
And let me be among those who are chosen by You.
Let me distrust myself and put my trust in You.
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of You.
Let me cling to nothing save only to You,
And let me be poor because of You.
Look upon me, that I may love You.
Call me that I may see You,
And forever enjoy You.

Amen.

—*St. Augustine of Hippo*

St. Basil The Great

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Ages, and Maker of all men, I thank You for all the good things which You have bestowed upon me, and for this Communion of Your most pure and life-giving Mysteries. Therefore, I entreat You, O Gracious One Who loves mankind, keep me in Your tabernacle and under the shadow of Your wings; and grant that, with a pure conscience, even unto my uttermost breath, I may worthily partake of Your Holy Things, unto the remission of my sins, and unto life eternal. For You are the Bread of Life, the Fountain of all holiness, the Giver of good things; and unto You we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.⁷

⁷ “Russian Day” Committee, *The Orthodox Prayer Book: English*, Third Edition. (South Canaan, PA; Luzerne County, PA; Lackawanna County, PA: St. Tikhon’s Press; “Russian Day” Committee, 2010), 298–300.

Prayer For The Church

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victories to the all the saints over all their enemies and by Your Cross upholding Your people everywhere.

Prayer For the Local Church

Eternal God, who by your Son Jesus Christ established the family of your church in all the world, including our local church, Church On The Living Edge: breathe upon it anew the gifts, the charisms, of your Holy Spirit, that ever awake to your command, we may go forward in faith in humble and lowly service, yet in conquering light and might, to win the world we live in to the love of your Only Begotten Son. Amen

Quicken Lord we pray, all the members of the church, that they may be alive to opportunities as well as responsibilities of the times in which we live. Give us a kind of spiritual discernment that truly understands the times and knows what to do. Save us from complacency and from fear of new ways; inspire our minds with the vision of a world won for you through the cross of Christ; and stir our wills to both pray and work until your will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Heavenly Father, you have brought us into the fellowship and communion of your dear Son: lead us all in Church On The Living Edge ever closer day by day to you and to one another, that we may become of one heart and one mind in love toward you; rushing along in unison; and grant that our common life and labor in loving sacrificial service may help to extend your kingdom here in our local community and all over the world. Amen

Prayers For Leadership

Almighty God, by whose Holy Spirit the apostles were guided in their councils; direct, we pray the deliberations of our leaders and those who share with them the responsibility of planning and providing for the ongoing work of both our local church, and the churches that look to our Bishop for oversight and wisdom. Grant them wise judgment and adventurous faith, that they may lead us ever forward to greater service and achievement in the furtherance of your kingdom in the world, until your will is done on earth as it is in heaven and all the families of the earth are one united family and you, as you promised Abraham, the great father of our faith. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Prayer For Body Ministry

Lord God, St. Paul taught us that as members of Your body we all have our part to play in the life of the church. We thank You for the work You have given each one of us to do with one another, for one another, and for those we are called to serve, thank You Father that all that we do, we do together as one. Grant us grace to persevere in the labor of the Gospel, and through it to serve you to Your Honor and your glory. Amen

Lord Jesus, to whose service we are all dedicated in this Your holy Church, Church on The Living Edge, fit us all for the work we have been given to do. Fill us with Your Spirit, enlighten our minds as we study the Sacred Text, Your Holy Word; inspire us as we share that good Word with all those we meet, and make us exemplary in goodness, mercy, compassion, love, loyalty, honor, sacrifice, and indeed holiness, to the honor and the glory of Your holy name. Amen

Prayer For Pastors

Lord Jesus Christ, You who are the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and the Bishop and Guardian of our souls, You laid down Your life for the sheep and when You ascended on high You appointed under-shepherds to feed, to guide, to guard, to ground, and to gather your flock. Give our pastors the grace they need day by day to faithfully carry out the demanding duties of their sacred calling. Fill them with Your love for the souls committed to their care; inspire them with wisdom, guidance and instruction of those who seek their aid; and in all things help them as well as us when they serve, to glorify You by the way in which they live out the life of Christ as He lives it within them. Amen

Prayer For Governing Wisdom for Eldership

Blessed Lord, You have called the elders to guide us in all the governing of this house. Guide their deliberations, so that by all the aims and purposes that You have placed before them as the stewardship of their responsibilities for this house, that they may be strengthened to do the work on behalf of this church and to support the mission we have been given, both here, and all around the world. Amen

Prayer For Children's Workers

Father of mercy, whose blessed Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, laid upon his disciples both the care and the well-being of children. We pray for Your special blessing on all those in this house who have offered themselves for the service of spiritual formation and nurturance in Christ for all the children that are part of the Church on The Living Edge family. Father, we give You thanks for the privilege that is theirs and ours in sharing in the early training of our children in Christ, in the nurture and admonition of all things related to Christ, and in His faith and in His very life. Endue all the children's workers with insight and understanding, with wisdom, patience, and love; and when they find themselves in seasons of challenge and difficulty, grant them the most blessed secret joy that comes through faithful continuance in the sacred task which they have undertaken. Amen

Heavenly Father,

You call us to be a people of obedience and faithfulness in every area of our lives. You instruct us to be wise and faithful stewards of our time, our talents, and our treasures. Father, how easy it is for us to think we are the source of our time, our talents, and our treasures. We easily deceive ourselves into thinking we can take care of ourselves without any support. We are unconscious of how much we do that even while we profess that You and You alone are the Source of all things in our lives, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Have mercy on us for those areas where we have failed to give You thanks for Your faithful provision. Have mercy on us for the ways in which we fail to give you thanks, even in the way we at times withhold that which is rightly the first portion of all our increase. Lord Jesus, you warned us that there are only two choices in life, we either worship Your Father, or we worship Mammon, the principality of money and economic exchange. Father, we acknowledge that when we fail to be faithful in our tithes and offerings, and radically generous to the needy and the poor, that we are revealing that we are worshipping Mammon. Remind us that to repent of that requires actually obeying those principles and commandments of giving the first or our increase on a regular basis. Father, we pray for the entire COTLE family, that as one heart, one mind, and one faith, we will be faithful in our stewardship of our time, talent and treasure. We pray that the entire COTLE family will learn to be obedient in every one of these areas. Father, we are aware that as a family we are not all faithful in our time, our talent, and our tithes and offerings. Our pastors yearn for the day when the entire house is faithful in all these areas. Search our hearts Lord, expose our fears, our need for control, and our need to even save ourselves as it relates to these things, and lead us by your grace to repent and bring forth the kind of deeds that are congruent with repentance. Father, there are many needs that the pastors carry for the house that we don't realize and perhaps don't even take into account. Yet Father, we are well-fed and care for in every area by the pastoral team. Teach us to live a life that expresses our thankfulness. Father, even in this season, make the house a faithful house in all areas so that there can be "meat on Your table" and that every need will be met with some left over. These things we ask in Jesus' precious Name. Amen

Lord, our God, you know who we are: People with good and bad consciences; satisfied and dissatisfied, sure and unsure people; Christians out of conviction and Christians out of habit; believers, half-believers, and unbelievers.

You know where we come from: from our circle of relatives, friends, and acquaintances, or from great loneliness; from lives of quiet leisure, or from all manner of embarrassment and distress; from ordered, tense, or destroyed family relationships; from the inner circle, or from the fringes of the Christian community.

But now we all stand before you: in all our inequality equal in this, that we are all in the wrong before you and among each other; that we all must die some day; that we all would be lost without your grace; but also, in that your grace is promised to and turned toward all of us through your beloved Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We are here together in order to praise you by allowing you to speak to us. We ask that this might happen in this hour in the name of your Son, our Lord. Amen.⁸

⁸ Karl Barth, [*Fifty Prayers*](#), trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 1–2.

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the eternal, living, saving Word that in Jesus you have spoken and continue to speak to us human beings. Do not allow us to hear it only in a cursory fashion and to be too lazy to obey it. Do not let us fall, but remain near each one of us with your comfort, and between each of us and our fellow human beings with your peace. Let dawn continue to break a little in our hearts, in this institution, at home with those who are dear to us, in this city, in our nation, and throughout the whole earth. You know the errors and misdeeds that make our current situation once again so dark and dangerous on all sides. Let a fresh wind blow through it, that might at least scatter the thickest fog from the heads of those who rule this world, but also from the heads of the peoples who permit themselves to be ruled, and above all from the heads of those who make public opinion. And have mercy on all of those who are sick in body and in spirit, the many for whom life is suffering, those who are lost and confused through their own or others' fault, those who have no human friends or helpers. Show our youth also what true freedom and genuine joy are, and do not leave the old and the dying without the hope of the resurrection and eternal life. But you are the first, who are concerned about our sorrows, and you are the only one who can turn them to good. We thus can and want only to lift our eyes up toward you. Our help comes from you, who made heaven and earth. Amen.⁹

⁹ Karl Barth, *Fifty Prayers*, trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 2.

Lord, God, our Father, we thank you that here with each other we can call on you and listen to you. Before you, we are all equal. You know the life, thoughts, path, and heart of each of us, down to the smallest and most hidden detail, and before your eyes none is righteous, no, not one. But you have not forgotten, rejected, or condemned a single one of us. Quite the opposite: you love each one of us; you know what we need, will grant it to us, will look at nothing but the empty hands that we stretch out to you, in order that they might be filled—not sparingly, but richly. In the suffering and death of Jesus, your dear Son, you were gracious and exceedingly helpful when you took our place, you took our darkness and laments on yourself, and you have made us free to come to your light and rejoice as your children.

In his name, we ask that you now give each of us something of your good Holy Spirit, so that in this hour we may understand you, ourselves, and each other a little better, and that thereby we may be quickened and encouraged to take a step forward along the path that you have set for all of us, whether we know it or not—both then, as Jesus, hanging on the cross, bowed his head and died, and from all eternity. Amen.¹⁰

¹⁰ Karl Barth, [*Fifty Prayers*](#), trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 19–20.

Lord our God, we praise you and thank you that you, in your dear Son, in mercy beyond understanding, would humble yourself so much for our sakes, in order that in him we may be so highly exalted for your sake. We praise you and thank you for this mighty decision regarding your people Israel and the pagan nations from which you called our ancestors. We praise you and thank you for all of your gracious election and calling, that you are also the God of the rejected and the uncalled, and that you never cease to deal with each one of us in a fatherly and righteous manner. Let us never tire of recognizing you and praying to you in all of these mysteries, that we may in faith lay hold of your Word, through which you magnify your honor and give us, with eternal blessing, peace and joy, even in this life. We pray for your church here and in all nations, for the sleeping church, that it may awaken; for the persecuted church, that it may continually rejoice and be assured of what it has in you; and for the confessing church, that it may live not for its own sake, but for your glory.

We pray for the rulers and the authorities all over the world: for the good ones, that you may preserve them; and for the bad ones, that you may either turn their hearts or put an end to their power, all according to your will; and for everyone, that you may advise them that they are and must remain your servants.

We pray that all tyranny and disorder may be fended off, and that all oppressed nations and people may be granted justice.

We pray for the poor, the sick, the prisoners, the helpless, and the troubled, for all who suffer—perhaps from something only you know—that you yourself may comfort them with the hope of your kingdom. Amen.¹¹

¹¹ Karl Barth, *Fifty Prayers*, trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 20–21.

Lord, our God, our Father in Jesus Christ, your Son, and our brother, we thank you that everything is as we have now again attempted to say and hear. We are sorry that so often we have been blind and deaf to the light of your Word. And we are sorry for all of the sin in our lives that this has caused. And because we know well that without you we would be continually lost, we ask that you not cease to touch us with your Holy Spirit, to awaken us, and to make us alert, humble, and brave. We do not ask this for each one of us individually, but we ask this for one another, all those who are in this house, for all prisoners in the world, for all who are suffering or ill in body or spirit, for the homeless and the downtrodden, and also for all those whose concerns and needs are hidden from us, but not from you. We ask this also for those close to us, for all parents, teachers, and students, for the people who hold positions of responsibility in the state, the administration, and the court, and for the preachers and ministers of your gospel.

Help them and all of us to bear what must be borne; but also, above all, to think, say, and do what is right; to believe, to love, and to hope in the great riches that you will give to them and to us. Amen.¹²

¹² Karl Barth, [*Fifty Prayers*](#), trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 34–35.

As Life Advances And We Age

Lord, I'm tired.

As I grow older
fatigue comes sooner.
This worn and weary frame
no longer functions
as it once did.

That I may continue to serve You
and live the rest of my days
to their full
is my prayer.

I know, Lord, that I must learn
to recognize limitations,
to choose among opportunities,
to eliminate excess baggage.

But that knowledge comes hard.
I am not wise;
I need to understand
much more than I now know
of the practical application
of Your Word
to these matters.

Forgive me Lord
for not learning sooner,
for wasted time
and dissipated energy
I now wish I had.
I see the importance
of these commodities
now that I am beginning
to run short of them.

I want to serve You
to the end,
not in a lackluster manner,
nor in weariness of flesh,
but vivaciously,
conserving and wisely using
all my remaining strength
for Your glory,

Amen.¹³

¹³ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 7–8.

Finding Balance

One of my hardest trials, Lord,
is learning
to strike the delicate balance
between taking matters
into my hands
and putting them in Yours.

My problem is
that I tend to do one or the other
when I know
You want me
to put one hand into Yours
as You
encourage, strengthen and guide me
to do with the other what You have commanded.

Forgive me, God
when I let go
and run ahead,
when I drag behind
and
when I stand still, confused.

Balance is what I need!
Give it to me, I ask,
that I may pray as I should
walk as I ought
and think as You think,
for Christ's honor,
Amen¹⁴

¹⁴ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 10.

Complaining

Caught myself:

I've been complaining again
Instead of thanking You.

How often I find myself
joining the chorus
of those who can see
nothing more
than the skin
of life's trials.

They complain because they are blind
and know nothing else to do.

Why should I,
who see Your hand
at work in every trial
molding and making of me
what You want me to be,
echo pagan plaints?

Certainly, at bottom
no complaint
is against circumstances
or my fellow-man;
but against You
and what You are doing
in Your world!

Forgive me, Lord;
keep my heart and my lips
free from the sin
of murmuring.

Open my eyes to see
beneath the sordid surface
of sinful circumstances
Your sovereign sway.

Help me to trust You Lord
and to replace my rebellious spirit
with a joyful heart
and prayers of expectant thanksgiving.
For Jesus' sake,
Amen.¹⁵

¹⁵ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 11–12.

Correction

Correct me, O God

of knowledge and truth.
I have been wrong, and wronged others;
I have erred in thought, word and deed.
I was self-deceived,
led others astray,
stubbornly insisted on my viewpoint.
Now You have shown me clearly
the error of my ways.
Forgive me for misunderstanding
Your truth—and Him Who is the Truth
Help me now, Lord,
to acknowledge my wrong
to those I wronged,
to prayerfully search out Your truth,
and to teach it humbly
wherever You direct my paths,
by and for Him Who is
the Way, the Truth and the Life,
Amen.¹⁶

¹⁶ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 14.

Handling Disappointment

Lord, I can almost taste the bitterness of disappointment;

my shattered expectations and dreams
are like gravel in my mouth.

So help me—my strength fails.

Help me

to realize all that has happened,
to see, beyond the betrayal,
Your hand and Your love.

Through the failure of man

You move silently but surely,
even making human wrath
to praise You
and to bring about my good.

Teach me

in this disappointment
to empty my mouth of grit
and to savor instead
the delicacies You have prepared for me.
That I may honor Christ,
Amen.¹⁷

¹⁷ Jay E. Adams, *Prayers for Troubled Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 17.

Trials And Tests

Lord, I feel
 like I've been kicked in the teeth,
 like I've been pounded with a baseball bat.
I don't feel
 like giving thanks for tribulation,
 like rejoicing in trial
 or even like praying.
Lord, *I'm* down!
But that's just why
 I come to You—
I need *You*.
Pick me up.
Forgive me for sinful attitudes.
Strengthen me.
Instruct me from Your Word.
Teach me
 how to respond,
 what to do and say,
 what my responsibilities are.
And enable me to assume them
 so that
 even in this, my God,
 I may honor Your Son,
 in Whose Name I pray,
 Amen¹⁸

¹⁸ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 20.

Faith

My faith is small, Lord:
I didn't really expect
You to do it—
but You did;

Your answer to my prayer
far exceeded
what I asked or dreamed.

How can I thank You?
I ask forgiveness
for lack of faith,
I shall testify to others
about Your faithfulness,
and, in the future,
I shall remember how You responded
—and believe
(Help my unbelief).

Thank You Lord
for Your great goodness to me.
In Christ,
Amen.¹⁹

¹⁹ Jay E. Adams, *Prayers for Troubled Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 21.

Fear

I am so afraid
that I am almost shivering;
I dread
what may happen next.
Lord, that is because
in sin
I have been looking
away from Your face
and at the stormy waves.
Forgive me.
White water and calm
are the same to You;
You are the Lord of the sea.
If it be Your will,
speak to the splashing waves
that they may cease.
But if it be not Your will
at least speak peace
to the whitecaps in my heart.
Teach me to fear You, Lord,
so that I need never fear
what waves—
or wavemakers—
can do to me.
In your Name,
Amen²⁰

²⁰ Jay E. Adams, *Prayers for Troubled Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 22.

Love

I have said the words
 “I love you”
 to You and to my neighbor—
but do I really love?
Do I really put first
 others or self?
Am I patient and kind?
Or am I jealous, proud, ugly,
 irritable, bitter?
Have I yet learned
 not to be happy about injustice
 but to stand firmly with truth,
 to cover a multitude of sins,
 in hope and faith
 to give others the benefit of all doubt,
 to willingly endure suffering?
Lord, You know how short of such love
 my feeble love now falls.
You know too
 that it is because You first loved me
 that I love at all
 and that I want to love
 as I have been loved.
Fan the flickering flame
 in my heart
 so that in all I do
 I may reflect
 the measureless, endless,
 unspeakable love
 of Jesus Christ,
 in Whose Name I pray,
Amen.²¹

²¹ Jay E. Adams, [*Prayers for Troubled Times*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 26–27.

When you're stressed out and can't switch off

Lord, I don't know what to say to you in this stressful moment. I'm too confused—the prayers I learned off as a child don't mean very much right now. I know you're somewhere in the middle of all this confusion. Please help me to see things more clearly. And be with all those who, like me, don't know what to say to you right now.

Kairos

Lord, the noise of life is oppressing me,
the bother of life obstructing me,
the gossip of life overwhelming.
In the quietness of this evening hour, I ask you to close
 my ears
so I may listen for silence,
close my eyes
so I may see your presence,
close my mouth
so that your words may speak to me clearly.
Calm my body, cleanse my heart,
and rest my soul,
that in waiting on you,
I may rest in you,
peacefully, quietly,
still.

*Giles Harcourt*²²

²² Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 17.

For Restful Sleep

God, help me to-night to relax in body and in mind.

Take from me the tension which makes rest impossible.

Take from me the worries which fill my mind with thoughts which destroy sleep.

Take from me the fears which lurk at the back of my mind, which come to haunt me when work is laid aside, and when there is too much time to think.

Help me to-night really and truly to cast my care upon you, really and truly to feel the everlasting arms underneath and about me.

Help me to sleep to-night, not just the sleep of tiredness, but the sleep of peace; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

*William Barclay*²³

O God, you yourself never nod or sleep, but in your wisdom and mercy have given us the gift of sleep. Help me, tonight and every night, to leave my business in your hands, without worry. Let me leave my loved ones and my suffering ones in your safe care. Let me relax and be my real self, taking off my poses with my clothes. Then you can speak to me in the depths of my being and dreams can bring me comfort and wisdom, O Creator of man and Giver of sleep.

George Appleton,²⁴

O Lord, my heart is all a prayer,
But it is silent unto Thee;
I am too tired to look for words,
I rest upon Thy sympathy
To understand when I am dumb,
And well I know Thou hearest me.

*Amy Carmichael*²⁵

²³ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 17–18.

²⁴ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 18.

²⁵ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 18.

Guidance

Be Thou my understanding: thus shall I know that which it may please Thee that I should know. Nor will I henceforth weary myself with seeking: but I will abide in peace with Thine understanding which shall wholly occupy my mind. I will not turn my eyes except towards Love. There will I stay and not move. I see all good to be in Thee. My spirit can find no place but Thee for its repose ... O God! I do not wish to follow Thee for thy gifts! I want Thyself alone! I want nothing but Thee alone!

*Catherine of Genoa, 1447–1510*²⁶

Christ, I have a new concept of you.

Suddenly I see you real—not mystical but human—sitting across from me almost as a doctor would. Instead of a doctor’s face I see yours, the face of the great physician. And with this comes a marvelous, almost shocking realization: you can heal me if I will let you.

I see you too as a wise counsellor. I think of the people in authority to whom I have turned—a psychologist, a teacher, a magistrate. Suddenly I am staggered to realize that you are all of these people in one.

I don’t have to make an appointment; I can turn to you any time I need. You will listen, you will guide me about my husband, my children, my job, my very human concerns.

For you were human too. You are human still. For you live and walk the earth with me and with all these others whom you have made. You understand these awful conflicts.

And so, right now, I lay this latest problem before you. What can I do? You know how desperately I’ve tried—where have I gone wrong? How can I change this situation?

Even if I cannot hear your counsel, I can feel it. Your strength and your wisdom flow into me. From you, I draw the ability to change what I can, but endure what I must.

*Marjorie Holmes*²⁷

²⁶ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 21.

²⁷ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 21–22.

Guidance (continued)

Loving Creator,
thank you for this moment
when I feel your presence,
feel your hand
guiding my actions and my planning,
making me ready for new opportunities and new tasks.
Thank you for your presence with me.

Rosemary Atkins et al.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that as I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton, 1915–68

O God, you created me and designed me for a purpose.
Help me to discern what that good and noble purpose is.
Let everything that is not the essential me fall away.
Amen.

Helen Jaeger²⁸

²⁸ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 22–23.

Keeping short accounts with God

Grant, O Lord, that each day before I enter the little death of sleep, I may undergo the little judgement of the past day, so that every wrong deed may be forgiven and every unholy thought set right. Let nothing go down into the depths of my being which has not been forgiven and sanctified. Then I shall be ready for my final birth into eternity and look forward with hope and love to standing before thee, who art both judge and Saviour, holy judge and loving Saviour.

George Appleton, 1902–93

Lord, another day of my life has gone and I know that I have not used it as I could have done.

I have been selfish, tactless, thoughtless and unkind.

I have wanted too much for myself and forgotten my friends.

I have talked and talked, but I have not listened.

I have not listened to other people and now I do not know about their troubles and I cannot help them.

I have not listened, and therefore I cannot understand.

I have not stopped once all day, just to be quiet and listen to you either, Lord.

Lord, tomorrow you are going to give me another day.

Help me to use it better.

Tomorrow, Lord, help me to be quiet.

Virginia Salmon

Lord, we need you;
our hearts are wounded,
our days fade like evening shadows,
we are weak and despise ourselves;
for we have sinned against you:
forgive us, O Lord,
and in your constant love save us;
through Jesus our redeemer. Amen.

Michael Perry, from Psalm 109

Now evening has come, dear God. So many things have happened and the page of my book is full. I hope your eyes of love will find some beauty in it, and please forgive the blots and smudges.

Phyllis Lovelock

Keeping short accounts with God (continued)

O God, at the end of the day it is not so much the things that I have done which worry me as the things which I have not done.

Forgive me for the tasks into which I did not put my best, for work that was shoddy, and for workmanship of which any true craftsman would be ashamed.

Forgive me for the things I did not do, and for the help I did not give.

Forgive me for the word of praise and the word of thanks I did not speak.

Forgive me for my failure in courtesy and in graciousness to those with whom I live and work.

Help me each day to do better, so that each night I may have fewer regrets: through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

William Barclay

O Lord, be gracious unto us! In all that we hear or see, in all that we say or do, be gracious unto us.

I ask pardon of the Great God. I ask pardon at the sunset, when every sinner turns to Him. Now and for ever I ask pardon of God. O Lord, cover us from our sins, guard our children, and protect our weaker friends.

Bedouin camel-driver's prayer

Penetrate the dark corners where we hide memories, and tendencies on which we do not care to look, but which we will not disinter and yield freely up to you, that you may purify and transmute them. The persistent buried grudge, the half-acknowledged enmity which is still smoldering; the bitterness of that loss we have not turned into sacrifice, the private comfort we cling to, the secret fear of failure which saps our initiative and is really inverted pride; the pessimism which is an insult to your joy. Lord, we bring all these to you, and we review them with shame and penitence in your steadfast light.

Evelyn Underhill, 1875–1941

Keeping short accounts with God (continued)

The day fails; the darkness falls.

Now, O Lord my God,
now let thy servant lay him down in peace;
for it is thou, Lord, only
that makest him dwell in safety.

Out of mine own night let me call, let me cry,
that I sleep not in sin unrepented.

Let my hands be clean,
let my prayer be pure;
let me look up to the brightness of thy glory,
with whom is no darkness at all.

Let my lying down be very trust,
mine eyes close under thy blessing.
Let action sleep, and memory, and even thought;
but not love, never my hope in thee.

*Into thy hands, O Lord,
I commend my spirit.*

While the body rests,
quiet in thy keeping,
let my soul ascend
and sing in thy light:
Hosanna in the highest.

Eric Milner-White, 1884–1963

The sun has gone to rest.

The bee forsakes the flowers.
The young bird slumbers in its nest,
within the leafy bowers.
Where have I been this day?
Into what folly run?
Forgive me, Father, when I pray,
through Jesus Christ thy Son.

Prayer on a sampler, 1857²⁹

²⁹ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 27–30.

When You Are Feeling Alone

Almighty God, remind us that nights of sorrow can be followed by unexpected days of joy,
and save us from the sin of continuing self-pity. Amen.

Beryl Bye

Christ,
praying in the Garden while others slept
you know the necessity
and the pain
of standing alone.
Be with me now in my loneliness.
Help me to find strength in solitariness,
peace in the silence,
and the presence of God
in the absence of friends.
Turn my thoughts from myself
that I may seek
not so much to find companionship
as to give companionship to others.

Margaret T. Taylor

When You Are Feeling Alone (continued)

Here I stand, O my God, alone.

Have you forgotten me?

I feel so far away from you, from other people, from the world.

I am alone.

How did I get here, in this lonely place? When did I lose that sense of your presence near me?

Who moved?

I try to tell myself that this is just a bad patch, that I'm tired, that too many things are going on in my life, that everything will be as it was—

if I just hang in there.

But I'm tired of just hanging in there and hoping that you and I will connect. I don't like feeling disjointed, uneasy, empty.

I am alone.

Where are you, God? How do I find you again? Where do I have to go? What do I have to do? I don't have any answers, and I can't hear your voice in my loneliness.

I long for the way it used to be: when I could feel your touch, your presence near me. How did I get lost?

Perhaps this is one of those times I will just have to walk in faith. God, here are three things I know:

- that you love me,
- that you have a plan for me,
- and that you are with me.

Even though I know those things, I don't *feel* them. If I did, I wouldn't be here now, telling you that I feel alone.

But I know those things because in the past, they were absolutely true. Just because I can't feel them now doesn't mean they're no longer true.

So, God, I'm going to begin a faith walk with you. I will believe that those three things are still true:

- that you love me,
- that you have a plan for me,
- and that you are with me.

Even if I feel alone.

I offer you my faith walk. Please be with me, encourage and strengthen me, so that one day, maybe soon, I won't feel alone any more.

Patricia Wilson

When You Are Feeling Alone (continued)

Jesus, our brother,
once you knelt sleepless
in the darkness of a garden alone
and wept and prayed,
sweating, bleeding,
with the pain of powerlessness,
with the strain of waiting.
An angel offered you strength—
but it was a bitter cup.

We pray for all
who wake tonight
waiting, agonizing,
anxious and afraid,
while others sleep:
for those who sweat
and bleed, and weep alone.

If it is not possible
for their cup to be taken away—
then may they know your presence
kneeling at their side.

Jan Sutch Pickard

Lord, I'm lonely and I don't know who to turn to. I ask you to be with me, and with all people who are alone. To be alone is terrifying and everyone needs love. Comfort us, Lord God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Prayers for Teenagers

Lord, I turn to You as my source of strength when I feel so alone. I think of Christ and know that the loneliness He felt in Gethsemane and on the cross must have been far greater than I feel now. Still I find my feelings difficult to bear. Thank You for being so accessible and understanding. Help me to overcome my isolation and to reach out to others again. In Christ's name, Amen.

Dr Jim Lewis

When You Are Feeling Alone (continued)

O God, I come to you for comfort.
You know how lonely I am, O God,
keep me from living too much in the past.
Keep me from living too much in memories and too
little with hopes.
Keep me from being too sorry for myself.
Help me to remember that I am going through what
many another has gone through.
Help me not to sorrow as those who have no hope.
Help me to find comfort in my work,
and, because I have gone through sorrow myself,
help me to help others who are in trouble.
This I ask for your love's sake. Amen.

The Seafarers' Prayer Book

The paths of lives criss-cross all around:
my neighbors busy with families and
tracking backwards and forwards to work.
Their time in the evenings is precious and pre-planned.

And here am I, Lord, in the middle of this
thoroughfare:
a car passes, a dog barks or a postman makes
impersonal deliveries.
When I get to the telephone, it's rarely anyone who
knows me.
But it's good to talk, Lord,
for I am reminded that you, my dearest Friend, are
always there,
have always known me, and understand my funny ways.
I smile, remembering the conversations we've had over
the years.
Tomorrow, I'll tread my path again for the friendship and
joy I hope to find.

*Janet Gleadall*³⁰

³⁰ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., *Prayers for the Night* (London: SPCK, 2011), 31–35.

When you can't sleep

Good Jesus, strength of the weary, rest of the restless, by the weariness and unrest of your sacred cross, come to me who am weary, that I may rest in you.

E. B. Pusey, 1800–82

Lord Jesus, grant us Thy peace in sleepless hours, that in patience we may endure and in faith receive Thy strength to bring us victory. Amen.

Leslie F. Church

Loving God, You guard and protect all Your beloved children. Be with me now as I try to sleep. Let me feel safe, secure, and sleepy as I imagine myself resting in Your arms. Guide me into rest, that I may begin tomorrow afresh, to the glory of Your name. Amen.

Melissa Roberts

O Holy Spirit, bless all who have sleepless nights, and grant them patience, and fill their hearts with peace, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

S. B. Macey, nineteenth century

O Lord let me sleep! You have said that you will give your beloved sleep. I know you love me, please give me sleep. Or let me rest quietly in you and realize that I am sharing with you the sleeplessness of the starving, the lonely, the lost and the old who are so much worse off than I. Let me know that my wakefulness is not wasted, but helps to make up what is lacking in your suffering.

Etta Gullick

O Lord, the Maker of all things, we pray Thee now in this evening hour, to defend us through thy mercy from all deceit of our enemy. Let us not be deluded with dreams, but if we lie awake keep thou our hearts. Grant this petition, O Father, to Whom with the Holy Ghost, always in heaven and earth, be all laud, praise and honour. Amen.

Henry VIII, 1491–1547

You, who said, 'Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest', I come to you now.

For I am weary indeed. Mentally and physically I am bone-tired. I am all wound up, locked up tight with tension. I am too tired to eat. Too tired to think. Too tired even to sleep. I feel close to the point of exhaustion.

Lord, let your healing love flow through me.

I can feel it easing my tensions. Thank you. I can feel my body relaxing. Thank you. I can feel my mind begin to go calm and quiet and composed.

Thank you for unwinding me, Lord, for unlocking me. I am no longer tight and frozen with tiredness, but flowing freely, softly, gently into your healing rest.

Marjorie Holmes³¹

³¹ Dorothy M. Stewart, ed., [*Prayers for the Night*](#) (London: SPCK, 2011), 36–37.

WHEN YOU FEEL DEPRESSED

I feel isolated, Lord. You seem a million miles away. At times I can't stop myself from crying; I feel so overwhelmed, worn out and torn apart within me. Everything has got on top of me. To be honest, I don't know who to turn to. I don't feel really close to anyone I can open up to and say what's really going on inside me.

Lord, I know the theory! You're supposed to be my rock, but all the bottled-up feelings are still there.

There were of course the good old days when my faith—and perhaps it was that rather than you—kept me going, smiling happily and not letting anything bother me.

Lord, if you could help me to be a little less preoccupied with myself I'd be so thankful. May I learn to think, to realize that feelings aren't facts, to be realistic, that I can't change the world overnight. Lord, help me to be patient with those around me ... my circumstances ... and also myself. Help me to be firm, too, Lord, if possible, to move on and to move out from the endless despair I feel I'm stuck in right now.

May I remember again you sympathize with and understand what I am going through—that Lord Jesus, you felt abandoned on the cross.

Please restore in me the right perspective on life. Help me to control my anxieties. Give me people I can really talk to.

Please come and help me, Lord. Give me strength for one day at a time.

Amen.³²

³² Martin Manser, [*A Book of Prayers*](#), First edition. (Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2018), 15–16.

WHEN DOUBTING

Lord, I'm not sure anymore.

Are you really there?

Some days I'm as certain of you as I'm sitting here now. But at other times my faith wavers. It seems to be as light and thin as a piece of tissue paper.

There seem to be so many questions; the world is full of uncertainties. Why are babies born deformed? Why do innocent people suffer? Why is there so much injustice in the world? Why do police officers get killed? Why are there earthquakes? Why do planes crash? The list could go on and on, Lord ...

Help me look beyond my lack of faith to you, to see the "bigger picture" of you.

Thank you that I do have faith that is small, even though it seems to be as small as a grain of sand. Even though that is so tiny, may that be built on today.

"Lord, I believe a little; help me to believe more."

Amen.³³

³³ Martin Manser, [*A Book of Prayers*](#), First edition. (Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2018), 19.

WHEN YOU NEED FORGIVENESS

Lord God, I recognize that my wrongdoing, my wrong thinking, my wrong being—my sin—has come between me and you. I confess and admit my sin. I ask you to cleanse and forgive me.

I thank you, heavenly Father, that you are rich in mercy, that you are full of compassion. I kneel before the cross again and see how terrible my sin is ... how I have defied you and rebelled against you. I thank you that Christ died to take away the punishment that was due to fall on me. I remember again that Jesus Christ died on the cross to bring me forgiveness, to restore my relationship with you. I thank you that you rescue me, you deliver me. I receive Christ's forgiveness again right now, as a free gift. I thank you that I can know peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

May I walk afresh now in the joy of your salvation, humbly grateful for your salvation, sensitive again to the calls of discipleship and enjoying all that you give me as one of your children.

Amen.³⁴

³⁴ Martin Manser, [*A Book of Prayers*](#), First edition. (Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2018), 24.

WHEN YOU FEEL GUILTY

Lord, I know I shouldn't have.

I see it as wrong now, but I didn't at the time ... it kind of just happened and now I have to face up to the consequences ...

I'm sorry that I thought I could get away with it.

Lord, I realize I've sinned against people, but even more deeply, I've sinned against you. "I am guilty." There, I've said it. I've broken your law; I've offended your holy justice.

I am guilty in your law court.

I need your cleansing. Cleanse me, wash me thoroughly inside; may I come to know you more fully again. I need to be made whole again. I need your radical surgery—a clean heart—deep inside me, not just sticking plaster on a surface scratch.

I cry out to you for your forgiveness. I thank you that Christ paid the ultimate price for the sins of the world—for the sins of bad people everywhere—for *my* sins—for *that* sin. May I accept your forgiveness for that sin right now.

Help me too, to put things right with the people I've offended, to sort out this mess ... to think and act clearly and in the truly right way. Give me the courage and power to do what I need to.

Lord, help me at this time, I pray.

Amen.³⁵

³⁵ Martin Manser, *A Book of Prayers*, First edition. (Vereeniging: Christian Art Publishers, 2018), 26–28.

Ancient Prayers

1st Prayer, by St. Macarius the Great

O God, cleanse me a sinner, for I have done nothing good before Thee. Deliver me from the evil one, and may Thy will be in me, that I might open my unworthy lips without condemnation and praise Thy holy name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

2nd Prayer, by St. Macarius the Great

Having risen from sleep, I offer Thee, O Savior, the midnight song. Falling down, I cry to Thee: let me not fall asleep in the death of sin. Be gracious to me, Thou Who wast willingly crucified. Raise me quickly as I lie in laziness, and save me as I stand in prayer. After the night's sleep, O Christ God, shine a sinless day on me and save me.

3rd Prayer, by St. Macarius the Great

Having risen from sleep, I run to Thee, O Master, for Thou lovest mankind, and I rush to accomplish Thy work. Help me, I pray Thee, at all times and in all things. Deliver me from every evil thing of this world and from works of the devil. Save me, and lead me into Thine eternal Kingdom. Thou art my Maker, The Provider and Giver of everything good. All my hope is in Thee and I glorify Thee, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

4th Prayer, by St. Macarius the Great

O Lord, through Thy abundant goodness and great generosity, Thou hast allowed me, Thy servant, to pass through the hours of this night untempted by any evil of the enemy. Grant also, O Master and Creator of all, that I might accomplish Thy will in Thy true light and with an illumined heart, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

5th Prayer, by St. Macarius the Great

O Lord, the Almighty God, Who acceptest the thrice-holy hymn from Thy heavenly hosts: accept this song of the night even from me, Thine unworthy servant. Grant that at every year and hour of my life I might glorify Thee, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.³⁶

³⁶ St. Tikhon's Seminary, [Orthodox Daily Prayers](#) (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1982), 12–14.

For the Day

Lord, exclude me not from Thy heavenly blessings.
Lord, deliver me from eternal torments.
Lord, whether I have sinned in mind or
 thought, word or deed, forgive me.
Lord, deliver me from all ignorance,
 forgetfulness, cowardice, and stone-like insensitivity.
Lord, deliver me from every temptation.
Lord, enlighten my heart which evil
 desires have darkened.
Lord, as a man I have sinned: as a
 gracious God, have mercy on me, seeing
 the weakness of my soul.
Lord, send Thy Grace to my aid, that I
 may glorify Thy holy name.
Lord Jesus Christ, inscribe me, Thy
 servant, in the book of life, and grant me a good end.
Lord, my God, even though I have done
 nothing good before Thee, grant by Thy
 Grace that I may make a good beginning.
Lord, sprinkle the dew of Thy Grace into my heart.
Lord of Heaven and earth, remember me,
 Thy sinful, shameful and impure
 servant, in Thy Kingdom. Amen.³⁷

³⁷ St. Tikhon's Seminary, [*Orthodox Daily Prayers*](#) (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1982), 77–78.

For the Night

Lord, accept me in penitence.
Lord, abandon me not.
Lord, lead me not into temptation.
Lord, grant me good thoughts.
Lord, grant me tears, the remembrance of
 death and compunction.
Lord, grant me the thought of confessing my sins.
Lord, grant me humility, chastity and obedience.
Lord, grant me patience, courage and meekness.
Lord, cause the root of good to dwell in me
 —Thy fear in my heart.
Lord, grant that I may love Thee with all
 my soul and mind and to do Thy will in all things.
Lord, protect me from certain people,
 demons and passions, and from any other unseemly thing.
Lord, I know that Thou doest as Thou
 wilt: may Thy will be in me, a sinner, for
 blessed art Thou for ever. Amen.³⁸

³⁸ St. Tikhon's Seminary, [*Orthodox Daily Prayers*](#) (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1982), 78–79.

Are We Yet Alive, Lord?

Are We Yet Alive, Lord? We feel pain, sorrow, happiness. We cry, wail, laugh. Are these signs that we are alive? Or are they but death-gurgles masquerading as signs of life? We find it hard to believe, to understand, that we come to life through being baptized into your Son's good death. Yet you have made us your baptized, giving us life, life that makes our pain, sorrow and happiness real. Life that makes our crying, wailing and laughing service to one another. Raise us, then, from our watery graves shouting, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" so that the world may see your liveliness, your love. AMEN.

Who Am I to Pray?

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of prayer. What an extraordinary thing that we can pray to you, unburden ourselves before you, place our cares, woes and joys before you. I confess I find praying an awkward business. I keep thinking, *Who am I to pray?* But I know that to be false humility, hiding my prideful desire to be my own creator. So we pray a prayer of joy in prayer, asking that we become your prayers for one another. AMEN.

Teach Me to Beg

Dear Jesus, send your Spirit on us so that we will be taught to pray. Prayer is hard, requiring great effort, but when done, effortless. I confess I have never liked to pray. Prayer is too much like begging. So, I have to pray that your generous Spirit will teach me to beg. I beg you to help all of us discover that our lives are constituted by prayer, so that we may be in your world one mighty, joyous prayer. Make us so rested by such prayer, so content to be your people, that we kill no more. AMEN.³⁹

³⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, [*Prayers Plainly Spoken*](#) (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 22–24.

Living Confessions of Love

Lord of All Life, we come before you not knowing who we are. We strut our stuff, trying to impress others with our self-confidence. In the process we hope to be what we pretend. Save us from such pretense, that we might learn who we are through trust in you to make us more than we can imagine. Help us, Augustine-like, to reread our lives as confessions of sin made possible by your love. Bind up our wounds and our joys so that our lives finally make sense only as a prayer to you. AMEN.

Give Us the Sight of Children

Light of True Light, true God from true God, give us clear sight, courage to see your sinful, rebellious, dreadful world as it is, not as we want it to be. Save us from narcissistic fascinations that cloud our understanding with our unknowings. Give us clear and innocent sight, the sight of children, capable of seeing beauty in a common rock. Your creation glows with your fiery glory. Draw us to the fire, consume us with your glory, that we may glow with your salvation, your light for the world. AMEN.

All the Time in the World

End of All Our Beginnings, Lord of time, who alone makes time a gift, remind us we are creatures with a beginning. We confess we often forget we are your timeful creatures. We fear the forgetfulness our death beckons. We are driven frantically to work, thinking we can ensure we will not be forgotten, ensure our own place in time. How silly we must look to you, ants building anthills to no purpose. Help us take joy and rest in your time, eucharistic time, a time redeemed through Jesus' resurrection, that we can rest easy in our dying. You have given us all the time in the world. May we take pleasure in it. AMEN.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, [*Prayers Plainly Spoken*](#) (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 29–31.

Courage for the Journey

Lord of Time, end of all our beginnings, make the beginning of this course part of your purpose. Make us rejoice that we cannot create our own beginnings. Help us discover even through this course that we have been made participants in your purpose—called kingdom. As citizens of that kingdom, force us to recognize our need for one another, and in that humiliating recognition may we discover the humility to acknowledge truthfully that which is true. We confess as we begin this course that we are a bit frightened, probably not so much by you as by our own inadequacies. I know I am frightened, because I have to act like I know what I am doing, since I am supposed to change these students' lives and, in the process, even have my life changed. I do not like to change, but at least when all is said and done, I know that it is your fault that we, students and teacher alike, are so caught. Give us the good humor that comes from being forced into this strange and weird world of yours. Give us courage as we embark on this journey, that we will want to know the truth about ourselves. Help us remember that when all is said and done, you are in the beginning because you are the end. AMEN.⁴¹

⁴¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *Prayers Plainly Spoken* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 34–35.

A Threefold Prayer

Father in heaven hear us
Jesus our Savior hear us
Spirit our Strengtheners hear us

Father in heaven guide us
Jesus our Savior guide us
Spirit our Strengtheners guide us

Father in heaven help us
Jesus our Savior help us
Spirit our Strengtheners help us

Father in heaven we love you
Jesus our Savior we love you
Spirit our Strengtheners we love you

Father in heaven we need you
Jesus our Savior we need you
Spirit our Strengtheners we need you

Father in heaven come to us
Jesus our Savior come to us
Spirit our Strengtheners come to us

Father when we are troubled calm us
Jesus when we are troubled calm us
Spirit when we are troubled calm us

Father when we are weary rest us
Jesus when we are weary rest us
Spirit when we are weary rest us

Father when we are angry settle us
Jesus when we are angry settle us
Spirit when we are angry settle us

Father when we are in danger protect us
Jesus when we are in danger protect us
Spirit when we are in danger protect us

Father when we are warring pacify us
Jesus when we are warring pacify us
*Spirit when we are warring pacify us*⁴²

⁴² David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 66–67.

Dedication

I give myself to you Lord

I give myself to you

With my mind and its thinking

I give myself to you

With my hands and their working

I give myself to you

With my eyes and their seeing

I give myself to you

With my body and its actions

I give myself to you

With my heart and its loving

I give myself to you

I give myself to you Lord

I give myself to you

Forgive Us Lord

Between me and each evil deed
Come Lord Jesus

Between me and each sinful act
Come Lord Jesus

Between me and each wicked thought
Come Lord Jesus

Between me and each wrong desire
Come Lord Jesus

The Cross between me and all ill
The Cross to foil the devil's skill

The Cross between me and all harm
The Cross to foil the evil's charm

Jesus Savior of us all
Give us forgiveness as we call
Help us forget the evil past
Give us a hope that will last
From wicked ways may we abstain
Avoid the deeds that give Thee pain.

Christ in forgiveness to me be near
Christ in forgiveness come appear
Christ in forgiveness drive off the foe
Christ in forgiveness help me below
Christ in forgiveness give me release
Christ in forgiveness I need thy peace⁴³

⁴³ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 69–71.

For Aid

We bring (*name*) in weakness
For your strengthening

We bring (*name*) in sickness
For your healing

We bring (*name*) in trouble
For your calming

We bring (*name*) who is lost
For your guidance

We bring (*name*) who is lonely
For your love

We bring (*name*) who is dying
For your resurrection.

Father us surround
Every foe confound

Jesus entwine
Keep us thine

Spirit enfold
In thy hold

Sacred three enthrall
To thee we call

Father
Create this day without sorrow
Create us hope for the morrow

Jesus in thy hands grasping
Lift us to life everlasting

Spirit fill us with love
That our lives shall improve

Holy blessed three
We are ever with thee.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 72–73.

Your Presence Lord

You Lord are in the world
Your Presence fills it
Your Presence is PEACE

You Lord are in this place
Your Presence fills it
Your Presence is PEACE

You Lord are in my life
Your Presence fills it
Your Presence is PEACE

You Lord are in my heart
Your Presence fills it
*Your Presence is PEACE.*⁴⁵

⁴⁵ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 76.

Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus

Come, Lord Jesus.
When this world's as dark as night
You are the One we call the light.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When we are tempted to go astray
You are the One we call the way.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When we are falling in the strife
You are the One who is the life.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When troubles to our lives bring harm
You are the One who brings us calm.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When the storms of life increase
You are the One who is our peace.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When our lives are full of woe
You are the One to whom we go.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When we are down and all forlorn
Come as the resurrection morn.
Come, Lord Jesus.

When our lives are full of sin
You are the One who death does win.
*Come, Lord Jesus.*⁴⁶

⁴⁶ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 80–81.

For God's Safe Keeping

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us
against the snares of the evil one
And the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us
Christ above us
Christ in us
Christ before us.
May thy salvation O Lord,
Be always ours
This day and for evermore
Amen

*St Patrick 373*⁴⁷

⁴⁷ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 85.

The Shepherd's Eye

Look down O Lord from heaven,
on thy flocks and lambs;
bless their bodies and their souls
and grant that they who have received
thy sign, O Christ, on their foreheads
may be thine own in the day of judgement.
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Egbert, Archbishop of York 734

Guidance From the Eternal

Eternal light shine in our hearts
Eternal goodness deliver us from evil
Eternal power be our support
Eternal wisdom scatter the darkness of our ignorance
Eternal pity have mercy on us
That with all our heart and mind
and soul and strength we may seek thy face
and be brought by thine infinite mercy
to thy holy presence.

Alcuin of York Eighth Century

As We Get Older

May the right hand of God
Keep us ever in old age,
The grace of Christ
Continually defend us from the enemy.
O Lord direct our hearts in the way of peace;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Book of Cerne
*Bishop Edelwald Ninth Century*⁴⁸

⁴⁸ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 88–89.

Longings

Christ be near at either hand,
Christ behind, before me stand,
Christ with me where'er I go,
Christ around, above, below.

Christ be in my heart and mind,
Christ within my soul enshrined,
Christ control my wayward heart,
Christ abide and ne'er depart.

Christ my life and only Way,
Christ my lantern night and day,
Christ be my unchanging friend,
Guide and Shepherd to the end.

*after St Patrick from The People's Mass Book*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 91.

From the Stowe Missal (A Mass Book Of The Irish Church)

Thou who guides Noah over the flood waves,
Hear us
Who with thy word recalled Jonah from the abyss,
Deliver us
Who stretched forth thy hand to Peter as he sank,
Help us O Christ.
Son of God, thou didst marvelous things of the Lord with our Fathers,
Be favorable in our day also;
Stretch forth thy hand from on high.

I implore you, most high God of Sabaoth, Holy Father,
That you would deign to grid me with the tunic of love,
To encompass my loins with the belt of love,
And to burn up the reins of my heart with the fire of your love,
So that I may be able to intercede for my sins and earn pardon
 for the sins of the people here present,
 and to offer a peace offering for each one;
Me also when with boldness I fall before thee,
Let thou not perish,
 but vouchsafe to wash, adorn and to raise up gently;
Through our Lord.

Thou command peace
Thou givest peace
Thou didst leave peace.
Give us, O Lord,
Thy peace from heaven and make this day peaceful,
And the remaining days of our life do thou dispose in thy peace.
Through our Lord.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ David Adam, [*The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*](#) (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 94–95.

ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE

The Hymn of St Patrick

I bind unto myself today
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this day to me for ever,
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan river;
His death on Cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb;
His riding up the heavenly way;
His coming at the day of doom;
I bind unto myself today ...

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need.
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward;
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Against all Satan's spells and wiles,
Against false words of heresy,
Against the knowledge that defiles,
Against the heart's idolatry,
Against the wizard's evil craft,
Against the death-wound and the burning,
The choking wave, the poisoned shaft,
Protect me, Christ, till thy returning.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger ...

tr. C. F. Alexander

The Breastplate of St Patrick

There is no doubt of the faith that St Patrick had in the saving power of Christ and in his abiding presence. We can share that same faith by putting on his 'Breastplate'.

CHRIST BE WITH ME

Not a request but a fact; what we seek is an awareness of this reality. We need to take Him at His word, 'Lo I am with you always'. Wherever we are, whatever we do, our God is with us. The Lord is here, his Spirit is with us.

CHRIST WITHIN ME

There is many a person who has spent his life seeking Christ and making all sorts of pilgrimages, but the wonderful message is, 'We dwell in him and he in us'. If we still ourselves, we will discover he is there. He has been waiting to work in us and through us. 'In him we live and move and have our being'.

CHRIST BEHIND ME

There he walks in your past.
He walks in all the dark rooms you pretend are closed, that he may bring light.
Invite him into your past. Experience his forgiveness, his acceptance of you.
Offer especially all that you are ashamed of
 all that you wish to forget
 all that still pains and hurts you
 all the hurt you have caused others.
Walk there in the places you are afraid of, knowing that he walks with you and will lead you on!

CHRIST BEFORE ME

He forever goes before us to prepare a place for us. He is on the road we tread. Wherever life is leading us, he has gone before. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.' Perhaps we have no clue about what lies ahead; we know *who* is ahead of us, so the future is not quite unknown.

CHRIST BESIDE ME

The light in the dark.
The presence in our loneliness.
The strength in our weakness.
The guide in our lostness.
He is ready to carry not only our burdens, but us if need be.
He is the mission that we take to others.

CHRIST TO WIN ME

Let us not belittle the battle—we belong to the Church Militant here on earth. His mission, his salvation, is not yet complete in me. It all has a ‘now’ and a ‘not yet’ quality to it. There are many things each day that will shout to hide his voice, that will demand and take away awareness of him. But he remains and, in his love, is still seeking to win me.

CHRIST TO COMFORT AND RESTORE ME

He has come that we should not perish; that our life should be everlasting.
He has come that we should have life in all its fullness.
The Comforter, the strengthener.
The Resurrection, the life.
In him I find refreshment, restoration, renewal.
Through him I shall not perish ... not even today!

CHRIST BENEATH ME

Beneath are the everlasting arms—and they bear the print of the nails. No matter how far I have sunk, he descends to lift me up. He has plumbed all the hells of this world that he may lift us upwards. He is our firm support.

CHRIST ABOVE ME

That at all times he may raise me and lift me up. He became man that he may lift us up to the Godhead. His eye is upon me.
I will not sink, for he lifts me.

CHRIST IN QUIT

In the place of stillness: the room of prayer
In the sanctuary of adoration
In the stilling of the storm
In the stilling of our minds, our souls and bodies
In the peace he gives
In the peace he asks us to share.

CHRIST IN DANGER

In the storm itself
In the sinking of the disciple
In the opposition of the enemy
In the hells and crucifixions
In the betrayals and denials
In the ebbing out of life
The Risen Lord is there.

CHRIST IN HEART OF ALL THAT LOVE ME

Thank God; not only in me but in all who love me.
In them, whether they are aware or not.
My mission is to discover this and reveal it.
Christ comes in love.
When we truly love, we open our life not only to another but to the great Other who is
Christ.
In our sharing together he comes.
Let us release the Christ in each other.

CHRIST IN MOUTH OF FRIEND AND STRANGER

There is a wonderful way to discover God—in the other.
There is an openness and receptiveness in our lives that makes room for the Christ.
Our mission is not to bring Christ to others, but to discover that he is there and to
reveal his presence.
When theology palls and mysticism seems empty there is still the third way—our
neighbor.

I sought my God,
My God I could not see.
I sought my soul,
My soul eluded me.
I sought my brother
And I found all three.⁵¹

⁵¹ David Adam, *The Edge of Glory: Prayers in the Celtic Tradition* (London: SPCK Classics, 1985), 97–104.

A SHELTER IN THE STORM

- CALL TO CONFESSION: PSALM 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

Infinitely wise God,

Your wisdom is unsearchable and infinite; your arm is powerful and mighty; your will is sovereign throughout this universe; your patience and love for fallen sinners like us defy our understanding. Lord, we can do nothing but sin, and each new day demonstrates that we are lovers of darkness, covenant breakers, and full of fear. We have received unfathomable mercy and abundant grace, yet we frequently trample on your beloved Son by cherishing anxious thoughts and living in fear of those around us. Instead of believing that you are a secure refuge in whom we can hide, we imagine a thousand scenarios of pain and loss. Instead of trusting that you are a present help who will defend us, we pursue our own revenge against those who have hurt us. We harbor bitterness toward you in our hearts over our problems, real and imagined, and we punish others in a variety of sinful ways for hurting us: by coldness and silence, by malice and slander, by rehearsing our grievances and nurturing our grudges. O God, forgive us for the overwhelming fear that dwells in our hearts and damages our relationship with you and with others.

Lord Jesus, without your righteousness we would be perpetually undone. We cannot imagine the beauty of your sinless heart when you prayed for the forgiveness of those who were killing you, but we thank you for it. We cannot fathom the depth of your trust in your heavenly Father, even as he turned his face away from you at the cross. Your blood washes us clean, and your obedience covers our endless record of disobedience. Thank you for the deep love and mercy that led you to pity us and to give your own life to save ours.

Holy Spirit, lead us to repentance and save us from despair. Give us grace to see our sin clearly and to come to you renouncing ourselves, hating our sin, and hoping fully in the forgiveness that flows even to us, the chiefs of sinners. Drive the joy of our salvation deep into our hearts, until trusting you feels like the only thing we can do. Give us hearts that seek reconciliation and peace with those who have hurt us, even when doing so is costly and painful to us. Help us to turn away from evil and to repay it with love and kindness; help us to love as we have been loved in Christ. Taking refuge in Jesus' strong name, we pray: amen.

PSALM 46:4–11

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”

The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

GOD, OUR WARRIOR

PSALM 55:17–18

Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he hears my voice.
He redeems my soul in safety
from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.

Mighty God,

The forces that are arrayed against us in this life far outmatch our little strength. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against powerful spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. Our enemy is strong and crafty, and if we try to stand against him in our own strength we will inevitably fail. Yet, Father, we confess that we often trust in our own wisdom and strength, as if we were mighty and self-sufficient. We go through life oblivious to the dangers around us and not heeding the warnings of your Word. When we find ourselves defeated yet again, we complain and moan as if you had let us down, when the fault is entirely ours. Instead of praying and asking for your help, we grumble and resent our weakness. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, thank you that you have entered the battle on our behalf, leaving the safety of heaven to engage the challenges of living as a human being. You felt all of our human weaknesses, yet you endured without sin, because you constantly entrusted yourself to your Father's mighty power. Thank you that you were triumphant for us, redeeming us and giving our souls complete safety in you. The strong forces that are arrayed against us can never separate us from you, and so our ultimate victory is secure.

Holy Spirit, thank you that you are at work strengthening us daily. When you give us the grace to stand, depending upon you, help us to remember that the strength is yours and not ours. When you leave us to ourselves and we fall, show us your good purposes in that, too—help us to learn our own weakness, to become more watchful and distrustful of ourselves, to pray more frequently and fervently, and to become more eager for the final day of our victory in Christ. Thank you that he is even now interceding for us and that he will continue to do so throughout our earthly warfare, until he welcomes us into his closer presence. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

ROMANS 8:37–39; REVELATION 3:21

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”⁵²

⁵² Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 68–73.

WAITING

PSALM 62:1-2; 69:3; 27:14

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

I am weary with my crying out;
my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.

Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

Loving heavenly Father,

We ask that, by your Spirit, you would help us to admit what is true about ourselves: that we have no goodness of our own and need the goodness of Jesus Christ to cover us. We are undeserving of your passionate love and are full of sinful desires, but you are full of grace. We are restless and impatient, grasping what we crave instead of trusting that you love us and enjoy showering your precious children with good gifts. We find it hard to wait for you to answer our prayers, to give us what we want, to relieve our suffering, to fulfill our dreams. Every part of us—our souls, minds, and bodies—is corrupted with selfishness. We are fallen and twisted, and there is a fountain of pollution deep within our nature. We are deeply ashamed of the depravity that clings to us and the sin that we cherish in secret. The truth of your Word reveals who we are, striking a heavy blow at our pride and leaving us in pieces before you. We confess our frequent and willful sin to you. Father, forgive us.

But you have given us another master and Lord: your son, Jesus Christ. He waited patiently for your will in all things and never gave in to the enticing temptations that surrounded him. He loved sinners without participating in their sin, and freely forgave the most notorious people while waiting in purity for his own wedding day. Now we stand dressed in the spectacular robes of his perfect goodness, with a record of complete purity that we could never earn. Jesus, we are undone by your patient, persistent love for weak sinners like us.

Holy Spirit, teach us to guard our hearts and minds as we wait. Fill us with gratitude and love; strengthen our desires for obedience and purity. Help us to love you, our triune God, with all of our hearts, bodies, minds and souls, for we are weak and cannot do that well. Help us to trust in the generous loving-kindness of our Father and to value his wisdom more than our own. When we fail, help us to hide away in Christ, cherishing his obedience in our place. Help us to wait joyfully for the day when all waiting will be over, when we will see our beloved Savior and be fully joined to him forever. For the glory of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

PSALM 25:6–8; 40:1–3

Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore, he instructs sinners in the way.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the pit of destruction,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.⁵³

⁵³ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 74–76.

GOD'S MAJESTY

PSALM 99:1-3

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
The LORD is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
Let them praise your great and awesome name!
Holy is he!

Glorious and holy God,

You are far beyond our knowledge, yet eager to be known by us; mysterious, yet revealed to us in your creation, your Word, and your Son; radiant in holiness and glory, yet merciful to your wayward children. You deserve praise and honor, for you are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and at your pleasure empires rise and fall.

What did you see in us, that we—diseased and despised sinners—should be clothed in your bright glory? That fallen rebels like us should be lifted from a pit of sin to be seated next to a king? That those who are groaning, weeping, and grumbling should be invited to a joy as full as our hearts can hold? Who can fathom such immeasurable love?

Father, teach us to honor and fear you as we should. You are a powerful God and consuming fire. Forgive us for our tendency to treat you as our errand boy and good luck charm, whose job it is to serve us and do our bidding. Forgive us for fearing you sinfully, for our failure to trust you, for mistaking your hand of love and instruction for a fist of vengeance and anger, for doubting that you have poured out all your wrath on Christ in our place. Father, forgive us and help us to understand your heart—to worship you with holy reverence and great joy.

Holy Spirit, comfort us often with the righteousness of Christ. We have been given a glorious record of obedience we could never earn; let us see his childlike trust and respect for his Father, his deep humility, and his utter dependence on God. Show us that all of his goodness has been given to us and covers us, though we struggle daily to rest in his grace and mercy. May we be diligent to honor and serve the one who has suffered in our place. Help us to see our sin, to mourn for it, and then to dance and frolic in the finished work of Christ. Ravish us with his glory, inflame our hearts with love and gratitude, and transform our sluggish and tepid souls until we are fervent with joy and devoted to obedience. May the unfathomable beauty of Christ and his immeasurable love for us cause us to burn with holy fear and boundless delight until we see his face and fall at his feet in worship. In his glorious name we pray, amen.

ISAIAH 57:15

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 78–79.

HOPE DEFERRED

PROVERBS 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for becoming one of us so we could know that you understand what it feels like to live in a fallen and terrifying world. You know what it is to have a heart sick with sorrow at the death of a dear friend, a soul consumed with agony and dread at the prospect of suffering, a body that is ill and unable to function, and a heart betrayed by those who profess loyalty—you were used by others for what you could do for them, misunderstood and falsely accused, rejected and despised though you were innocent. You could have stayed in heaven, blissfully untouched by the foulest aspects of sin and depravity, but you chose to enter into the chaos for the sake of loving us and dying for us. Now you love us patiently and walk along with us as we experience those things as well. You comfort us, strengthen us, and protect us with the shining gift of your perfect obedience in all things, carefully measuring out times of joy and strength with times of difficulty and sadness to help us grow.

Jesus, remind us of your suffering and love often. We are easily overwhelmed by the very real sorrows and challenges that come from our own sinful hearts, the sins of others, and the ordinary sorrows and burdens of living in this world that is out of our control. We are consumed by fear of things real and imaginary, and in our fear we sin a great deal to try to manage situations or escape from them for a brief moment. We often forget how kind and patient you are and how you are very much in control. We forget your promises; we forget the ways you have cared for us in the past; we behave as though you don't exist or don't care. We live life as practical atheists, in spite of what we claim to believe. Lord, forgive us for this very great rejection of you.

Lord, help us in our weakness. When darkness hides your lovely face, may we know, just as surely as we know that the sun will shine again, that you are there, presiding on your throne, ruling the universe, and working all things together for the good of those who love you. Help us to grow toward remembering that truth and toward trusting you in the bleakest times, confident that no matter what we see or imagine around us, you are true reality and are always for us. Teach us to wait with greater confidence that you do all things well. Remind us of the day that is coming, when all our desires will find their fulfillment in your presence and when hope will finally become reality. Encourage us with glimpses of the joy that will soon be ours so that we can walk faithfully through the troubled days that you call us to live in. In your strong name we pray, amen.

ROMANS 5:1–2; 8:24–25

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Barbara R. Duguid, *Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*, ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 84–85.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

ISAIAH 58:1–4; LUKE 18:11–13

“Declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
Yet they seek me daily
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the judgment of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they delight to draw near to God.
‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not?
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,
and oppress all your workers.
Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with a wicked fist.
Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high.”

“The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ”

Triune God,

Help us to recognize and repent from our many sins. We confess that we have treasured many things above our Savior, and have nurtured storehouses of idols that call for our worship. We have been elated when they smiled upon us, and cast down and depressed when they cursed us, instead of looking to you and basking in your unchangeable love. Sometimes we have even made an idol out of our spiritual disciplines: our Bible study, our prayer, our fasting, our service of others. Forgive us for finding our salvation, joy, and identity in our strengths. Teach us instead to delight in and feast upon all the spiritual treasure you have lavished on us so richly in Christ: the banquet of his righteousness given to us, the abundant riches of his grace and kindness poured out on us, the glorious inheritance he has earned for us by his perfect obedience and death. Teach us to humble ourselves and repent properly, with broken hearts and not merely outward show. Remind us often who we are in Christ, as we walk through a world of temptation that dazzles and beckons us. Draw our hearts and minds to the cross daily so we will marvel at your purposeful and determined love for starving beggars like us, who have nothing to give you but our sin. Help us not to be undone by our sin, but to be driven by it to delight all the more in your rich mercy and grace.

Gracious Redeemer, thank you for your patience that has borne with us so long. Thank you for perfectly feasting, and entering into the joys of life here on earth, alongside those who rejoice. Thank you too for mourning and fasting perfectly alongside those who weep. Unite us to yourself with inseparable bonds, so that nothing may ever draw us back from you. Help us to grow in putting on genuine righteousness without ever trusting in it to win your favor. Keep us grounded in your truth throughout the challenging times in which we live, until that day when we finally see the glorious things that you have prepared for those who believe. That day will be all feasting—the end of fasting, praying, pleading, mourning, humbling, watching, fearing, and sinning. Teach us to long for that last day, and lead us to it soon. In Jesus' name, amen.

JOEL 2:12–13

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
and rend your hearts and not your garments.”
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and he relents over disaster.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Barbara R. Duguid, *Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*, ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 88–90.

REVELATION 7:9–10, 14, 17

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ...

... “These are the ones [who] ... have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb....

“... The Lamb ... will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 98–99.

WAITING

DANIEL 9:15–19

“And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

“O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

Heavenly Father,

We confess that, like little children, we hate to wait. We fuss and fret about our difficult circumstances until we are weary of crying, instead of resting in you and trusting your unmatched wisdom. We grasp for the things that our wisdom and appetites demand right now, rather than waiting patiently to receive the good gifts that you have planned for us in your perfect timing. Even good things regularly become the object of our over-desires. We persuade ourselves that we need riches, relationships, sex, children, food, or possessions to be happy and fulfilled, instead of recognizing your wisdom and perfect plan for our lives. You have given us exactly what we need, in perfect measure, with perfect love. Your Word exposes the perverse foolishness and ingratitude of our hearts.

Jesus, we desperately need to have the filthy, sin-stained rags of our wrong desires and over-desires removed, and our nakedness covered by your holy purity. While you lived among us, you always waited patiently for your Father’s timing. You were never rushed or late, never out of step with the Holy Spirit’s leading. You never pined for the things that your Father withheld from you, nor drew back when he handed you the cup of suffering. Clothe us in your holy purity and perfect patience, we pray.

Holy Spirit, renew our minds with your perfect holiness. Teach us how to wait patiently for the Father to answer us and how to endure without those things that we think we must have. Show us even how to survive our repeated failure and sin, by making Christ’s beauty shine all the more clearly in the light of our own spiritual brokenness and ugliness. Grow within us daily a greater longing and eager expectation, as we await the day of Christ’s appearing, when we will finally see him with our own eyes and all our purified desires will finally be fulfilled in him. Amen.

1 JOHN 1:7-9

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

ADOPTION

HOSEA 1:6–10

She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.”

Heavenly Father,

We admit to you the sad truth that we often live as if we were unpitied orphans. You have called us your sons and daughters and have made us alive in Christ; we ought to think about you and worship you all day long, and our hearts should constantly overflow with gratitude and obedience to you. Yet we find that we still are bent toward sin and drift easily away from you and toward temptation. We gratify the sinful desires of our bodies often, and in many different ways—through eating and drinking and sexual sins of many kinds. We medicate ourselves to escape our pain and entertain ourselves endlessly to distract our attention from our inner emptiness. Some of us control our bodies and submit them to rigorous physical, academic, and spiritual disciplines as a way of controlling our world and passions without you, trying to prove that if we work hard enough we can earn your pleasure. Father, forgive us for our many sins—those committed outwardly as well as those we cherish in secret.

Lord, thank you that although we still wrestle with sin, you have declared us righteous and given us the shining, perfect obedience of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He was the perfect Son who lived before you according to his true identity and mission, without ever faltering or falling. He hated sin and trusted the counsel of your will in all things, both when it was joyful and when it was dark and painful. He has earned every spiritual blessing for us, and his goodness surrounds, shields, and protects us each day. Father, thank you for Jesus.

Holy Spirit of the living God, you have begun a good work in us, and you will surely complete it. Though our sin may grieve you, it never stops you from working in us and through us. We thank you for the rich mercy that has saved us, raised us, and seated us with Christ. May thoughts of your immeasurable riches toward us in Christ, and the lavish provision that has been made for our sin, cheer our weary souls, strengthen us for obedience, and transform us more and more into the image of our sinless Savior. In his powerful name we pray, amen.

1 PETER 1:3–5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 114–117.

ANGER

JONAH 4:2–4; MATTHEW 5:44–46

“I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?”

[Jesus said] “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?”

Glorious King and loving Father,

Your forgiveness and compassion far exceed our wildest dreams, but we are angry, resentful, and confused sinners. At times, our lips are ready to confess, but our hearts are slow to feel and our ways reluctant to change. Unmask our sin's deformity until we hate it and turn away from it instead of turning away from you. Like Jonah, we are often angry with you when people whom we dislike or hate seem to prosper and get away with evil. Instead of running to you for relief from our sin, we run from you, rehearsing the sins of others in our minds and feeling superior to them. We want you to be patient and merciful toward us when we sin against you many times each day, but we want those who sin against us to suffer and pay for their sin. Sometimes we don't even know that we're angry with you. Instead of hot tempers and furious rage, we indulge in cold disdain and apparent indifference, taking pride in our self-control while we nurture bitter and judgmental thoughts. Father, we all struggle with unrighteous, selfish anger and are worthy of your wrath against our sin. Lord, have mercy on us and forgive us for our profound hypocrisy, for while we were still your enemies, you gave your Son for us.

Spotless Lamb of God, you willingly stood condemned in our place and sealed our pardon with your blood. Thank you for your obedience and death, which have purchased our salvation. Thank you for praying for your enemies, even while they scoffed at you, whipped you, and nailed you to a cross. Thank you for bearing your Father's anger without becoming angry, and for yielding patiently to your Father's will when he didn't answer your prayer, giving you the bitter cup to drink for us. Thank you for choosing to die out of love for your people. Thank you for giving your record of perfect, loving forgiveness to us as a free and priceless gift. We stand in your love and power alone and are grateful.

Holy Spirit, help us to see our anger toward you. Remove our blindness; give us the courage to confess our rage, the grace to repent of it, and the faith to find comfort and joy in your forgiveness. Give us godly sorrow for our sin, and help us to cry out for mercy and pardon. Work in each of us a deeper, stronger faith that is powerful and confident in the cross. Give us soft and tender tears of repentance so that we see the glory of the cross more brightly. Help us to rest and rejoice in the wounds that have paid all of our debt, and give us hearts that are filled with awe at your amazing love for ruined sinners like us. Help us to frolic joyfully in the gushing torrent of your forgiveness and love, until streams of mercy flow sweetly from us toward sinners all around us. In the saving name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

MICAH 7:18–20

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the remnant of his inheritance?
He does not retain his anger forever,
because he delights in steadfast love.
He will again have compassion on us;
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.
You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

JUSTICE

MICAH 6:6–8

“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”
He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Almighty and holy God,

Your love for justice delights our hearts. If you were not a just and holy God, this world, which you created and govern down to the most microscopic detail, would be unbearable to live in. However, we also admit that your love for justice terrifies our souls. If we were to count the sins that we have committed only today, we know that we would deserve your great anger and punishment. We have entertained evil thoughts toward others and have preferred ourselves and our favorite people over those who are outcasts in need of our love and care. We have made little of our sins, excusing them and even using your great forgiveness as a way of avoiding your commands. We have wearied you by laughing over evil things that we ought to hate. We have grieved you by hating good things and calling them evil, simply because they bore us or make us feel uncomfortable. Father, we deserve your judgment. Lord, have mercy on us.

We thank you that you have poured out the whole fire of your wrath on Jesus in our place. He never wearied you, but brought you perfect delight during every moment of his life. He hated evil and loved good, and he went out of his way to minister to those who were marginalized and unloved. We thank you that you are willing to look on his obedience and allow it to stand in our place. Father, thank you.

Holy Spirit, there is nothing we can do to satisfy God’s justice. If even our best acts are like filthy rags, then we need the goodness of Jesus to cover us just as much on our best days as on our worst days. Remind us often that the blood of Christ erases our sin, and that God speaks to us in love, not in exasperation and disappointment. Ignite our hearts with a fiery gratitude that compels us to adore our Savior and to love what he calls good. Fill our hearts with your astonishing love, and send us out into a hurting world to love the fatherless, the widow, the strange, and the awkward, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

ISAIAH 42:1–4; 1 PETER 2:21–24

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

HONESTY

MATTHEW 5:33–37; PSALM 15:1–2, 5

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right
and speaks truth in his heart;

He who does these things shall never be moved.

God of truth and revelation,

Make us humble disciples in the school of Christ. Teach us daily that we are fallen, sinful creatures who justly deserve everlasting destruction. We nurture lies, deep in our hearts. We distrust you and your promises, despite how clearly you have revealed yourself in history and in Scripture. We believe Satan’s lie that you do not desire our good, our joy, or our happiness, and so we excuse our self-destructive pursuit of our own desires and our dismissal of your wise and loving instruction. We do not speak truthfully with one another, but we constantly spin, minimize, or excuse our sin while we inflate, exalt, and call attention to our selfishly motivated good works. We neglect your life-giving Word ourselves, and we weaponize your truth in order to accuse and control others. We despise others with whom we disagree, when everything that we have learned about you and your world is a gift of your Spirit.

Lord Jesus, thank you for not despising our ignorance from the enlightened glories of heaven. Thank you for taking on humanity in order to live among us. You proclaimed truth to us in order to call us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. You lived a life of genuine truthfulness and integrity, lovingly confronting spiritual know-it-alls and comforting the spiritually downcast. You spoke truth with grace and gentleness, not to tear down but to bind up, and you pointed lie-captured hearts back to the reality of your Father’s loving care.

Holy Spirit, lift the fog and darkness of our unbelief. Shine the light of your truth on our darkened minds. Show us Jesus Christ in all his beauty and loveliness, all his grace and compassion. Lead us daily to the cross, so that we may contemplate in his sufferings the immensity of his love for us. Holy Spirit, deepen in us an understanding of these profound truths, and do not let Satan deceive us with his cunning lies. In Jesus’ name, amen.

JOHN 1:14, 16–17; 14:6

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.... For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said ..., “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

PRAYER

MATTHEW 6:5-6

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Loving heavenly Father,

We may not remember to pray often, and yet we worry about prayer a great deal. We worry about how we sound when we pray and about who is listening. We think about how long we pray and are eager to check it off our list of duties when we are done. We doubt that you hear us or care about us enough to listen to our sorrows. We think that we have to clean ourselves up in order to pray, and we wonder if we disgust you with our sin and weakness. Father, forgive us.

Some of us love to pray. We want people to hear us and are eager to impress others with how spiritual we sound. We plan our public prayers carefully and are delighted when others notice our excellent prayers. In our hearts, we scoff at those who struggle to pray and don't do it very well. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, you prayed perfectly for us, and by your Spirit you make all of our prayers perfectly acceptable to our Father. As our great High Priest, you stand in heaven now, praying for your people and pleading for us. Jesus, thank you.

Holy Spirit, you pray on our behalf when we cannot pray, and you teach us to pray. Give us strong desires to come often to the throne of grace in order to receive help in our time of need. We need you many times, each and every day. Remind us to pray, and make us willing and able to cast all our cares on you, remembering that you care for us and are the only refuge for our weary and discouraged souls. In the name of Christ we pray, amen.

PSALM 66:19–20; HEBREWS 10:19–23

But truly God has listened;
he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me!

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

SEEKING GOD'S KINGDOM

MATTHEW 6:9–13, 33

“Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
[For yours is the kingdom and the power
 and the glory, forever. Amen....]

“... Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Heavenly Father,

We confess with our lips the blessedness of seeking your kingdom first, but our lives proclaim a different story. We sing the wonders of your love, but we grumble and complain when our desires are not fulfilled. We say that we follow a loving God who does what is best for us, but often we want to be our own gods, running the world in our own way. We declare that we long for the coming of your kingdom, but often we are more interested in the gifts that you give us than we are in you. Instead of following you, we are prone to follow our wisdom, our desires, and our own kingdoms. Father, forgive us for this prideful selfishness.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the King who reigns in truth and love. You showed us this love by becoming one of us and following your Father's will in our place. When Satan tempted you with the glory and power of your own kingdom, you rebuked him and followed the path of suffering instead. You laid down your life so that we could flourish in your kingdom forever. Thank you for this disarming kindness and love.

Holy Spirit, grow in us the desire to follow you, because we are still sinful, blind, and easily distracted. Help us to see the glory of your kingdom and to love it more than we love our own. Delight our hearts with your goodness until we bow our will to you joyfully. Give us grace to stand in obedience, knowing that without you we can do nothing. Give us grace to run to you when we fall, knowing that in Christ we have all the righteousness we will ever need. Help us to trust that your will is always done on this earth, even when it looks like Satan is winning. Help us to die to ourselves and to serve your kingdom with humble gratitude, boasting in the sweet name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 1:10–14

Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

THE ROCK

MATTHEW 7:24–27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Heavenly Father,

We know that you love us and care for us with perfect strength, love, and commitment, but we find it hard to trust in you for our spiritual, physical, and emotional safety. We try to earn your love through our own works and obedience instead of resting in the finished work of Christ. We protect ourselves from physical danger and can't trust you well when we are sick and our health and strength are threatened. We guard ourselves emotionally from others—we hide and escape instead of living openly and honestly. We deceive others when we are ashamed or scared; we manipulate others when we want things but can't speak openly. When they won't give us what we want, we bully others into doing our will. O God, forgive us for our weakness and sin.

Jesus, we are very weak, but you were strong for us. Thank you for loving others well and for trusting in your Father's strength and deliverance, even when it looked as though you were completely forsaken. Your perfect confidence in God led you to joyful worship of your Father; now we are given that beautiful perfection, and we are so grateful.

Holy Spirit, give us grace to trust and rest. Remind us often of our perfect safety in Christ; draw our eyes away from our fear and self-salvation strategies so that we may worship and adore Christ. May our confidence in him help us to move toward one another, and into a scary world, with love and self-sacrifice instead of self-defense. Fill us each day with outrageous, joyful gratitude that enables us to hide confidently within his grace and love. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

PSALM 61:2-4; 27:4-5

Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I,
for you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me dwell in your tent forever!
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!

One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.

RELENTLESS LOVE

MATTHEW 8:24–27

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

Loving heavenly Father,

Your love for us is relentless and unstoppable. We thank you that our remaining sin cannot shock you or cause you to reject us or abandon us, even though we continue to sin against you day after day. We confess that while our minds understand your great power, sovereignty, and love, and while our lips claim to trust you, we are easily undone by very small trials and difficulties. Mere trifles cast us into despair and anxiety, and we behave as though you don't care and will not protect, defend, and provide for us. We are silly creatures who run from you, even though you have always been faithful to your promise to walk with us through all the fiery trials to which you call us. Father, forgive us for our lack of faith, our pretentious prayers, our willful disobedience, and our blind and flagrant idolatry.

Jesus, thank you for obeying the will of your Father when he asked you to walk into the heart of the storm for us. Even though you wrestled with the temptation to run away, you willingly accepted the cup of God's wrath and endured the wild tempest of his just anger and indignation toward all our sin. We can scarcely believe that you would do that for us. Thank you for your glowing obedience, which covers and protects us even though we continue to run from you over and over again. Thank you for standing firm so that we could be counted as perfectly faithful and obedient in spite of ourselves.

Holy Spirit, thank you for your ongoing work in our lives. You have begun a good work that we cannot impede with our foolishness, and we are grateful. Open our eyes to our sin, and point us to Christ as the only hope for our weakness and willful transgression. Melt us with the love and obedience of our Savior; cause us to run toward him and throw ourselves into his arms instead of running away and drowning ourselves in sinful escape strategies. Humble us with our inability and our great need for Christ, and teach us to walk in grateful dependence upon him all the days of our lives. Give us growing faith to see your hand at work in us each day, through the many storms of life. In Christ alone we pray, amen.

ISAIAH 43:1-4

But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
 Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
 and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
 peoples in exchange for your life.”

FEAR

MATTHEW 10:28

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Heavenly Father,

How easily we become fearful and distressed by our difficult circumstances when it appears that life is out of control! We fear those who have the power to kill our bodies, feeling anxious about terrorists, criminals, and many other dangers in this fallen world. We forget that they must answer to you and have no power to send us to hell. We even fear those who have the power to embarrass us—to make us feel uncomfortable or ashamed. We dread the disapproval of those whose good opinion we crave, or of those who have power over us and can thwart our dreams and desires. We quickly forget your awesome power to lift up and bring down people and nations. We don't remember that you govern every molecule in this universe, including every thought, word, and deed that occurs. As a result, we act as if our futures lay entirely within our own grasp or were at the disposal of those around us. Forgive us for our faithless fear and for its opposite: our self-confident pride.

Lord Jesus, thank you for your humble and constant trust in your Father. You feared no one on earth; instead, you feared the Lord with perfect reverence. When evil men did their worst, nailing you to a cross and killing your body, you still entrusted your soul to your Father's hands. You entered the hell of suffering for our sins, so that we would never have to fear that terrible fate. Thank you that your perpetual, confident faith is now counted to us, as if it were our own.

Holy Spirit, give us a fresh boldness to face each new day—a boldness that flows from believing in God's promises and trusting in God's sovereign power and goodness. Teach us the proper fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom. Enable us to resist the constant pressure to conform to the values of this world, and draw us to pray whenever we face troubles or joys in life. Help us to walk alongside each other in difficult times, bearing one another's burdens and reminding each other of the certain outcome of the race that is set before us: a joyous welcome into our Father's arms. Amen.

ACTS 2:23–24; HEBREWS 12:1–2

“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

WORSHIP

MATTHEW 15:7–9

[Jesus said to the Pharisees,] “You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

“ This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

Merciful and mighty God,

We thank you for the great honor and privilege of joining with the angels and archangels who gather around your throne to worship you. You alone deserve all of our adoration and praise, and we thank you for giving us a glimpse of this heavenly worship service whenever we gather with your people. We ought to be filled with awestruck wonder that we belong to you, our only wise King. We confess to you that instead of being amazed by this, we have grown accustomed to this thought and are sometimes bored with the obligation to gather with your people for worship. We think that we are doing you a favor when we come to church, and we arrive with distracted minds and divided hearts. We joyfully give the best of our time, energy, effort, gifts, and wealth to our favorite idols and interests while grudgingly laying our leftovers before you—and then being proud of that second-rate offering. We would never say that we despise you, yet we are easily capable of finding worship to be dull and boring, and of resenting your command to gather together weekly. Lord, have mercy on us. We are deeply sinful and selfish children whose best acts of worship are blemished, deformed, and twisted with self-interest and pride.

We thank you for Jesus Christ. He is the spotless Lamb who became our perfect sacrifice. His death paid the debt for our mountains of apathy and disdain, and we are grateful. We thank you for his life of perfect obedience and flawless worship on our behalf. He loved, honored, worshiped, and obeyed you with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and now his record has replaced our own. In him we are counted as perfect worshipers, and we fall before you and praise you for this wonderful gift of his righteousness.

Holy Spirit, stir our cold and lazy hearts with gratitude. Open our eyes to see all that is ours in Christ, until we can't stop praising him. May the knowledge of what we deserve, and the reality of what we have received, melt our stony hearts with joy, fill our dull minds with unbearable delight, and adorn our lips with exuberant praise. Help us to grow as worshipers, until the day we join the angels dressed in festival robes and gather around your throne to honor you as your righteous children made perfect in Christ. In his strong name we pray, amen.

HEBREWS 12:18–19, 22–24, 28–29

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel....

... Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

MATTHEW 25:31–46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Heavenly Father,

We thank you that you are a righteous judge. You define goodness and fairness in your universe, and we can trust you far more than we can ever trust our own sense of justice. We also thank you for your patience with us, which staggers our imaginations. Lord, we speak hard words against you in our hearts every day. If we examined every thought that flows through our minds, we would discover countless grumblings and accusations against you. We often serve you for many selfish reasons and think that you owe us what we want in exchange. We know this by the way that our hearts flare when we don't get what we want and, even worse, by our bitterness when others whom we think less deserving get exactly what we want. O God, have mercy on us and forgive us. If you were to give us what we truly deserve, we couldn't endure it for a moment.

We thank you for Jesus. You poured out on him the anger that we deserve, and he did endure it. He lived the perfect life, which earned your pleasure, and he paid the awful debt of all our sin. Our holy judge was judged in our place, and now we stand in his goodness with all the righteousness we need. Thank you for looking on his life and death, and for pardoning us.

Holy Spirit, we are weak and forgetful. Our minds are full of many things, and the drift of our thoughts is always away from you. We need your help in order to think clearly about Christ and remember him. We need you to melt our hard hearts with gratitude, for we cannot do that for ourselves. We need you to bring us to repentance, time and time again, when our souls rise up to grumble and accuse you of injustice. Humble us with the remembrance of Christ's unbelievable love and patience with us, and fill us with desire to worship and adore him. Amen.

ACTS 10:38–43

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

THE GOOD NEWS

MATTHEW 28:18–20; ROMANS 10:14–17

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

God of our salvation,

What could we ever give to you in return for your greatest gift: your own dear Son? He is our peace and salvation, our Redeemer, our substitute. He stooped low to raise us up—was born like us that we might become like him. He united Deity and humanity, the Creator becoming created, so that one day we might shed our sinful flesh and be remade in his likeness. He worked out a perfect righteousness, which was given to us, so that we can draw near to you. When we cannot rise to him, he draws close and lifts us up to himself. He entered into holy war with Satan, defeating our enemy, winning our battle, and purchasing our eternal peace with you.

O God, these are tidings of great joy, and yet we often live without joy in our salvation. We find great joy in your good gifts without lifting our hearts to worship you, the giver of all good things. We prostitute our hearts daily; our attention and admiration are easily bought for a moment of pleasure and escape. We are relentless worshipers of ourselves—fearful of talking about you and appearing foolish, committed to our own agendas and brazenly unwilling to go wherever you would send us, captivated by our own little kingdoms instead of gratefully serving in yours. No wonder we are easily shaken when our eyes are always on ourselves and the fragile things in which we put our hope.

O God, have mercy on us. Though we desire to please you, we are weak and sinful, unable to stand in obedience unless you lift us up. Forgive us for the sin that remains in us. Though it frightens and troubles us, you have defeated it completely, giving us perfect peace in Christ. Thank you that we are forever united to him—his obedience is our very own, and your delight in him is always bathing us with your Fatherly pleasure.

Enlarge our hearts to celebrate this good news of great joy, for we are barely able to grasp the enormity of our salvation. Settle our hope and peace in the love of Christ, and make his throne the pleasure ground of our souls. Help us to love those around us, drawing them into your family by caring and speaking of your greatness in wise and loving ways, always ready to share the great news, and eager to explain the hope that is in us. Help us to sing of your goodness, loudly in our souls and joyfully when we are together, with hearts that are undone by your love and kindness to us. In Christ's great name we pray, amen.

EPHESIANS 2:13–18

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

FEAR (continued)

MARK 4:35–38

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

Faithful Father,

We confess to you our fearful hearts and our fretful prayers. We look around us and see a world that feels dangerous and out of control. There are storms on all sides—waves that are ready to swamp our little boats and drown us and those whom we love. We easily forget that you are the Creator God who rules the wind and waves. We panic and accuse you of leaving us in danger, when all along your sovereign power is at work for good in our lives, even in the most painful and distressing circumstances. You hold in your hands our health, our money, our careers, our relationships, our children—everything that we have and everything that we are.

Lord Jesus, thank you for entering the storms of life with us. Thank you for enduring exhaustion, pain, sickness, broken relationships, and betrayal for us. The circumstances that so easily cause us to doubt God’s love and care, you committed confidently into the hands of your sovereign Father. Thank you that you trusted perfectly in the darkest situations, in our place.

Holy Spirit, teach us to put our faith to work and to learn that we have a good and almighty Father who orchestrates our lives perfectly. Help us to be content in weakness, failure, suffering, and brokenness, recognizing that these gifts come to us from your hand. Through them, may we see more and more clearly our own weakness and inability, along with the fact that your grace is always sufficient for us. Amen.

MARK 4:39–41

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

THE CHRIST

LUKE 9:18–20

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

Incomparable Savior,

We thank you, with all of our hearts, for your wondrous love in bearing all of our guilt on the cross. May your cross sweeten every bitterness in our lives, encourage us with hope in every trial, and connect us to you as the true vine—the only source of all our strength and power. Lord, we have died with you, are risen with you, and are seated with you already in heavenly places. Yet we find that sin continues to have great power over us, because we quickly forget who you are, and who we are in you. We are often self-absorbed—we struggle daily to deny ourselves and to choose obedience and love for others over pleasing ourselves. We wrestle with many sinful desires and with over-desires for many good things. When we do manage to serve others, we often take pride and pleasure in our own good conduct, and we use our serving to feel good about ourselves. Father, forgive us for the self-gratifying and self-exalting lives that we lead from moment to moment.

Jesus, thank you for giving up the praise and glory of heaven in order to please your Father and rescue us from ourselves. You denied yourself the adoration and worship that you richly deserved, in order to enter a world of people who would misunderstand, reject, and hate you. You lived a life of self-denial and sacrificial love for others, always obeying your Father, always putting the needs of others before your own. We thank you for your radiant robe of righteousness, which replaces the filthy and tattered rags of our attempts to be good. Although you are the anointed one of God, you paid the full price that we owed for sin at the cross, so that we could be freed from bondage to sin and death and from our relentless self-worship. Thank you.

Holy Spirit, we have been given a cross to carry before we wear the crown. We confess that self-love causes us to hate that cross and that human reason leads us to run from it. Without your help we cannot bear it. Spirit, remind us often that Jesus has carried that cross already for us, and that he will surely carry it with us from day to day. Increase our joy in the cross of Christ, and our wonder and admiration for all that was accomplished for us there, until our hearts melt and our self-worship gives way to profound delight in Jesus as our priceless treasure. As true worship fills the panorama of our souls, may we grow into people who swiftly turn away from our own desires in order to love others as we have been so greatly loved. We pray in the beautiful name of Jesus, amen.

JOHN 14:1-6

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 120–153.

RESURRECTION

JOHN 5:24–29

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

Loving Father,

You know our inmost thoughts and the doubts that constantly shake us. With our lips we confess that we believe in the resurrection, but our persistent fears betray our unbelief. We say that in Christ we have everything we need for life and death, yet when our possessions, health, reputations, jobs, or families are threatened with loss or danger, we fret and fall apart. We know we will one day have new, glorious bodies, but we are quickly undone when our earthly bodies fail us. We run from discomfort and pain, and even withdraw from others who are suffering, unwilling to do the costly work of loving them well in their distress. Father, forgive our unbelief.

Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life. You entered this world of suffering and death, and gave yourself over into the hands of those who hated you and were determined to kill you. Yet, in your darkest moments, you fixed your eyes on the joy that was set before you: that after the resurrection you would possess us as your people forever. You never wavered in your desire to have us as your inheritance, or in your faith that the Father would accomplish this through your death and resurrection. Thank you for enduring through deep suffering in order that we may become like you and be with you forever.

Holy Spirit, you are the one who brings life to our dead souls, and will one day bring life back to these mortal bodies also. When we find ourselves in the depths of suffering and loss, enable us to cry out to you. When we labor hard and see no fruit, teach us to wait patiently for you, the God of the harvest. When we cannot believe well and we run to find comfort in our favorite earthly pleasures, strengthen our faith. Help our unbelief, and help us to survive the weakness of our flickering faith by resting in the perfection of Jesus on our behalf. In all of our trials and difficulties, fix our eyes on our heavenly inheritance, which is stored up for us in Christ in a place where no power in heaven, on earth, or under the earth can touch it. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! We long to be free from our sin and to enjoy you forever with sinless hearts, clear eyes, and minds devoted to knowing you and serving you with loving delight. Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20–26

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

JOHN 13:34–35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Loving heavenly Father,

Have mercy on us. Although we have all received your lavish love and unfailing forgiveness, we find it very hard to love each other well. Our fallen nature draws us to an endless fascination with ourselves, and to a strong tendency to despise people who are different from us or don't agree with us. We long to be praised and admired; when our desires are thwarted, we withdraw our affection from those who disappoint us and indulge ourselves with vicious, unkind thoughts toward them. Instead of cultivating a love that covers sin, we rehearse the sins of those whom we dislike in an effort to justify ourselves and feel superior. Father, forgive us, for we are broken and twisted lovers of ourselves. Thank you for discarding our sins, for burying them in the deepest sea, for refusing to remember our sin and hold it against us.

Lord Jesus, you volunteered to become a man and to allow the very creatures whom you made to sin against you in the deepest way. You lived a life of perfect goodness for us and loved others well, yet you were mocked, beaten, spat upon, and despised. In all of this, you prayed for the forgiveness of the ones who abused you most. Thank you for your obedience, which covers over our daily, petty dislike of others as well as our full-blown hatred toward those we despise. Without your death in our place and your righteousness credited to us, we could never enjoy the beaming delight of our heavenly Father. Thank you for meriting his pleasure for us, even though we are still very sinful.

Holy Spirit, we desperately need your help. Our minds wander into vicious thoughts before we even realize what is happening. Please show us when our thoughts are sinful, and help us to repent of them and accept the responsibility for them. Help us to run to the cross to be immersed in your forgiveness, love, and eternal welcome, so that we can love and forgive others with hearts that are melted with gratitude. Help us to capture sinful, unloving thoughts and to make them obedient to you, so that our behavior will be far more loving than the attitudes with which we frequently struggle. May the deep love of our Father, and the sacrificial love of our Savior, transform us from the inside out into people who respect, cherish, and readily forgive the most difficult people in our lives. We ask this in the name of Christ alone, and for the sake of his glory. Amen.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:11–13

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

PEACE

JOHN 16:33; COLOSSIANS 3:14–16

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Heavenly Father,

Our hearts are constantly storm-tossed by our varied circumstances. When life is going well, we are elated and feel infinitely strong. When we face problems and frightening situations, we are cast down and feel sure that we will drown. Instead of thankfulness and peace, our hearts are often ruled by forgetfulness and fear. We imagine ourselves to be abandoned because of our sin and cut off. We feel isolated from one another as well as from you. We know that you have overcome this world, but our peace is fleeting and is built upon flimsy things, and we are not comforted by your strength and love. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, thank you for your perfect peace in all life’s deepest trials. You were able to rest in the midst of the storm, because you knew that you were the Father’s priceless treasure, whom he would not allow to see destruction. Even when the Father’s wrath was poured out upon you for our sake, you rested in his sure promises and trusted in him. Thank you that this peace is now given to us as a free gift. Because of you, we are the Father’s priceless treasure, his beloved children, whom he will never give up.

Holy Spirit, quiet our unruly hearts. Banish our fear and sadness with your truth. Give us the peace that we so often lack by reminding us of the rich word of Christ. Teach us to find solid hope in Christ’s blood, which is shed for us. Thank you that even when nothing feels well with us, all is well with you—the gospel is true in spite of our feelings. Help us to celebrate this when our hearts are cold, our will is weak, and you do not remove our fear as we wish you would. May we encourage one another joyfully and boldly with this great news. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

EPHESIANS 2:11–22

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh ... were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Barbara R. Duguid, [*Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*](#), ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 156–161.

THE DIVINE JUDGE

ROMANS 2:1–5

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Righteous Judge of all the earth,

We are grateful for your forgiveness and amazed that you would look on Christ and pardon us. We do not deserve your mercy, but we have tasted the sweetness of your love, and our hearts are full of joy. At one moment we can praise you that we are not condemned; yet with our next thought we freely judge and condemn others. We judge their appearance, their education, their spirituality, their wisdom and gifts, their knowledge of Scripture, their theological beliefs, their political opinions, their works of service, and their ability to love others well. We even judge others for things we do ourselves, slaughtering them in our hearts and rehearsing their weaknesses in our minds. With our mouths and thoughts we declare others worthless, using their weaknesses to feel superior to them. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, you were judged in our place. Though you had every right to judge us, you came not to condemn the world but to save lost sinners like us. You have been punished for all of our bitter, selfish, and prideful thoughts of judgment against others, and you replace our sinful record of hypocrisy with your own gracious perfection. Thank you.

Holy Spirit, help us to notice our judgmental thoughts. Reveal them to us, and draw us to repent and to run to you for help. Help us to love and forgive others as we have been loved and forgiven in Christ. Give us compassion and humility in order to discern rightly and leave judgment in your wise and loving hands. When we fail miserably, as we often do, help us to repent, confess, ask forgiveness, and rejoice that there is now no condemnation for those who are united to Christ. May that truth transform us and motivate us to live lives of kindness and gentleness with one another. Amen.

HEBREWS 12:18–24

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

GOD'S KINDNESS

ROMANS 2:4–5

Do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Precious heavenly Father,

Your kindness to us in Christ overwhelms us. In him your justice is satisfied; you cover us with the perfect righteousness of your beloved Son. Every bitter thought we entertain, every evil deed we have done and still do, every harsh, unkind, and false word we have spoken and will speak in the future—all are completely replaced with the specific goodness and obedience of our Savior. Father, we thank you for such a great salvation. Your tender compassion toward us in our weakness melts our hearts with admiration, joy, and the courage to come to you.

Lord, we grieve that, in spite of your rich kindness to us, we still choose evil instead of obedience to you many times each day. You are the light—the giver of all light—yet we are prone to wander toward darkness in order to hide our sin and cherish our secret pleasures. You are the fountain of life, yet we kill others in our hearts with our selfishness and hate. Instead of fearing you with holy reverence, we fear what others think of us; we fear sickness, poverty, embarrassment, loneliness, or unbearable sorrow; we fear a life that doesn't go our way; and we fear that you won't give us what we crave. Almighty God, forgive us—prolong your kindness to us, and have mercy on us in our foolishness and sin.

Holy Spirit, captivate us with the love of our kind and righteous God. It is unthinkable that dirty, sinful people like us should be welcomed to find shelter, forgiveness, and love under the shadow of our great Creator's wings. We struggle to believe this is true, and Satan whispers that it cannot be. Persuade us of the truth of the gospel, and beckon us—draw us to hide away in the love of Christ, who has paid for all our sin and who covers us with his goodness every day. May we look to the future with hope and confidence—not in our ability to obey you, but in your unstoppable plan to rescue people like us. Help us to feast on your Word richly, to drink from the gushing fountain of your great love, and to eagerly seek to grow in holiness, humility, and dependence on you alone for our joy and salvation. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

PSALM 103:8-12

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

JUSTICE (2)

ROMANS 3:9–18

For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;
no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one.”

“Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.”

“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

“Their feet are swift to shed blood;
in their paths are ruin and misery,
and the way of peace they have not known.”

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

God of justice and mercy,

We come before you as those who cannot endure your justice. If you were to keep a record of our sins, which of us could stand before you? Yet that has not stopped us from keeping a record of the sins of others, both real and imagined, and dredging it up against them repeatedly in the court of public opinion. We have dug a pit for others with our mouths, condemning them and justifying ourselves, often with scant regard to the truth of what really happened.

Moreover, when we ourselves are falsely condemned, we do not flee to your justice and plead with you to vindicate us. Instead, where we have been able to do so, we have fought back in our own power, repaying reviling with reviling, instead of returning good for evil. When we have no power to defend ourselves, we have sunk into depression and despair, bitterly angry with you for not protecting us in our time of need. Father, forgive us for our mistrust of your goodness.

Jesus, you could have righteously condemned people all around you. As the only one without sin, you could justly have cast the first stone. But instead, you deliberately chose to forgive those who assaulted you, whether with words or with blows. You spoke kind and gracious words to those who were sinking in their own sin, as well as just words of condemnation for the self-righteous. You committed your own cause into the hands of your Father, even as his face was turned away from you on the cross. On the third day, your trust in God's faithfulness was fully vindicated in your resurrection from the dead.

Holy Spirit, enable us to rest our case in your safe hands. Help us to trust you to take care of the earthly verdicts that others pass on us, in the light of the eternal verdict of "Not guilty!" that is ours in Christ. Help us not to malign others with our tongues, but instead to speak kind and uplifting words that combine truth and grace. Lift our eyes up to the heavenly tribunal, whose verdict on us has already been delivered, and so give us grateful, thankful, forgiven hearts. We pray in Jesus' merciful name, amen.

PSALM 130:3-8

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

SACRIFICIAL SERVICE

ROMANS 8:7–8

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Heavenly Father,

As we consider the suffering of your Son in our place, we confess that we habitually look out for our own interests above those of others. Our homes and our churches are full of rivalry and conceit as we seek to advance ourselves and promote our own agendas. We do not submit our desires even to the desires of those whom we love most. We confess our relentless self-interest and pride, and we ask for your grace to change. Forgive us for desiring to rule others, for our daily failure to submit our lives to your will, and for failing to live with one another in an understanding way.

Lord Jesus, you were shattered so that we could be healed. Your life of selfless service to others, and your willing death in our place, give us all that we need to stand with confidence and joy before your holy Father. Thank you for being our faithful substitute in life and in death, and for putting yourself in harm's way for our eternal joy and safety. Thank you for submitting to your Father's will, even though you would have preferred not to drink from the cup of his wrath in our place.

Holy Spirit, we cannot lead the lives of sacrificial service to others to which we are called unless you change our hard and self-centered hearts. We desperately need your truth to convict us, your love to make us grateful for all you have done, your courage to compel us to submit ourselves willingly to one another, and your power to help us love others in their need. Have mercy on us, for we are weak and fearful. Transform us into humble servants who joyfully lay down our lives for one another in the name of our great and mighty King. Amen.

GALATIANS 5:1; MATTHEW 11:28–30

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

TRUST

ROMANS 8:16–18

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Most high and glorious God,

We are full of toiling and fear, easily troubled and distressed, but you are forever at perfect peace. You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You govern every atom in this universe with great care, working all things together for the good of your people and the glory of your great name. Father, we thank you, worship you, and proclaim that you are worthy of all our trust and loyalty.

We confess that we are easily distracted by the world around us. We know that you call us to suffer, and that our trials are meant to strengthen and train us, but our faith is weak and we hate to feel bad. We doubt and accuse you when we suffer pain, sorrow, injustice, rejection, loneliness, loss, disapproval, and failure. We are blinded by our emotions and prone to sinning in many ways in order to escape the painful feelings that overwhelm us and threaten to undo us. Father, forgive us for the sin that we embrace because we fail to trust that you are good, always for us, and never against us.

Thank you for the obedience of your precious Son, who counted it a joy to suffer great pain and sorrow for the glory of redeeming us. He trusted firmly in you and kept his mind and heart fixed on the prize that he cherished, which was his glory revealed in very weak and sinful people. Father, thank you for erasing our record of sin and doubt, and for replacing it with his record of spotless trust and of obedience through all his sufferings.

Holy Spirit, melt our cold, bitter, and fearful hearts with your great love for us. Take our eyes off of the earthly cities that dazzle us and that we are tempted to make our home. Instead, place our trust in the sure hope that we have an eternal home, a shining Savior who reigns in heaven and intercedes for us, a golden city that will make our present sufferings dim and unmemorable. Give us more grace to transfer our trust to the Savior who has suffered for us and will surely walk with us through the many valleys of death to which you may call us in our earthly lives. In our trials, draw us nearer to you, and shape us to look and think more like you. Teach us to count all things as trash compared to the great honor and deep joy of belonging to you, knowing that you will never forsake us or leave us alone. May the power of the resurrection be strongly at work within us, helping us to die to our strong feelings and to cast ourselves upon the mercy and love of the one who bled from his hands, his feet, and his side for our sake. We could never deserve such love, but we bow our hearts before you with humble gratitude and overwhelming joy. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

PHILIPPIANS 3:7–11

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

FINDING FAULT WITH GOD

ROMANS 9:14–24

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

Commander of the universe,

We marvel at your patient love for cosmic rebels like ourselves. We commit treason against you every day, with our lips and in our hearts. We grumble and complain as though you don't know our needs or care how we suffer. We argue with your providence, as though we are wiser and kinder than you are. We barge through life as though we are strong and can take care of ourselves and others. Our hearts flare with anger toward you when you don't answer our prayers as we wish, or do our bidding. Father, forgive us for talking back to you. You would be just to destroy us instantly for our great sin. Instead, you have chosen to love us and to show us how patient and kind you are with foolish, weak, and bitter children. Father, thank you.

Holy Spirit, remind us often of the humility of Christ in our place. Though our hearts rise daily to accuse and condemn our Maker, he stood silent as a lamb and went to be slaughtered for our sin. He trusted himself to his Father in all things, without fear, grumbling, or complaining. When we talk back to God, show us our hearts and show us Christ. Though our sin weighs us down, his goodness lifts us up to heaven, where he stands today praying and interceding for us. Give us faith to believe that you are wiser and kinder than we could ever be. Give us the desire and strength to follow your commands, for without you we are nothing and can do nothing. We thank you that we cannot resist your will, and that you will always have your way with us in spite of all our sin. In our weakness, glorify our great Savior, whose love will never let us go, and whose death and shining obedience are enough to save all those who trust in him. Amen.

ROMANS 9:25–26; JOHN 3:16–17

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’ ”

“And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’ ”

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to
condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

LIVING IN COMMUNITY

ROMANS 14:13

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to
put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

Almighty God,

We come before you today to proclaim that you are excellent and that your glory is evident in all of creation. You are holy and perfect in all your ways, yet you stoop to love us, fallen and sinful rebels that we are. We do not deserve your kindness and care, yet you have set your love upon us. You pursue us with your everlasting promise to work all things for our good and your own glory. Father, melt our hearts with wonder, love, and praise to you.

We admit before you that we often find it difficult to live in community with one another, as you call us to. We are judgmental toward others, particularly when you have given us strength in an area where they are weak. We frequently struggle with malice, hypocrisy, envy, deceit, and slander. Though at times we may control our tongues, in our minds we rehearse endlessly the sins and weaknesses of others, as we try to justify ourselves and feel superior. At times we cause others to stumble into sin, and so do damage to their hearts and souls. Father, forgive us for the many sins that we commit each and every day. We cast ourselves on your mercy and thank you for the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all sin, and for the obedience of Christ, which replaces our record of rebellion with the glory of his perfect holiness.

Holy Spirit of the living God, help us, we pray. Cause us to hunger for your Word and to grow in obedience to you. Help us to be faithful sojourners and joyful recipients of your grace. Make Christ appear excellent to us and beautiful in our eyes as we worship, as we work, as we live together, and even when we sin against one another. Help us to recognize our sin and to repent quickly, asking forgiveness of one another and helping one another to find peace and joy in the goodness of your Son instead of in our own obedience. May your great and mighty power, which raised Christ from the dead, be strongly at work in each of us, helping us to love one another with powerful gratitude and to live lives of increasing holiness, purity, and love for you and for one another. In the excellent name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

ROMANS 9:33; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21–24

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

HOPE

ROMANS 15:12–14

And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Loving heavenly Father,

You alone are the Creator and Sustainer of all things. It is our great privilege to live under your omnipotence, righteousness, wisdom, mercy, and grace. You love us with better love than we could ever know here on earth, and we stand in awe of your power and your commitment to cherish us. Yet even though we have tasted your goodness, we are people who would rather trust in ourselves. We place our hope in our own talents and abilities, in relationships with people whom we admire and love, in our jobs and good health, in our economic value and academic abilities. We even place our hope in spiritual disciplines, thinking that we will merit more favor from you if we deny ourselves, pray constantly, or sacrifice for you and for others. Father, we are worshipers of ourselves, and find our hearts full of anxiety and depression when we discover that we cannot save ourselves in any way.

Jesus, if you had not lived a perfect life for us, we could never have hope or peace. You trusted your Father throughout your lifetime and into your undeserved death. Thank you for suffering the many agonies of life in a fallen world on our behalf, and for remaining faithful and obedient in temptation, grief, and loss. Your glowing obedience and perfect righteousness are the strong foundation for all our hope and peace. Though our faith and hope often burn low, and though we are full of weakness, your unshakable faith and hope shine brightly on our behalf and smother the gloomy darkness of our sinful nature. We marvel that you would consider us a joy worth suffering for, and we bow humbly before you and offer you our praise, our thanks, and our very lives.

Holy Spirit, teach us to be still and to know that you are God and we are not. Please give us godly sorrow for the many ways we sin against you, and fill us with repentance and hope in you. Open our blinded eyes to see clearly your faithfulness and power, your great love and unending patience, and your relentless determination to pursue us, captivate us, and ravish us with the truth of the gospel. Show us the unstoppable love of our Savior, who was stricken for our sin and who stands in heaven as our powerful advocate. Then we will be at peace, because you are perfect and strong and will never leave us, forsake us, or hurt us. Amen.

EZEKIEL 36:25–29; GALATIANS 5:5

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.”

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

- HYMNS

“Jesus, My Only Hope”

“None Other Lamb”

GOD'S GOOD GIFTS

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Almighty God,

You never change. From age to age you are faithful to your promises, and you love to pour out generous blessings on your children. Like a good earthly father, you enjoy giving good gifts to those you love, and we have so much to be thankful for. We know that we are safe in your love, because your kindness to us does not depend on our faithfulness to you. We praise you, Lord, because you raise up the poor and needy; and, as spiritually poor and needy people, we need your constant care and attention.

Father, we should be filled with gratitude to you every minute of every day. We owe you everything, so our lives should be devoted to acts of generosity to you, to your church, and your family. We ought to give the very best that we have of our gifts, time, and material possessions to you, with glad and joyful hearts. Yet we confess that we don't even come close to honoring you in this way, Lord. We are often stingy in our giving to you and resentful of the demands that church and people place on our time. We are generous to ourselves and to those whom we love or wish to impress, but we rob you frequently by not giving to you in proportion to our great debt. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, thank you for giving your life and yourself so generously for us. You lived each day in perfect gratitude to your Father, giving thanks for your daily bread and giving your mind, heart, soul, and strength to serving us. In the end, you even gave your body as a sacrificial offering on the cross. How can we repay such amazing love?

Holy Spirit, teach us to excel in the grace of giving. Help our hearts to overflow with generosity to others in response to the outpouring of grace that we have received. Make us quick to identify and meet the needs around us, whether they are the needs of our church or the needs of one another. And, when we have done all that we can do, help us not to take pride in our giving, but to recognize that it is only a small return for your great generosity to us in Christ. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

EPHESIANS 2:4–10

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

BOASTING

2 CORINTHIANS 12:5, 7–9

I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.... To keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Mighty Father,

We confess before you the deep-seated pride that leads us to parade our strength and goodness before others, while at the same time hiding and denying our weakness and sin. We boast about our hard work and our achievements, our intellectual prowess and our self-control, and even about our spiritual disciplines, as if any of these virtues came from ourselves. We exalt ourselves over others, mocking their weaknesses and failures, behind their backs and to their faces. Yet anything good within us is entirely your gift; left to ourselves, we are profoundly weak and broken people who wander astray like sheep, moment by moment and day after day. Forgive us, Lord!

Jesus, thank you that you love us just as we are and are not ashamed to be called our Brother. You took on the weakness of a human body and entered our broken world in order to live the life that we could not live. You humbly saw the needs of people around you, and you loved them in all of their sin and brokenness, serving them with compassion and a pure heart. Thank you that your perfect obedience is now credited to us, even though we still have selfish, proud hearts.

Holy Spirit, we cannot deliver ourselves from our sinful brokenness. Help us to look to Jesus for our righteousness and salvation—he alone is our hope and refuge. Transform us, by your mercy and grace, into thankful, humble, watchful children who are eager to serve you. Rescue us each day from the pit of our own self-sufficiency. May the words of our mouths and the thoughts of our hearts be acceptable to you, our Rock and our Redeemer, in times of sorrow and times of peace, until the day when our faith becomes sight and our souls are made whole. Amen.

ROMANS 8:2–4

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

TRUSTING OURSELVES

GALATIANS 3:1–3

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Gracious Father,

We are as foolish as the Galatians. After receiving from you grace upon grace, and acknowledging our dependence upon your Spirit, we find ourselves constantly returning to our own efforts to construct a goodness in which we may boast. Instead of depending wholly upon Christ, we trust in the rags of our own pretended righteousness. This is evident in the way in which we use every scrap of our own performance to raise ourselves above others, and in the delight we take in pointing out the weaknesses and sins of others. We trust in our good theology, our church attendance, our Bible studies, our witnessing—in anything and everything apart from Christ alone.

Jesus, friend of sinners, thank you for your faithful holiness and humility. Although you lived a perfect life, you never used your righteousness to put down or exclude other people. Instead, while graciously exposing the emptiness of their claims to righteousness, you constantly invited them to come to you for rest, for peace, for hope, for strength, and for salvation. Thank you that you were crucified for us, so that we might be crucified along with you, dying to the condemnation that was deserved by our sin in your death. Now we have received from you a righteousness that has nothing to do with our families, our churches, or our performance, but is a free gift of your ransoming grace. All we have is you, and you are all we need.

Holy Spirit, raise us to new life in Christ so that we may fight against sin with all of the energy that you give us. May Christ live in and through us in ways that are visible to all; may it be seen that any power that we have is a gift of God and not from ourselves. May his grace pour out of us in compassion and welcome for outsiders and outcasts whom you are drawing to yourself through faith. And may our hearts hunger more and more for the day when our dying will be complete, our heaven-bound race will be run, and we will rise to complete newness of life and will see you face to face. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

COLOSSIANS 2:2–3

[I pray that your] hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

RECONCILIATION

EPHESIANS 2:11–22; ROMANS 8:5–6

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles ... were ... separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross.... He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

God of our salvation,

You have rescued us with your strong and holy arms, and we bow before you with joyful gratitude. You have destroyed dividing walls of hostility between us by uniting us to Christ and in Christ, so that now we are one body and one holy people. Thank you for bringing us near, for forgiving our sins, and for sending your Son to be our peace. We confess to you that we cannot live according to your Spirit unless you strengthen us. In spite of our family ties to one another, we are prone to aim weapons against one another instead of joining together to fight our real enemy. Our strong desires cause us to fight and quarrel—we arm our minds with bitter thoughts, our lips with hateful words, and our feet with hostility that runs from reconciliation instead of moving toward others. We spend many hours each day pursuing what we want, even if it means hurting others in the process. Father, forgive us for our many sins.

Lord Jesus, you have saved us with your strong and mighty righteousness. Your confidence in your Father's wisdom and love caused you to love others well when you came to earth. You walked through life healing, counseling, loving, and making peace with your brothers and sisters. The Spirit brought you into a desert of temptation, where you suffered Satan's cunning attack and emerged victorious, because you knew that we would need your righteousness in place of our filthy rags. You were nailed to a cross, where you gave up your life so that we could have peace with your Father and his wrath against our sin could be fully satisfied. Jesus, thank you for being our peace and for showing us what true peace looks like.

Holy Spirit, deliver us from our love of self. Free us to serve others joyfully and to seek their peace instead of seeing them as rivals and enemies. Unite us in our love for Christ and in our desire to stand against Satan's schemes. When we fall, help us to forgive one another and to find joy at the foot of the cross together. When we stand tall and strong, let us celebrate your goodness and mercy, acknowledging that we remain needy comrades gathered around the cross. Set our minds on you, regardless of our own performance, and cause us to meditate often on the grace in which we stand firm and on the blood that justifies us. Help us to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God until we see Jesus face to face. Amen.

ROMANS 5:1–2, 6–9

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God....

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

HUMILITY

PHILIPPIANS 2:5–8

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Loving heavenly Father,

Forgive us for our arrogant boastfulness and self-confidence. We are constantly seeking to build our own kingdoms, or to seek your kingdom in ways that lift us up, instead of submitting to your authority in everything. We easily believe that we know better than you and that our plans are wiser than yours, as if we were equal to you, the Creator of the universe, instead of being fallen, sinful creatures. We hate humbling ourselves and would far rather exalt ourselves, shouting our own glories from the rooftops. We want people to bow their knees to us and to do our every bidding, instead of submitting ourselves to you.

Precious Savior, as the Son of God incarnate, you possessed all authority over things in heaven and things upon earth, but you gave up that power to become a servant of others. Thank you for healing the sick and freeing those who were demonpossessed. Thank you for patiently bearing with your proud and deeply confused disciples. Thank you for your patience with us, for we too are often arrogant and confused. Thank you for your willingness to go even to the cross for us, scorning its shame.

Holy Spirit, thank you for raising Christ from the dead and exalting him to the right hand of the Father, restoring him to his rightful glory. Bow our knees before Jesus in adoring wonder and praise. Help us to learn how we may decrease so that he may increase. Teach us how to point people away from ourselves, and toward him, all the days of our lives. In his glorious name we pray, amen.

JOHN 10:17–18; PHILIPPIANS 2:9–11

[Jesus said,] “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

ASSURANCE

COLOSSIANS 2:1–3; HEBREWS 6:10–12

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Heavenly Father,

We confess before you the weakness of our grip on you. In good times, we declare with assurance that in Jesus we have a sympathetic High Priest and that you will never leave us nor forsake us. Yet when trials and troubles come, we quickly feel abandoned and alone, convinced that you have forgotten us. Instead of drawing near to the throne of grace, full of confidence in your love for us, our hearts are consumed with frustration and fear. Instead of reveling in our assurance in Christ, we lash out at those closest to us in anger, or withdraw within ourselves to sulk and hide, running to the idols that promise us escape or immediate relief from our pain. We quickly forget that our advocate has ascended into heaven in triumph and intercedes for us there. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, thank you that you entered this world of suffering and temptation as our merciful and compassionate High Priest. You know what it is to be tired and overwhelmed; you know what it is to feel excruciating pain and weakness; you know what it is to be abandoned and betrayed. Thank you that you were faithful in all these things for us, always trusting your Father, always revering him and obeying him from your heart. Thank you that you are completely without sin, and that you sprinkle our distrustful and disobedient hearts with clean water, washing us with your perfect and spotless holiness. Thank you for the gentleness with which you receive us, and for not reproaching us for our constant weakness, doubt, and folly.

Holy Spirit, help us to cling to Christ. Show us more clearly our eternal High Priest and advocate above. Help us to ponder more deeply his love for us when we are tempted to doubt it, and to stir one another up to love and good deeds. Intercede for us in our weakness, taking our incoherent prayers and presenting them perfectly before the Father. Strengthen us in growing holiness as you continue in us the good work that you have already begun, so that on the last day we might receive what you have promised us in Christ, along with all of the saints. In Jesus' name, amen.

HEBREWS 4:14–16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

GLORY

COLOSSIANS 3:1–4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Glorious Father,

Thank you that you have united our lives to Christ so completely that his perfect life was reckoned as ours, and his death for sin was counted as our death. We have died and been buried with him, and in him we shall live forever! Thank you that when he appears in glory, we too shall bask in that reflected glory and share in the glorious inheritance that he earned.

We confess that our minds are all too often not set upon these glorious heavenly truths. Our thoughts would rather wallow in a very earthly gutter. Instead of delighting in Christ and finding our glory and rest in him, we delight in our sins and seek glory and rest from our idols. Our minds are often focused on food, sex, relationships, work, achievements, and even our own attempts at achieving goodness, rather than being fixed on the glory of Christ and the gospel. When we do become aware of the depth of our sin, we are cast down and flounder in the bog of despair, as if our own flawed righteousness were what saved us, instead of running swiftly to you to confess and repent and receive your forgiveness.

Holy Spirit, renew our minds by your sanctifying power. Transform our thinking so that our repeated sin drives us repeatedly to Christ. Change our vision so that our earthly trials and difficulties lead us to ponder the surpassing glories that wait for us in heaven. Open our eyes so that we see one another as magnificent new creatures in Christ, awesome construction projects that you will bring to completion on the day of Christ Jesus. Renew our minds so that we become increasingly confident that you will certainly finish that same work in us, according to your own plan and timetable. Amen.

ROMANS 8:34–37

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

THE WORD OF GOD

COLOSSIANS 3:16–17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Sovereign God,

You are the God who speaks and acts—you spoke and created the universe; you spoke and redeemed your people out of Egypt; you spoke and commanded them to obey your wise and good laws, which would lead to their blessing and wholeness. But they and we have ignored, neglected, forgotten, and despised your Word. We have left our Bibles untouched, preferring to divert ourselves with work, games, television shows, and the internet. We have sought guidance from our friends and from the gurus of this age, instead of seeking truth from you. Even when we know perfectly well what your Word commands, we repeatedly give in to temptation in order to feed our desires and our lusts, or simply to make our lives easier. Sometimes we even despise the good news of the gospel that is splashed across every page of the Word, preferring to condemn and hate ourselves for our sins rather than confess them and receive your free forgiveness.

Jesus, you are the Father's final Word to this lost world. As the living Word, you were engaged in creation. As the Word appeared in flesh, you came down to this world to redeem us. You constantly loved and obeyed your Father's revelation of himself, delighting in the Scriptures and using them skillfully to refute Satan's temptations. Now you give us your perfect love for the Word as a free gift, covering our half-hearted and bored indifference with your passionate delight in the truth.

Holy Spirit, you have been tasked with leading us into all truth and bringing to our remembrance the things about Jesus. Stir up our dull hearts and energize our apathetic spirits! Give us a fresh enthusiasm to search the Scriptures, eagerly prizing the wisdom that they contain and thrilling in every new insight into the gospel. Show us Jesus on every page; stir our souls with the sufferings of Christ and the glories that await us in heaven. Motivate us to strive with every fiber of our being toward holiness, while comforting us with constant reminders of the righteousness that is ours already in Christ and the assurance that you will complete the good work you have begun in us on the day of his appearing. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

1 JOHN 1:1–3; HEBREWS 1:2–4; 12:22–24

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

UNBELIEF

HEBREWS 3:7–13

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,
where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.
Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.’
As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest.’”

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Holy God,

We confess that we are people with evil and unbelieving hearts, who do not naturally trust you. We are stubborn and rebellious, habitually unwilling to hear your loving, fatherly voice. We have repeatedly provoked you, despised your words, and even despised your incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, pursuing him to death. We have wandered along our own ways, rebelling against your loving plan or treating it as second best, when that plan involves pain or not getting what we want. We have pursued our desires for physical and emotional comfort, approval from others, health, wealth, success, or intimacy. We have relied on the perverseness of abusing food, drink, sexuality, or other people in order to bring us rest. We often do not take care of ourselves, or exhort one another, and we are easily hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Help our unbelief, Lord!

Dear Jesus, what a specific, staggering, atoning love you have shown us in the midst of our weakness. On our behalf, you flawlessly believed your Father. You relied perfectly on his Spirit and were willing to obey every element of his plan for your life. Your love for us and your trust in your Father caused you to be silent before your false accusers, and to endure torturous punishment for sins you did not commit. The sins for which you were dying were ours, and we are eternally, deeply grateful for this inconceivable act of love. Because you took on our sin, we are now as white as snow before the judgment seat, washed in the cleansing, healing stream of the blood drawn from your veins.

Help us, our Father, to trust you in the midst of this earthly life. We grow weary, and our strength is small, as we fight against the sin in our hearts and in the hearts of others. Help us to find our all in all in no less than Jesus Christ himself. Cause us to live so that others would see that the strength to trust you could never come from us. Help us to sing salvation songs at the midnight of our sufferings. Awaken us to trust you in the midst of this prison of sinful flesh, and remind us that our freedom has fully and finally been bought by the precious blood of Jesus. Amen.

EZEKIEL 36:25–28; ISAIAH 28:16

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

“Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion,
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:
‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”

THE WORD OF GOD (2)

HEBREWS 4:12–13

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Our God and Author of all life,

We confess our inattentiveness to your Word. Though we enjoy the benefits of the Bible's accessibility—its clear translation, abundant circulation, and unhindered distribution—we often leave it unread, unopened, untouched. When we do turn to your Word, many times we do so with mixed motives. We search for justification for our own behavior or seek grounds for criticizing others. We fail to join intellectual interest with personal humility. We salve our consciences by trusting in our faithful devotions rather than in Jesus' faithful devotion. Or we fear and tremble at the condemnations of your Word, missing its main purpose of pointing us to the atoning work of Jesus, the Word incarnate. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, though you are the Word of God himself, through whom all things were made, who dwelt with your Father in perfect glory, you became flesh and dwelt among us. Thank you for living in complete dependence upon your Father's word. You always did exactly what he told you. You were nourished by every word that comes from him, even when you were physically starved. You perfectly countered the devil's temptations, and his strategy of distorting God's Word, with the most profound and full understanding of its every word and letter. Thank you for enduring our well-deserved penalty for ignoring and distorting Scripture, so that we might enjoy the rewards of your perfect obedience to all that your Father has spoken.

Holy Spirit, thank you for inspiring those who wrote and recorded God's Word. We ask that you enlighten our eyes, that we may understand what has been written. Help us to find our only refuge in the Word incarnate. Bind us in union to Jesus, so that the piercing power of the Word may not strike us down, but rather separate our sin from us. Turn our eyes away from the false promises of this life, and fix our minds constantly on the glorious reward that is set before us because of Jesus' victory. In Jesus' name we ask, amen.

REVELATION 1:12, 14–18

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me.... The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

FAITH

HEBREWS 11:1-3; JUDE 20-25

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Commander of the universe,

You are powerful and majestic, and we marvel that you take notice of us. We, your creatures, have rebelled against your authority, yet you set your love on us and rescued us from death and hell. We praise you for choosing to pursue us and for giving us faith to believe in your Son.

Forgive us for believing that we are the captains of our own faith. Even as your redeemed people, we are easily confused and confounded. We deceive ourselves often and take credit for your good work in our lives. When our faith is strong, we think it is because of our obedience, devotion, and determination. When our faith is weak, we are frightened and full of despair, fearing that you have abandoned us because of our sin. Father, forgive us for not knowing and understanding you better. You are always for us, always working to grow us in your way and in your time. You have dealt with our sin once and for all, and in Christ we possess perfect faith and trust. Father, we are grateful that our sin cannot stop you from having your way with us.

Holy Spirit, the law of condemnation is written on our hearts and minds, and Satan easily enslaves us with it. Show us daily that your mercy is not purchased by our faithfulness, but has been bought for us by the obedience of Christ. Strengthen our faith according to your holy will, and help our rebellious souls to submit to you. Make us hungry for truth that will strengthen our wavering faith. Help us to bathe our minds in the good news of our oneness with Christ, and make that reality a strong and mighty shield that protects us in seasons of weak faith. Let us be grateful when faith is strong, for you alone are the giver and perfecter of faith. Let us not be shaken when our faith is weak and Satan terrifies our souls, for even Satan must obey you, and you hold us safely in your mighty arms. Help us not to despise ourselves and others when we struggle with doubt, but to lead each other patiently to the cross of Christ, who lifted the shield of his faith on our behalf and won our salvation and joy. In his strong name and for his glory we ask all these things, amen.

HEBREWS 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

GOD'S UNCHANGING FAITHFULNESS

JAMES 1:5-8

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Faithful and dependable Father,

We are unwise and fickle in all our ways. In Christ, we are new creations, full of noble desires to serve and obey you. In him we are full of faith and eager to delight you. But in our humanity, we are knitted to sinful flesh and double-minded in all our ways. Our motives are always mixed and tinged with selfishness and self-exaltation. We often doubt your love, your Word, your power, and your wisdom. We inherited our sinful nature from Adam, and we continue to choose to sin every day. Father, forgive us for this fallenness that will stick to us until the day we leave these sinful bodies behind. Thank you that in Christ you do not treat us as we deserve. Thank you for the hope that one day we will be only new creation and single-minded in our love and worship of you!

Lord Jesus, you never doubted the goodness of your Father or wandered from the mission that he gave to you. With single-minded faith and obedience, you suffered in our place. Though tempted and tried as we often are, you remained steadfastly the same, always devoted to rescuing inconsistent, faithless people like us. Thank you for your unchanging and unchangeable love and obedience that have become our own.

Holy Spirit, we desperately need your help in order to persevere and survive our own weakness and fickleness. Strengthen us with Christ. Give us the desire and ability to be steadfast and faithful in all our ways and to trust completely in our Savior. When you leave us to discover our wavering hearts, help us to acknowledge our foolishness and sin, and to hide in the ever-loving arms of Jesus. Help us to believe that his unchanging faithfulness is more than a match for all our unbelief and rebellion. Give us the gift of repentance, and replace our fear with wonder, love, and praise for our mighty Redeemer. In his unchanging name we pray, amen.

JAMES 1:17; HEBREWS 13:8; MALACHI 3:6

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”

JUSTICE (3)

JAMES 2:1–6, 8–9

Show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man....

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Great rescuing God,

We are weak sinners who find it easy to move toward people who make us feel good about ourselves, comfortable, and important. We continually show favoritism in our hearts, and often with our words and actions. We hate others, sometimes for no good reason, and we do evil to them, damaging their reputations with gossip and rejoicing when bad things happen to them. We know we should love even those who do evil to us, but our sinful hearts rise up, and we seek “justice” by doing them damage in return. Some of us have hurt others by lashing out, while others exact vengeance by cold, deadly withdrawal. All of us have hated, gossiped, and slandered, rehearsing the downfall of our enemies with relish. Father, forgive us. Deliver us from ourselves; we are weary of our sinful depravity. Unless you rescue us, we live at the mercy of our own vindictive flesh.

Lord Jesus, we marvel at your faith. You did only good to others, yet the people you loved condemned you to death and mocked you as you died. They rejoiced in your downfall and committed the greatest evil against you, yet you still forgave them. You trusted your Father to deliver you, even when he turned his back on you. You did not retaliate, exact vengeance, or use your great power to deliver yourself. Jesus, we thank you for giving this shining obedience to us. We know that in this life we will never get close to your perfection; thank you for earning our salvation with your spotless record and for covering us with your obedience. Thank you for your priceless death that paid the debt.

Holy Spirit, help us to survive our weakness and our failure to trust you with our deliverance. Remind us often that all our sin is paid for—past, present, and future. May this truth give us courage to see our hearts clearly, to confess our sin readily, to repent quickly, and to try hard to love those who sin against us. Restrain our tongues and bodies, and keep us from trying to deliver ourselves. Give us patience to be imperfect, and to allow others to be imperfect, as we wait for your work in your time. Give us faith to trust that you are the holy Judge who will carry out perfect vengeance and perfect forgiveness according to your perfect will. Thank you that the day will come when we will see our glorious Redeemer face to face and be like him forever. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 2:13–15

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

BEAUTY (2)

1 PETER 3:3–5

Do not let your adorning be external ... but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Loving heavenly Father,

You created a beautiful world, fashioning men and women in your glorious image to reflect your beauty and delight in your love. When Adam and Eve chose to sin, that image became marred and broken, and we confess that, like them, we choose to sin many times each day. We feel the ugliness of our fallen souls, and we try to make ourselves beautiful in many different ways. We love beautiful people, hoping that their beauty will make us feel more lovely. We compete with others in order to feel superior, and we crave the approval of important people in our lives. Some of us work very hard to make our bodies more attractive, in order to distract attention from our fallenness. Some of us are driven to academic, intellectual, artistic, and athletic excellence as we desperately seek to feel worthwhile. Father, forgive us for hiding from you in shame and for trying to weave robes of our own righteousness to cover our nakedness.

Lord Jesus, you left the glorious beauty of heaven to be born as a weak human being for us. You had no stately form or majesty to bring you honor on earth, but instead you clothed yourself in humility in order to invade our fallen world and rescue broken and ugly people like us. You cared for the sick, the weak, the poor, and the most insignificant members of society, blessedly focused on others and not on yourself. You loved with a gentle and quiet spirit, obeying your Father in every act of caring kindness. You became sin for us, taking on our twisted darkness and bearing the ugliness of the punishment that we deserve. You rose from the grave and gave us your obedience like a beautiful gift, shining and perfect in every way. Jesus, thank you.

Holy Spirit, make us beautiful in Christ. Help us to cherish the glory that we already have in our Savior until we feel no need to hide ourselves, to dress ourselves up, or to compete with one another. Persuade us that in Christ we are always captivatingly gorgeous to our Father, who looks on us and sees Jesus in our place. Grant us sweet conviction and repentance when we adorn ourselves with good works and beautiful things in order to feel better about ourselves. May the beauty of our Savior captivate us until we become more and more like him. Help us to love the unbeautiful and the unlovable with tender hearts that look beyond outward appearances to see people in need of forgiveness and love. Ravish us with your beautiful, unstoppable love until we see you face to face and are undone by your glory and perfection. In Jesus' strong and shining name we pray, amen.

ISAIAH 62:2-4

The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
for the LORD delights in you.

GOD'S GOODNESS

1 PETER 3:8-14

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For

“Whoever desires to love life
and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit;
let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.

King of love and mercy,

How different would our lives be if we remembered that you are good and that you love to give good gifts to your children? Our sinful hearts are darkened and blind to the truth. In our weakness, we forget that you are good in every way and that you delight to fill our lives with all that is best for our eternal prosperity. When we feel guilty for our sin, we hide from you, thinking that you will judge us for our crimes. We forget that Christ has paid the penalty for all our sins—past, present, and future. When we feel sad, endangered, and threatened, we panic and turn to habitual salvation strategies that seem to bring relief. Fear makes us forget all your goodness to us in the past and tells us you don't care for the crushed and brokenhearted. Our idols dazzle us with dreams of adulation, safety, prosperity, escape, comfort, and success, and we fall at their feet in worship many times each day. Father, forgive us for our treasonous betrayal. Thank you for your patience and unshakable love.

Precious Savior, you were punished for our crimes so that we could receive all the good things you earned through your perfect obedience. You forgave those who did evil against you, and you perfectly loved your Father even when he didn't rescue you from death. You trusted in his excellent goodness when you were fearfully threatened and your life was in danger. You did not try to save yourself, even though you could have. Jesus, thank you for your perseverance and for giving us your goodness as a priceless gift. Thank you that your Spirit is at work within us, transforming us into your beautiful image.

Holy Spirit, help us to remember the goodness of our Father. When you turn us over to our forgetfulness and sin, help us to see that our plans and our idols are not good at all. Teach us the emptiness and horror of our self-worship. Show us your unfailing goodness, until we are undone by your kindness and our unworthiness. Melt our stony, determined hearts with your undeserved love, until we fall at your feet with hearts full of love and wonder. May your shining goodness make us willing and able to turn away from evil more and more, and to do the good to which you call us. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

HEBREWS 5:7–9; PHILIPPIANS 2:8–10

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

FIERY TRIALS

1 PETER 4:12–13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Heavenly Father,

We live in a frightening world. In our fear, we often forget that you are powerful and loving and are devoted to your children. When we hear of wars and terrorists, we are tempted to turn to politicians to rescue us, and we panic despairingly if we feel we can't trust them. When faced with illness and mortality, we turn to doctors, diets, and frenetic health strategies in order to avoid the inevitable. When friendships fail and relationships disappoint us, we struggle with bitterness, anger, and depression because we have looked to other weak sinners to find comfort and meaning in life. When our plans don't work out, we scramble to construct self-salvation strategies in order to calm our fears and give us a measure of confidence and peace. Father, forgive us for forgetting that you love us, for stubbornly laying all our hopes and dreams at the feet of our idols, for despising you when you lovingly interfere with our self-salvation campaigns in order to rescue us from our pride and self-trust.

Thank you for your great patience with weak sinners like us, who refuse to turn to you until all else has failed. Thank you for bringing suffering into our lives and for letting our sinful hearts pour out of us, so that we can see our sin and repent before you. Thank you for causing our best plans to fail so we will learn that you are wiser, stronger, kinder, and more loving than we ever dreamed possible. Thank you for Christ, who faced fear and suffering with great dread, and yet turned to you in his moments of terror and temptation, trusting in your plan in spite of his horrible feelings. Thank you that his faithful determination to fix his eyes on you and to trust you in spite of the evil that he faced has now been credited to our account, and that you welcome us as perfect trusters. Thank you that you hold this world in your hand and promise that all will be well in the end. Thank you for the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and is at work every moment to help us grow, to comfort us, and to help us look away from our scary world and scary hearts so that we may see the beauty of our remarkable Savior.

Help us to remember your promises, to believe them, and to run to you in the midst of our fears with hearts that are bursting with gratitude and growing confidence in you alone. Amen.

MARK 8:31; 10:45; 1 PETER 5:10–11

[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

“For ... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 PETER 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Loving Savior,

You left the place of highest honor to put on our fallen flesh and walk through our broken world as one of us. You did not live in a palace and command men. Instead, you were born in a stable and you served mankind. You were not adored and revered by those around you; you were mocked and scorned and were hated by your own people. In your worst moments of grief and pain, your dearest friends stood far away because they were afraid and repulsed by your agony. Yet even in your moments of deepest anguish, you did not turn away from the one true God or give up in despair. You trusted your Father as he turned his back on you, and with dignity, confidence, and tremendous strength you used your last breath to commit your spirit into his hands. Precious Savior, thank you for your perfect goodness to the very end.

Lord, we confess that we are not like you. We often feel abandoned, even though you promised you would never leave us or forsake us. When darkness and fear hide your face from our sight, we are quick to despair, to believe lies, and to turn to other gods that we think will soothe us for a moment. We commit our spirits to our idols, finding refuge in them instead of remaining true to you in our bleakest hours. When we feel undone by our strong emotions, we escape quickly into sins that offer us false comfort and hollow love. Jesus, forgive us for being weak, disloyal betrayers. Thank you for being faithful to the very end; we desperately need your perfect obedience to cover our shame and replace our long history of sin.

Holy Spirit, help us to commit our spirits into your hands and to trust the stories of our lives to you. Remind us that our times are in your hands, not in our own or in the hands of those who despise us. Help us to believe you are wiser, stronger, and more loving than we could ever dream, and to run to you for refuge. Help us not to despair when our idols fail and our friends abandon us. Instead, remind us of our Savior—of the feelings he felt and the sorrow he knew, of the pain he willingly walked into for us. Connect us to the heart of Jesus so that we might feel honored to suffer with him and to know a small taste of what he endured for us. Strengthen us to be like him, to turn only to him, and to rest in his perfect suffering. It is more than a match for our trembling souls. In Jesus' name, amen.

LUKE 23:44–49

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

WAITING (3)

2 PETER 3:9–14; PSALM 27:14

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God.... According to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

Sovereign Lord,

We confess before you our deep impatience and frustration with life in a fallen world. We strive and do not succeed; we pray and do not see answers; we ask for holiness and find ourselves seemingly stuck in our sin. As a result, we condemn you in our hearts and our words for your slowness to fulfil your promises. We easily become discouraged and give up the fight against our darling lusts. Where are you, Lord, when the struggle for holiness seems like a losing fight?

Teach us today that you treasure our humility more than our triumphs, our dependence more than our successes, and Christ's righteousness more than our best efforts. Teach us therefore to glory in our weakness, to boast in our inability, and to lift up Jesus as our only hope in life and death. Fix our longing eyes and hearts on your sure and certain promise that one day you will finish the good work you have begun in us and will present us to yourself utterly spotless. Remind us that your timetable for new creation is neither fast nor slow, but is in keeping with your perfect wisdom.

By your Spirit, Lord, help us to grasp the enormity of the new creation you have already begun in us. May that reality drive us to live lives of holiness and godliness as we wait, courageously straining every muscle and nerve in the ongoing war against sin. Teach us to long for the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, and to call others to share this glorious vision of hope. In the meantime, as we wait, grant us your peace in our hearts. Amen.

ISAIAH 65:17–19; REVELATION 21:5–7

Behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

CONFESSING OUR SIN

1 JOHN 1:8–10

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

O Lord, our holy God,

Help us and heal us. We are stubborn, blind people who repeatedly and willfully stray away from you. Like children who don't want their parents to hold their hands while walking through a dangerous city, we will not stay near you. In our blindness, even our ability to confess our sin has been distorted. Some of us are emotionally unaffected by the fact that we are helpless sinners without your mercy, and are indifferent to the cost of our rebellions. We speak words of confession out of principle, out of duty, and out of habit, but rarely out of awareness of our need and our helpless state. Others of us are so undone by our habitual falls into sin that we can barely look up to you for help. Lost in the anxiety of our unbelief, we speak words of confession out of fear, out of desperation, and out of hopelessness, but seldom out of confidence that you love us and have invited us into the blessedness of repentance and forgiveness.

Yet Christ has acknowledged our helpless estate and has shed his own blood for our souls. This blood gives us confidence to confess our failures to you. Where we have failed to approach you with honest, sincere, and confident words, Christ stands in our place, laying before you his heart in truth and passion, with no sin or mixed motives. As he hung on the cross, shredded for our iniquities, the sorrows that were rightfully ours were given to him in fullest measure. Your steadfast love surrounds us, because your steadfast love was taken away from him. What a precious, atoning, ransoming love!

Loving Father, create in us clean hearts that are truly broken for our remaining struggles with sin, yet are utterly confident that your love is more than enough to reach the foulest sinner who trusts in you. Give us this trust in great abundance, Lord, as we continue to wrestle through this earthly journey. Help us to sing now with confidence that Jesus truly is our only boast, and, when he returns to take his ransomed children home, let us sing anew, "Hallelujah, what a Savior!" In Jesus' name, amen.

EPHESIANS 1:4–7

In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

WALKING IN DARKNESS

1 JOHN 2:8-11

It is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

God of light,

Our hearts are full of darkness, blinded by self-love. You have called us to love one another as you have loved us, but we confess before you our complete unwillingness and inability to obey this command. We are often consumed with jealousy and anger toward our brothers and sisters, hating them in our hearts. Instead of laying down our lives for others, we believe that they ought to serve us, and then we resent them when they fail to meet our expectations. Forgive us, Lord.

But amidst the darkness of our hearts we see a great Light. Lord Jesus, you are the Light of the World, come to make known your Father's grace and truth. When you left your throne to take on human flesh, you saw and loved people as they truly were, not for what you could get from them. Though tempted in every way as we are, you remained pure and undefiled, walking constantly in the light and loving us faithfully to the very end. Because of the darkness of our sin, your sinless body was hung bruised and bloodied on the cross. You set aside your glory, and entered the darkness of your Father's wrath that our sins had merited, for our salvation.

Lord, help us to walk as children of light who have been rescued from the grip of darkness. Help us to become people who want to obey because we know the light of your love. Draw us to meditate on the perfection of your Son, who never lifted his heart to an idol. Strengthen us to remember that his obedience and death have brought us to share in his glorious inheritance, and may this truth dissolve our hard hearts with gratitude. May we learn to walk in humble dependence on your truth day by day, trusting that your grace is sufficient for us to come boldly into your presence as cherished children. In Jesus' name, amen.

ISAIAH 9:2, 6; JOHN 1:4–5; 1 JOHN 2:7–8

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

In [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning.... At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

BEHOLD YOUR GOD!

1 JOHN 3:23–24

This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Merciful and gracious God,

We come before you as people who desperately need to see you with clear vision. We need to behold your majesty in order to feel our smallness; we need to gaze upon your holiness in order to feel our sinfulness; we need to see your humble self-offering at the cross in order to know how truly loved we are. Father, as we contemplate your beauty, help us to see how unlike you we really are. We transgress your wise laws, love iniquity instead of righteousness, and sin freely against your holy character. Instead of believing in the name of Jesus Christ and loving one another, we trust in ourselves and our own efforts, while despising and mocking others for their weakness. Instead of forgiving others, we cast ourselves in the role of judge, eagerly repaying evil to those who have done evil to us. You, however, have shown steadfast love to us while we still hated you; you spoke words of forgiveness to us while we used your name as a curse; you have richly blessed us with the gift of your Spirit, even while we continue to look anywhere and everywhere else for our blessings.

Lord Jesus, you showed mercy and grace in the face of undeserved evil. You were mocked and beaten for us; when sinful men reviled you, you were silent like a sheep before its slaughterer; when people cursed you, instead of bringing deserved judgment upon them, you spoke words of forgiveness and blessing in return. Thank you for living the life of unmatched goodness toward God and your neighbor that we should have lived, and for taking our place under the curse that our sin merits.

Holy Spirit, help us to live lives that abide in Christ and are thus truly a blessing to those around us. Help us to love those who are unkind and unfair to us, to speak kind words to those who mock us, and to be gentle with those who are harsh. Thank you that your declaration of blessing upon us is sure and immovable, rooted and grounded in your unchanging and eternal character. Amen.

ROMANS 10:9–10, 13

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.... For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

GOD'S LOVE

1 JOHN 4:9–10

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

O heavenly Father,

Teach us to see that if Christ has pacified your wrath and satisfied your divine justice, he can also deliver us from our sins. Remind us often that you do not desire us, as justified sons and daughters, to live in self-confidence and rest on our own strength. You have given us the Spirit of life to live within us and to cause us to want to obey you; the Spirit and his power are ours because we are joined to Christ by faith.

Father, we are often confused by the sin that remains even though your Spirit dwells in us. We do not love others well, and we cannot come close to loving as we have been loved by you in Jesus. We are relentlessly selfish people who use others for our benefit and cannot love unconditionally. We are quick to anger, envy, covetousness, and sinful thoughts—even concerning the people we love the most. We make very small progress in holiness, and each new day seems to reveal more sin in us than we saw before. Help us to understand that the Spirit of life within us speaks to the law on our behalf and cancels the power of sin and death. We long to hear the words “You are good”, but your Spirit whispers to us instead that Christ is good, and he will make us into his very likeness. We thank you, Holy Father, for giving your precious Son to die for our sin, and for crediting us with all of his glorious perfections, even as we continue to sin daily.

Holy Spirit, flood our souls with gratitude for the precious blood of Christ. When you strengthen us to obey, let us thank you for it and see your hand in it, lest we take credit for your work and grow proud. When we sin, humble us under our own depravity and make Christ beautiful to us. Give us grace to admit what is true about us, and grace to see what is true about Christ. Let us see our sin and treasure our Savior until we become brothers and sisters who forgive one another readily. Teach us to love one another freely, just as we have been cherished by our heavenly Father. May obedience to him be our greatest goal and highest honor, and gratitude our reason to strive for obedience time and time again. In the name and for the glory of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

JOHN 3:16–17

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

LOVE ONE ANOTHER (2)

1 JOHN 4:11-13

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Loving heavenly Father,

We confess to you our inability to love and forgive others as we have been loved and forgiven in Christ. We are blinded by our own filthy righteousness and often find ourselves judging others for their sins in spite of our own lengthy record of transgression. We all hate people in our hearts, whether with icy cold resentment or red-hot fury, and we daily struggle to obey your command. Instead of laying down our lives, we murder the reputations of others with our bitter thoughts and spiteful words. Father, forgive us for our mountains of sin.

Lord Jesus, we are debtors to your mercy alone. Having received such vast forgiveness from you, we should love everyone freely and fully, and yet we cannot. How we thank you for loving your enemies, your disciples, and your closest friends and family with sinless perfection. You took on our failure and became sin so that we could be credited with your flawless record of love. You took the punishment for every evil thought we will ever have against others, for our aggressive sins of commission, and for our hateful sins of omission. How can we ever thank you for such a gift of love?

Holy Spirit of the living God, help us to repent daily of our resentments and evil thoughts, to confess our sins wisely to others, and to run to your throne of grace to plead for mercy and help in our many times of great need. Give us your wisdom to know when we should speak the truth in love to others, and when love can cover many sins, for we are easily confused. Make us sons and daughters who forgive with sincerity and with the desire to restore, so that we might reflect our glorious Savior as we struggle against this unforgiving, unloving flesh. We thank you that when we see you, we will love you and all of our brothers and sisters in Christ with perfect love, forever. Until then, keep us fighting against our sinful nature and striving to obey your commands. Keep us near the cross so that we will remember that all our failures are wiped away, and all our successes come from your loving hand. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

ROMANS 5:6–11

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.⁶¹

⁶¹ Barbara R. Duguid, *Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration*, ed. Iain M. Duguid (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 164–237.

Various Prayers For Despair

I believe, Lord, but let me believe more firmly.
I hope, Lord, but let me hope more surely.
I love, Lord, but let me love more warmly.
I repent, Lord, but let me repent more deeply.

St. Anthony Mary Claret

God—who knows what clay he shaped us from and loves us more than a mother can her child—God, who does not lie, has told us that he will not repulse anyone who comes to him.

Venerable Charles de Foucauld

My heart was wilderness,
I heard your voice;
my grief divided me,
you held me close;
bitterness consumed me,
you overflowed with trust;
I longed to be with you,
you let me stay.

Janet Morley

Show us, good Lord,
the peace we should seek,
the peace we must give,
the peace we can keep,
the peace we must forego,
and the peace you have given
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Caryl Micklem

Lord, look down on me in my infirmities
and help me to bear them patiently.

St. Francis of Assisi

Cast yourself into the arms of God
and be very sure that if he wants anything of you,
he will fit you for the work
and give you strength.

St. Philip Neri

Whatever did not fit in with my plan
did lie within the plan of God.
I have an ever deeper and firmer belief
that nothing is merely an accident
when seen in the light of God,
that my whole life
down to the smallest details
has been marked out for me
in the plan of Divine Providence
and has a completely coherent meaning
in God's all-seeing eyes.
And so I am beginning to rejoice
in the light of glory
wherein this meaning
will be unveiled to me.

St. Edith Stein

Let nothing disturb you,
nothing frighten you,
all things are passing.
Patient endurance
attains all things:
one who God possesses
wants nothing,
for God alone suffices.

St. Teresa of Avila

Lord Teach Us Your Ways

Lord, our God, in your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, you have made us your children. And now we have heard your call and have gathered here together to praise you, to hear your Word, to call on you, and to lay in your hands whatever afflicts us and whatever we need. Be now among us and instruct us, so that all that is fearful and despairing, all that is vain and defiant, even all of our unbelief and superstition, may be made small; so that you can show us how great and good you are; so that our hearts may go out to one another; so that we may understand one another and help each other a little bit; so that this may be an hour of light in which we see heaven open and then a little brightness on this dark earth.

The old has passed, and all has been made new. This is true, and it is true even for us: you are certainly the Savior of us all in Jesus Christ. But only you can rightly say and show this to us. Say and show this to us—to us and to all others who pray with us on this Sunday morning. They pray for us. And we also do the same for them. Hear them and us! Amen.⁶²

Lord our God, you see and hear us. You know us, each and every one of us, better than we know ourselves. You love us, even though we truly have not deserved it. You have helped us, are helping us, and will continue to help us when again and again we are about to ruin everything by wanting to be our own help. You are the judge, but also the Savior of all poor, confused humanity. We thank you for that. We praise you for that. And we look forward on that great day to being allowed to see what we are already allowed to believe, if you make us free to do so.

Make us free to do so! Give us an honest, sincere, and active faith in you and in your truth! Give it to many people, to all people! Give it to all nations and all governments, to the rich and the poor, to the healthy and the sick, to the prisoners and all those who think they are free, to the old and the young, to the happy and the sad, to the melancholy and the carefree! There is no one who does not need to believe, and there is no one to whom it has not been promised that “even I might believe.” Say it to them and to us, that you are their gracious God and Father, and ours as well!

This we pray to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.⁶³

⁶² Karl Barth, *Fifty Prayers*, trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 51–52.

⁶³ Karl Barth, *Fifty Prayers*, trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 52.

In You Is Abundance

Lord, our God, because we now, at your behest, and in the name of your dear Son, call on you and want to hear your Word, grant that this does not happen without you, but in your holy presence, in the power of your Spirit, and to your glory! We know and confess that there is nothing good in us. But we hold to the fact that in you is abundance. We ask that you awaken within us obedience that makes us useful proclaimers and hearers of your Word; that nothing of its strength, depth, and clarity will get lost because of any fault of ours. We ask the same for all congregations that have gathered at this hour and on this day, both here and elsewhere, for the same purpose. We praise you, that we, as your people, know you and may praise you in humility, until all creation shall be revealed before you and will sing the new song in joy in your presence. Amen.

Lord, our God in Jesus Christ, your Son, you humbled yourself, that we might be inconceivably exalted. You became poor, that we might be rich. You suffered and died, and thereby gave us freedom and life. And this—such eternal mercy and loving kindness—is your power and majesty as our Creator and Lord, is the magnificence in which we praise you, and in whose light we, in the days that you still grant us, may live. For that we thank you.

And in the process of thanking you, we come all the more before you to spread out everything that, according to our understanding, is difficult, unresolved, and in our eyes needs help. We ask you in your grace to consider each of us and have mercy on each of us, who can do nothing without you, now and forevermore.

Have mercy on your church on earth in its confusion and scattering, in its weaknesses and errors!

Have mercy on your people Israel in their blindness to the salvation that indeed came first to them and that indeed first went out from them!

Have mercy on the heathen old and new, near and far, and on the godless and the idolaters, on whom your name has not yet, or not yet properly, shined!

Have mercy on the governments and the nations of the earth, on their perplexed search for peace and justice; on all the confusion in our human efforts in science, training, and education; and on all the difficulties in so many marriages and families!

Have mercy on the innumerable hungry and thirsty, the many persecuted and homeless, the sick, both in body and in spirit, both here and elsewhere, the lonely, the prisoners, and all those who are punished by other people!

Have mercy on all of us in the hour of our struggle and death! Lord, because we believe and know that you have conquered and that, with you, we also have conquered, we call on you to show us but the first steps on the embattled path to freedom. Amen.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Karl Barth, *Fifty Prayers*, trans. David Carl Stassen, First edition. (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 61–63.

Prayers For Deliverance

Lord Jesus, you came to heal our wounded and troubled hearts.
I beg you to heal the torments that cause anxiety in my heart;
I beg you, in a particular way, to heal all which are the cause of sin.
I beg you to come into my life and heal me of the psychological harms
that struck me in my early years and from the injuries that they caused throughout my
life.

Lord Jesus, you know my burdens. I lay them all on your Good Shepherd's Heart.
I beseech you & -by the merits of the great, open wounds in your heart & -to heal the
small wounds that are in mine.
Heal the pain of my memories, so that nothing that has happened to me will cause me to
remain in pain and anguish, filled with anxiety.

Heal, O Lord, all those wounds that have been the cause of all the evil that is rooted in
my life.
I want to forgive all those who have offended me.

Look to those inner sores that make me unable to forgive.
You who came to forgive the afflicted of heart, please, heal my own heart.

Heal, my Lord Jesus, those intimate wounds that cause my physical illness.
I offer you my heart. Accept it, Lord; purify it and give me the sentiments of your Divine
Heart.
Help me to be meek and humble.

Heal me, O Lord, from the pain caused by the death of my loved ones, which is
oppressing me.
Grant me to regain peace and joy in the knowledge that you are the Resurrection and the
Life.
Make me an authentic witness to your Resurrection, your victory over sin and death,
your living presence among us. Amen.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Prayers of Father Gabriele Amorth

A PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

My Lord, you are all-powerful, you are God, you are Father.
We beg you through the intercession and help of the archangels Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel
for the deliverance of our brothers and sisters who are enslaved by the evil one.
All saints of heaven, come to our aid.

From anxiety, sadness and obsessions,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From hatred, fornication, envy,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From thoughts of jealousy, rage, and death,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From every thought of suicide and abortion,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From every form of sinful sexuality,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From every division in our family and every harmful friendship,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.
From every sort of spell, malefice, witchcraft, and every form of the occult,
we beg you, free us, O Lord.

Lord, you who said, "I leave you peace, my peace I give you," grant that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, we may be liberated from every evil spell and enjoy your peace always, in the name of Christ, Our Lord. Amen.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Prayers of Father Gabriele Amorth

Orthodox Prayers For The Sick

O Lord our God, the Physician of our souls and bodies, look down upon Your servant (name) and cure him / her of all infirmities of the flesh, in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your Most Holy, Gracious, and Life-giving Spirit, always, now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Merciful Lord, visit and heal Your sick servant, (name), now lying on the bed of sickness and sorely afflicted, as You, O Savior, raised Peter's wife's mother and the man sick of the palsy who was carried on his bed: for You alone have carried the sickness and afflictions of our race, and with You nothing is impossible, for You are all-merciful.

O Lord Almighty, healer of our souls and bodies, Who puts down and raises up, Who chastises and health also; now, in Your great mercy, visit our brothers and sisters who are sick. Stretch forth Your hand that is full of healing and health, and raise them up, and cure them of their illness. Put away from them the spirit of disease and of every malady, pain and fever to which they are bound. And if they have sins and transgressions, grant to them remission and forgiveness, for You love humankind. Yes, O Lord my God, have pity on Your creation, through the compassions of Your only-begotten Son, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, with whom You are blessed, both now and ever, and to ages of ages.

Prayers For Healing From The Book Of Common Prayer

For a Sick Person

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need: We humbly beseech thee to behold, visit and relieve thy sick servant *N.* for whom our prayers are desired. Look upon *him* with the eyes of thy mercy; comfort *him* with a sense of thy goodness; preserve *him* from the temptations of the enemy; and give *him* patience under *his* affliction. In thy good time, restore *him* to health, and enable *him* to lead the residue of *his* life in thy fear, and to thy glory; and grant that finally *he* may dwell with thee in life everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Recovery from Sickness

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your servant *N.* the help of your power, that *his* sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

or this

O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with your servant *N.*, that *his* weakness may be banished and *his* strength restored; and that, *his* health being renewed, *he* may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For a Sick Child

Heavenly Father, watch with us over your child *N.*, and grant that *he* may be restored to that perfect health which it is yours alone to give; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

or this

Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you gather the lambs in your arms and carry them in your bosom: We commend to your loving care this child *N.* Relieve *his* pain, guard *him* from all danger, restore to *him* your gifts of gladness and strength, and raise *him* up to a life of service to you. Hear us, we pray, for your dear Name's sake. *Amen.*

Before an Operation

Almighty God our heavenly Father, graciously comfort your servant *N.* in *his* suffering, and bless the means made use of for *his* cure. Fill *his* heart with confidence that, though at times *he* may be afraid, *he* yet may put *his* trust in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

or this

Strengthen your servant *N.*, O God, to do what *he* has to do and bear what *he* has to bear; that, accepting your healing gifts through the skill of surgeons and nurses, *he* may be restored to usefulness in your world with a thankful heart; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Strength and Confidence

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servant *N.*, and give your power of healing to those who minister to *his* needs, that *he* may be strengthened in *his* weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Sanctification of Illness

Sanctify, O Lord, the sickness of your servant *N.*, that the sense of *his* weakness may add strength to *his* faith and seriousness to *his* repentance; and grant that *he* may live with you in everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Health of Body and Soul

May God the Father bless you, God the Son heal you, God the Holy Spirit give you strength. May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul, and bring you safely to his heavenly country; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Doctors and Nurses

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thanksgiving for a Beginning of Recovery

O Lord, your compassions never fail and your mercies are new every morning: We give you thanks for giving our brother (sister) *N.* both relief from pain and hope of health renewed. Continue in *him*, we pray, the good work you have begun; that *he*, daily increasing in bodily strength, and rejoicing in your goodness, may so order *his* life and conduct that *he* may always think and do those things that please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayers for use by a Sick Person

For Trust in God

O God, the source of all health: So fill my heart with faith in your love, that with calm expectancy I may make room for your power to possess me, and gracefully accept your healing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In Pain

Lord Jesus Christ, by your patience in suffering you hallowed earthly pain and gave us the example of obedience to your Father's will: Be near me in my time of weakness and pain; sustain me by your grace, that my strength and courage may not fail; heal me according to your will; and help me always to believe that what happens to me here is of little account if you hold me in eternal life, my Lord and my God. *Amen.*

For Sleep

O heavenly Father, you give your children sleep for the refreshing of soul and body: Grant me this gift, I pray; keep me in that perfect peace which you have promised to those whose minds are fixed on you; and give me such a sense of your presence, that in the hours of silence I may enjoy the blessed assurance of your love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

In the Morning

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. *Amen*

Akathist
to our Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ

Kontakion 1

To you, Champion Leader and Lord, the Vanquisher of Hades, I, your creature and servant, offer a song of praise, for you have delivered me from eternal death. But as you have inextinguishable loving-kindness, deliver me from all dangers that can be, that I may cry to you: Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me.

Ikos 1

Creator of angels and Lord of hosts, as of old you opened the ear and tongue of the deaf and dumb, likewise open now my perplexed mind and tongue to the praise of your most holy name that I may cry to you:

Jesus, most wonderful, angels' astonishment!
Jesus, most powerful, forefathers' deliverance!
Jesus, most sweet, Patriarch's exultation!
Jesus, most glorious, Kings' stronghold!
Jesus, most beloved, Prophets' fulfillment!
Jesus, most marvelous, martyr's strength!
Jesus, most peaceful, monk's joy!
Jesus, most gracious, priests' sweetness!
Jesus, most merciful, fasters' abstinence!
Jesus, most tender, saints' rejoicing!
Jesus, most honorable, virgins' chastity!
Jesus, everlasting, sinners' salvation!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 2

As when seeing the widow weeping bitterly, O Lord, you were moved with pity, and raised her son from the dead as he was being carried to burial, likewise have pity on me, O Lover of mankind, and raise my soul, deadened by sins, as I cry:

Alleluia!

Ikos 2

Seeking to understand the incomprehensible, Philip asked, "Lord, show us the Father," and you answered him: "Have I been so long with you and you have not yet known that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" Likewise, O Inconceivable One, with fear I cry to you:

Jesus, Eternal God!
Jesus, All-powerful King!
Jesus, Long-suffering Master!
Jesus, All-merciful Savior!
Jesus, Gracious Guardian!
Jesus, cleanse me from my sins!
Jesus, wash me from my iniquity!
Jesus, pardon my unrighteousness!
Jesus, my Hope, do not forsake me!
Jesus, my Helper, do not reject me!
Jesus, my Creator, do not forget me!
Jesus, my Shepherd, do not destroy me!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 3

You who clothed your Apostles who tarried in Jerusalem with power from on high, O Jesus, clothe me also, stripped bare of all good works, with the warmth of your Holy Spirit, and grant that with love I may sing to you:

Alleluia!

Ikos 3

In the abundance of your mercy, O Jesus, you have called publicans and sinners and infidels. Now do not despise me who am like them, but as precious myrrh accept this song:

Jesus, invincible power!
Jesus, infinite mercy!
Jesus, radiant beauty!
Jesus, unspeakable love!
Jesus, Son of the Living God!
Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner!
Jesus, hear me who was conceived in iniquity!
Jesus, cleanse me who was born in sins!
Jesus, teach me who am worthless!
Jesus, enlighten my darkness!
Jesus, purify me who am unclean!
Jesus, restore me, a prodigal!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 4

Having an interior storm of doubting thoughts, Peter was sinking. But beholding you in the flesh walking on the waters, O Jesus, he confessed you to be the true God; and receiving the hand of salvation, he cried:

Alleluia!

Ikos 4

When the blind man heard you, O Lord, passing by on the way, he cried: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And you called him and opened his eyes. Likewise enlighten the spiritual eyes of my heart with Your love as I cry to You and say:

Jesus, creator of those on high!
Jesus, redeemer of those below!
Jesus, vanquisher of the powers of hades!
Jesus, adorer of every creature!
Jesus, comforter of my soul!
Jesus, enlightener of my mind!
Jesus, gladness of my heart!
Jesus, health of my body!
Jesus, my Savior, save me!
Jesus, my Light, enlighten me!
Jesus, deliver me from all torments!
Jesus, save me despite my unworthiness!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 5

As of old You redeemed us from the curse of the law by Your Divine-flowing Blood, O Jesus, likewise rescue us from the snares in which the serpent has entangled us through the passions of the flesh, through lustful suggestions, and evil despondency, as we cry to You:

Alleluia!

Ikos 5

Having beheld the Creator in human form and knowing Him to be the master, the Hebrew children hastened to please Him with branches, crying "Hosanna!" But we offer you a song, saying:

Jesus, True God!
Jesus, Son of David!
Jesus, most glorious King!
Jesus, blameless Lamb!
Jesus, most wonderful Shepherd!
Jesus, guardian of my infancy!
Jesus, nourisher of my youth!
Jesus, praise of my old age!
Jesus, my hope at death!
Jesus, my life after death!
Jesus, my comfort at your judgment!
Jesus, my desire, do not put me to shame!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 6

In fulfillment of the words and message of the God-bearing prophets, O Jesus, You appeared on earth, and You who are uncontainable dwelt with men, and took our infirmities; being healed by your wounds, we have learned to sing:

Alleluia!

Ikos 6

The light of Your Truth shone upon the world, and demonic delusion was driven away; for the idols have fallen, O our Savior, unable to endure Your strength. But we, having received salvation, cry to You:

Jesus, the Truth, dispelling falsehood!
Jesus, the Light, above all radiance!
Jesus, the King, surpassing all in strength!
Jesus, God, constant in mercy!
Jesus, Bread of Life, fill me who am hungry!
Jesus, Source of knowledge, give me drink who am thirsty!
Jesus, Garment of gladness, clothe me the corruptible!
Jesus, Shelter of joy, cover me, the unworthy!
Jesus, Giver to those that ask, give me sorrow for my sins!
Jesus, Finder of those that seek, find my soul!
Jesus, Opener to those that knock, open my wretched heart!
Jesus, Redeemer of sinners, blot out my transgressions!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 7

Desiring to reveal the mystery hidden from the ages, you were led as a sheep to the slaughter, O Jesus, and as a lamb before its shearer. But as God You rose from the dead and ascended with glory to heaven, and along with Yourself You raised us who cry:

Alleluia!

Ikos 7

The creator has shown us a marvelous Creature, who was incarnate of a virgin without seed, rose from the tomb without breaking the seal, and entered bodily the Apostles' room when the doors were shut. Wherefore, marveling at this, we sing:

Jesus, infinite word!
Jesus, inscrutable word!
Jesus, incomprehensible power!
Jesus, inconceivable wisdom!
Jesus, inexpressible divinity!
Jesus, boundless dominion!
Jesus, invincible kingdom!
Jesus, endless sovereignty!
Jesus, supreme strength!
Jesus, power eternal!
Jesus, my Creator, have compassion on me!
Jesus, my Savior, save me!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 8

Seeing God wondrously incarnate, let us shun the vain world and set our mind on things divine; for God came down to earth that He might raise to heaven us who cry to Him:

Alleluia!

Ikos 8

The immeasurable One was below all things, yet in no way separated from things above, when He willingly suffered for our sake, and by

His death our death was put to death, and by His resurrection granted life to those who sing:

Jesus, heart's sweetness!
Jesus, body's strength!
Jesus, soul's radiance!
Jesus, mind's swiftness!
Jesus, conscience's joy!
Jesus, well known hope!
Jesus, memory before the ages!
Jesus, high praise!
Jesus, my supremely exalted glory!
Jesus, my desire, do not reject me!
Jesus, my shepherd, seek me!
Jesus, my Savior, save me!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 9

All the angelic nature of heaven glorifies unceasingly your most Holy Name, O Jesus, crying "Holy, holy, holy!" But we sinners on earth with lips of dust cry:

Alleluia!

Ikos 9

We see the most eloquent orators voiceless as fish concerning You, O Jesus our Savior; for they are at a loss to say how you are perfect man, yet remain God immutable; but we, marveling at this mystery, cry faithfully:

Jesus, God before the ages!
Jesus, King of kings!
Jesus, Master of rulers!
Jesus, Judge of the living and the dead!
Jesus, Hope of the hopeless!
Jesus, Comfort of those who mourn!
Jesus, Glory of the poor!
Jesus, do not condemn me because of my deeds!
Jesus, cleanse me according to Your mercy!
Jesus, drive from me despondency!
Jesus, enlighten the thoughts of my heart!
Jesus, grant me to remember my death!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 10

Desiring to save the world, O Sunrise of the East, You took upon yourself the sinister direction of our nature, and humbled Yourself even unto death; thus, your name is supremely exalted above every name, and from all the tribes of heaven and earth You hear: Alleluia!

Ikos 10

Eternal King, Comforter, true Christ! Cleanse us of every stain, as you cleansed the ten lepers; and heal us, as You healed the greedy

soul of Zacchaeus the Publican, that we may shout to You with compunction, crying aloud:

Jesus, treasury incorruptible!
Jesus, wealth unfailing!
Jesus, strong food!
Jesus, drink inexhaustible!
Jesus, garment of the poor!
Jesus, protection of widows!
Jesus, defender of orphans!
Jesus, help of toilers!
Jesus, guide of pilgrims!
Jesus, pilot of voyagers!
Jesus, calmer of tempests!
Jesus, God, raise me who am fallen!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 11

Though unworthy, I offer you tender songs, and like the woman of Canaan, I cry to You: "O Jesus, have mercy on me!" For it is not a daughter, but my flesh that is cruelly possessed with passions and burning with fury. So grant healing to me, who cry to You:

Alleluia!

Ikos 11

Having previously persecuted You, the Light-bestowing Lamp of those in the darkness of ignorance, Paul heeded the power of the voice of Divine enlightenment, and understood the swiftness of the soul's conversion; lighten also the light of my dark soul as I cry:

Jesus, my most mighty King!
Jesus, my most powerful God!
Jesus, my immortal Lord!
Jesus, my most glorious Creator!
Jesus, my most good Guide!
Jesus, my most compassionate Shepherd!
Jesus, my most merciful Master!
Jesus, my most gracious Savior!
Jesus, enlighten my senses darkened by passions!
Jesus, heal my body scabbed with sins!
Jesus, cleanse my mind of vain thoughts!
Jesus, keep my heart from evil desires!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 12

Grant me Your grace, O Jesus, Absolver of all debts, and receive me who am repenting, as you received Peter who denied You, and call me who am downcast, as of old You called Paul who persecuted You, and hear me as I cry to You:

Alleluia!

Ikos 12

Praising Your incarnation, we all extol You, and we believe with Thomas that You are Lord and God, sitting with the Father and coming to judge the living and the dead. Grant me then to stand on Your right hand, who now cry:

Jesus, King before the ages, have mercy on me!
Jesus, sweet scented flower, make me fragrant!
Jesus, beloved warmth, make me fervent!
Jesus, eternal temple, shelter me!
Jesus, garment of light, adorn me!
Jesus, pearl of great price, enlighten me!
Jesus, precious stone, illumine me!
Jesus, sun of righteousness, shine on me!
Jesus, Holy light, make me radiant!
Jesus, from sickness of soul and body deliver me!
Jesus, from the hands of the adversary, rescue me!
Jesus, from the unquenchable fire and other eternal torments save me!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 13

O most sweet and all-compassionate Jesus! Receive now this our small supplication, as You received the widow's two mites, and keep Your inheritance from all enemies, visible and invisible, from foreign invasion, from disease and famine, from all tribulations and mortal wounds, and rescue from the torment to come all that cry to You:

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Ikos 1

Creator of angels and Lord of hosts, as of old you opened the ear and tongue of the deaf and dumb, likewise open now my perplexed mind and tongue to the praise of your most holy name that I may cry to you:

Jesus, most wonderful, angels' astonishment!
Jesus, most powerful, forefathers' deliverance!
Jesus, most sweet, Patriarch's exultation!
Jesus, most glorious, Kings' stronghold!
Jesus, most beloved, Prophets' fulfillment!
Jesus, most marvelous, martyr's strength!
Jesus, most peaceful, monk's joy!
Jesus, most gracious, priests' sweetness!
Jesus, most merciful, fasters' abstinence!
Jesus, most tender, saints' rejoicing!
Jesus, most honorable, virgins' chastity!
Jesus, everlasting, sinners' salvation!
Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Kontakion 1

To you, Champion Leader and Lord, the Vanquisher of Hades, I, your creature and servant, offer a song of praise, for you have delivered me from eternal death. But as you have inextinguishable loving-kindness, deliver me from all dangers that can be, that I may cry to you:

Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Prayer to Our Lord Jesus Christ

To you, O Lord, the only good one who does not remember evils, I confess my sins, I fall down before you, unworthy as I am, crying out: "I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I am not worthy to look upon the height of heaven for the multitude of my iniquities." But, my Lord, O Lord, grant me tears of compunction, you who alone are good and merciful, so that with them I may beg of you to cleanse me of all sin before the end; for frightful and terrible is the place that I must pass through when I have separated from this body, and a multitude of dark and inhuman demons awaits me, and there is no one to come to my help or deliver me; wherefore, I fall down before your goodness: Do not deliver me up to those who wrong me, nor let my enemies triumph over me, O Good Lord, nor let them say: you have come into our hands and you have been delivered to us. Neither, O Lord, forget your compassions, and do not render to me as my iniquities deserve, and do not turn your countenance away from me; but, O Lord, chasten me, with mercy and compassion, and do not let my enemy rejoice over me, and bring to nothingness all his deeds. And grant me an unsullied way to you, O Good Lord, because, having sinned, I have not had recourse to any other physician, and have not stretched out my hands to a strange god. Therefore, do not reject my supplication, but hearken to me in your goodness, and strengthen my heart in your fear; and let your grace be on me, O Lord, like a fire consuming the impure thoughts within me. For You, O Lord, are the Light above all lights, the Joy above all joy, the Repose above all repose, the True Life, and the Salvation that abides to the ages of ages.

AMEN.