

Good Friday Day of Prayer and Fasting

Sorrow is inevitably a part of life this side of the new heavens and earth; but it's never the most important part. What is essential to humanity is the pervasive sense of well-being that is open to us because of the nature of God. Because his character is good, we may trust he is working good. Scripture teaches that part of his projection of goodness into our world is through the prayers of his people. So we pray.

Below are two categories of prayers and song. The first is a small compilation of psalms of lament from the book of Psalms. The second is a small compilation of general prayers by a variety of authors in a variety of styles, and a selection of song links you may find meaningful. Whether you use some, none, or all of the offerings below, thank you for joining your voice with ours before our Lord.

Psalms of Lament

Common in Scripture are Psalms of Lament: songs and poems that cry out to the Lord in times of deep distress asking for God's intervention – for deliverance from suffering, sorrow, loss, fear, enemy attacks, death, etc. Expressions of trust are also common in lament. Below is a sampling of such psalms. I've included a link to the psalm sung (the parentheses provide insight into the musical style) and the text.

Psalm 13 (Shane and Shane)

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

1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
4 lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 22 (Westminster Abbey Choir)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0TdIbrN14E>

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.
3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—

17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;

18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!

21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

24 For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!
May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.

28 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.

30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;

31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.

Psalm 46 (Shane and Shane)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKs_gQecaDY

1 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 77 (piano and vocal)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yw9Fp6XWq7w>

1 I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, and he will hear me.

2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.

3 When I remember God, I moan;
when I meditate, my spirit faints. *Selah*

4 You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I consider the days of old,
the years long ago.

6 I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;
let me meditate in my heart."

Then my spirit made a diligent search:

7 "Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?

8 Has his steadfast love forever ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all time?

9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" *Selah*

10 Then I said, "I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the Most High."

11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

12 I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds.

13 Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is great like our God?

14 You are the God who works wonders;
you have made known your might among the peoples.

15 You with your arm redeemed your people,
the children of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

16 When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
indeed, the deep trembled.

17 The clouds poured out water;
the skies gave forth thunder;
your arrows flashed on every side.

18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.

19 Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.

20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

General Prayers and Songs for Healing and Trust

35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:35-36

Lord Jesus, throughout the Bible we are told of your compassion; how when you look on the state of the world you have pity upon our harassed and helpless condition and long to heal us. Show us that compassion now, O Lord! Heal us, now, O Lord!

Our world is experiencing in a unique way just how harassed and helpless we are. Families and countries are living amid so much loss and fear. So, we call on you to show us your compassion. Make it undeniable Lord! Convict us again of your compassion and willingness to act on our behalf by halting the ravaging of our world by this virus. Step in and bring it to an end! Step in and protect us not only from the virus

itself but all the collateral damage it is creating. We know we don't deserve it; we don't pretend to have earned your mercy. But, still, we cry out for it. Not because of who we are, Lord – but because of who you are! Heal our world!

All-wise God,
Thy never-failing providence orders every event,
sweetens every fear,
reveals evil's presence lurking in seeming good,
brings real good out of seeming evil,
makes unsatisfactory what I set my heart upon,
to show me what a short-sighted creature I am,
and to teach me to live by faith upon thy blessed self.

Out of my sorrow and night
give me the name Naphtali – 'satisfied with favour'-
help me to love thee as they child,
and to walk worthy of my heavenly pedigree.

(Valley of Vision, A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions. (Banner of Truth, 2009. p. 101))

O most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we run to you for comfort. Deliver us, we ask, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; make prosper the means used to bring about cure; and grant that, realizing how frail and uncertain our life is, all may turn toward, and trust in, Jesus Christ, our Lord for peace and eternal life. Amen. *(Adapted from Anglican Book of Common Prayer)*

When will relief come, O Lord? When will things get better? Why can they not get better now? Why can't my timeline for recovery be the one you go with? Why are we in this situation? Why aren't there enough masks for medical workers, tests for the ill, cleaning supplies for those who want to help prevent the disease from spreading? Why do my kids have to fight me trying to help them? Why do we feel forced to choose between caring for people's physical vs economic health? Why if you are good and powerful is this happening?

So many questions, Lord. We have So. Many. Questions. And under it all is the biggest question of all. Will we trust you? Will we trust? We believe Lord, help our unbelief!

Mighty and merciful God,
you sent Jesus Christ to heal broken lives.
We praise you that today
you send healing in doctors and nurses,
and bless us with technology in medicine.
We claim your promises of wholeness
as we pray for those who are ill in body or mind,
who long for your healing touch.
Make the weak strong,
the sick healthy,
the broken whole,
and confirm those who serve them
as agents of your love.
Then all shall be renewed in vigor
to point to the risen Christ,
who conquered death that we might live eternally. Amen. *(Presbyterian Book of Common Prayer)*

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Phil. 4:4

Phil 4:4 tells us to rejoice in the Lord always – we are trying, Jesus, we are trying. But the situation in our world right now makes it difficult. Thank you for the grace of your reaches embraces those places where we have yet been able to rejoice. For though we may not be feeling it now, we do know that you have everything taken care of. It may not be taken care of in a way that we can understand – much as the disciples didn't understand the cross. But you are the same LORD yesterday, today and tomorrow and we've learned that a lot happens under your care that we are unaware of until later. We've learned that you are the Master of bringing life out what we considered certain death. So, while we may not understand the whys and wherefores of the pandemic, we know you are in the pandemic. Therefore, to you who are in our midst, we pray for those who are suffering. We pray for healing of those who are ill. We pray for strength for those who are ministering. We pray for endurance for all involved. Into your hands, O Lord, we commit our loved ones and our world. Amen.

Be Still My Soul (a cappella by Eclipse 6)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqKVFYD8Obc>

Christ the Solid Rock (traditional hymn with contemporary instruments and vocals)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVE-xXFDOwg>

Christ the Solid Rock (piano and congregation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkMapZB8qMk>

Forever Reign

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f3sNiYpuF4>

O Taste and See (Shane and Shane with Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYZHSmZZ1W8>