

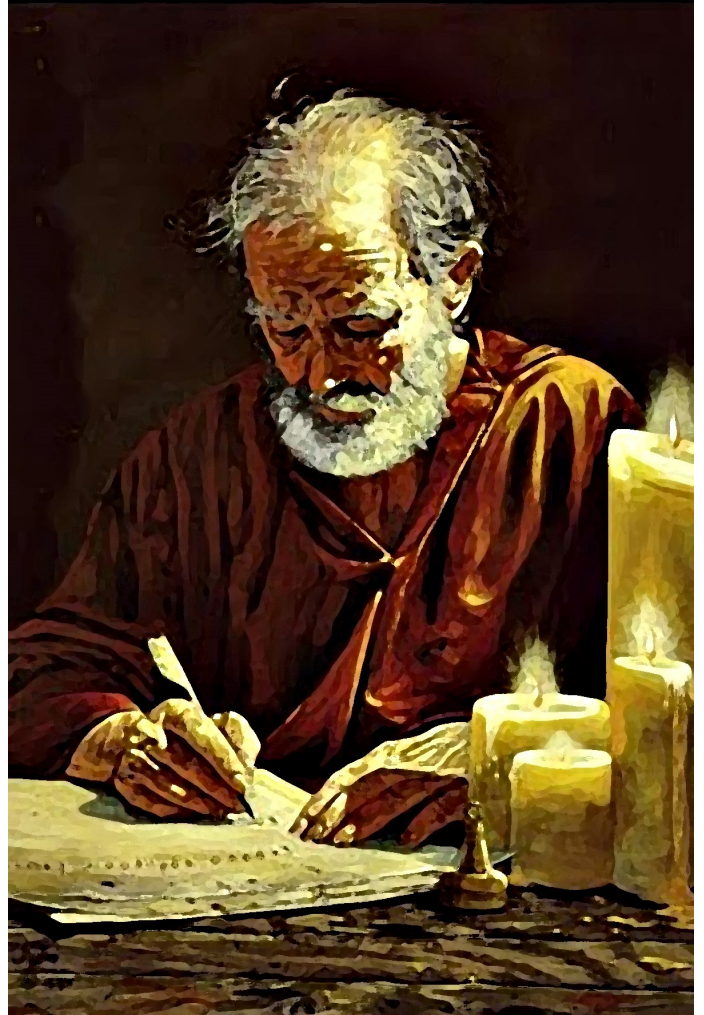
# Let us Pray

Devotional Prayers based upon the  
Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians

Redeemer Lutheran Church

April, 2020

*...I thank my God  
every time I remember you,  
In all my prayers for all of you,  
I always pray with joy...*



Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus,  
The Lord be with you.  
“And also with you.”

That brief back and forth greeting is called the Salutation. It's one of the oldest parts of the Western liturgical service. It's not just a formal, churchy way of saying hi to one another. It reminds us of the greeting Jesus gave to his stunned disciples on Easter, “Peace be with you,” and his promise before his ascension: “I will be with you always to the very end of the age.”

Have you ever wondered this about the timing of the salutation in the service: “*We’ve been worshiping for ten minutes already. Why are we greeting each other again?*” Again, there's more to it than just a greeting. As Lutheran Christians, we remind each other that the peace of Christ comes to us through God's Word and his Sacrament. That's why the salutation is often spoken before those two high points of the service. Jesus' gracious presence in the Word and Sacrament brings peace to our minds and hearts.

What follows the Salutation is the invitation before the Prayer of the Day: “Let us pray”. It might seem like just a transitional phrase. And, to be honest, I've sometimes even skipped it, taking its meaning for granted.

I don't take it for granted now. I miss praying with you. I miss worshiping with you. I miss gathering with you in God's House. This suspension of public worship hasn't been easy for any of us. Yet one of the many blessings is a deeper appreciation for what may have taken for granted—like simply standing shoulder-to-shoulder and praying to our God. Together. Obviously we are still praying these days—probably more than ever! But we're not together.

This booklet is one attempt to bridge the distance between us in our house-bound worship lives—to “let us pray” together as the Redeemer family.

The Prayer of the Day in the service, traditionally called the “Collect” [pronounced COL-lect], precedes the Scripture lessons and aims to *collect* the thoughts of the gathered worshipers in a simple prayer in anticipation of that marvelous gift—that God will soon talk to us through his Word.

In this booklet, it will be reversed. The daily prayer will be preceded by a Scripture lesson from the book of Philippians.

If you don't currently use a daily devotion, would you use this as a one-minute devotional prayer? You might use it to start the day, or perhaps to follow the evening meal. And if you already are following a particular daily devotion, I invite you to consider adding this one-minute of prayer time into another part of your day.

In the following pages, the short book of Philippians is divided into 30 days. It lines up well with April. And since this month might be the hardest month of the pandemic for America, this is a good time to pray together.

It's remarkable how timeless this letter of the Apostle Paul is. It says so much to Christians during this international health crisis. Like us, Paul was separated from the congregation that had a special place in his heart. He faced uncertainty while he was under house arrest in Rome. Yet he was confident in Christ, who was blessing those circumstances that Paul would not have chosen for himself. The Holy Spirit spoke through Paul as he wrote these words to the Christian church in Philippi. Years earlier, the great missionary founded this congregation as the first Christian church in Europe. You can read the background of Paul's first visit to Philippi in Acts 16

Thanks to Pastor Don Patterson from Holy Word Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas, and *A Reason for Hope* Ministries for the permission to use his format and many of his prayers from his daily devotional. What a joy to know that our 600-member family is hearing and praying through the same Word of God each day!

The Lord be with you...

In Christ,  
Pastor James Borgwardt

## Day 1

### Connected in Christ

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,  
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi,  
together with the overseers and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace  
and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord  
Jesus Christ".

Philippians 1:1-2

Dear Jesus,

You allowed the Apostle Paul to be confined to a house in Rome. He had lost his freedom to personally meet with his fellow believers. But Paul rejoiced that he could share your powerful Word with his beloved congregation. Thank you for preserving this letter for your whole Church, which includes me. Thank you for each precious word. The very first sentence reminds me that regardless of whether some of my church family are at their houses, and I am at mine, we are all *in Christ*. You have given me peace, Jesus, just as the Father has granted me grace through you. I marvel that the Father considers me holy through you. When I forget who I am, restore me to the joy of being a chosen and loved child of God—always connected to you and the body of Christ. Amen.

*There's no better place to be than in Christ.*

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## Day 2

### Confident in Christ

"I thank my God every time I remember you. <sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:3-6

Dear Jesus,

Lead me to always, like Paul, begin my prayers with thanksgiving. Today I especially remember my fellow believers. I am thankful for them. The joy they bring to me is more evident when I have to be apart from them for weeks at a time. Give each of them a special touch of your love so they grow in faith as they slug it out in this tough world. I am confident that you continue to carry out your gospel work in their lives as you do in mine. My faith looks back in confidence on what you've done, and my hope looks forward with confidence to what you will do. Increase in me the confidence that you are in control of all things, not only when things go according to my plan, but especially when they don't. Amen.

*Our God, who began a good work in us,  
will finish what he started.*

## Day 3

### Befriended in Christ

"It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. <sup>8</sup> God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:7-8

Dear Jesus,

Your grace is the constant in my life. Other things can change in a moment, yet your grace will always remain. I might be confined to my house, or I may be out and about in the world. Either way your grace sustains me. My fellow believers know the same truths. They view life the same way that I do. I miss sharing that deep, Christian bond with them in person. They are people I long for because they "get it" too. They know that if, by grace, you defeated our greatest enemies, you certainly won't abandon us when facing this crisis. Even though I can't be with them like I want, I know that you are with them. Protect them from the evil one and bless their lives with your prosperity in ways they never could have imagined. Amen

*Few things can replace the pure satisfaction  
a true Christian friend brings.*

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## Day 4

### Discerning in Christ

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

Philippians 1:9-11

Dear Jesus,

This is my request for my friends, my family, and myself: Give us hearts and minds that are filled with discernment, so that we not only love the right *things*, but that we love them in the right *way*. This pandemic has forced me to look at my life differently, and to live it out somewhat differently, too. With a new perspective, let me see what is best in my life, and express the fruits of faith with an eye toward your return. Yes, I look forward to when this crisis is over. But I'm reminded to look further still to that day when you will restore all things at your return. Until then, use my life and this entire situation for your glory. Amen

*Like two wings of a plane,  
love must be balanced with discernment.*

## Day 5

### Optimistic in Christ

"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear."

Philippians 1:12-14

Dear Jesus,

I want to be like Paul always looking on the bright side of every dark cloud. For him, everything revolved around whether or not you and your salvation were well known. He could even see how his difficult circumstances of house arrest and isolation advanced your gospel. I want that gospel centrality. You are always working in our lives through every circumstance. Even during our national crisis, I see fellow Christians share the gospel in fearless ways. Praise God! Give me the faith by your Spirit to show the joy and optimism that come from being a redeemed sinner who has that same gift to offer every person they meet. Amen

*In Christ, not one circumstance is non-redeemable.*

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## Day 6

### Unbothered in Christ

"It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup> The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup> But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice."

Philippians 1:15-18

Dear Jesus,

I see your name almost everywhere these days. Even famous celebrities are turning into preachers. Some may talk about you because your name sells for them. Others try to debunk your life and its meaning. I grieve at times because of the confusion they cause for the untaught. But like Paul I love the preoccupation with you that our world has. When you get press it gives people the opportunity to find you and your grace. I will rejoice and not be sad when I hear your name even when spoken by people who are wrong, because your name is the only one that saves. This way I don't need to get bothered in these crazy times. Help me to speak your name for the blessing of others today. Amen

*No one can stay neutral when they hear Jesus' name. Inwardly, they will either smile or grimace.*

## Day 7

### Victorious in Christ

"Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

<sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup> but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Philippians 1:18-23

Dear Jesus,

Since you have granted me eternal life I have two choices every day. I can either throw myself into productive living for you and others, or I can comfort myself that heaven is my real home and treasure. Either choice is good for me. One gives me purpose and the other hope. Purpose and hope are essential feelings for the health of my soul. And you gave me both! If you will soon call me to yourself through death, that will be the day of my ultimate victory. Let me see that heaven is my glorious victory, not my consolation prize. Amen

*In Christ you cannot be ruined by life or by death because he has made them both the conduit for blessing.*

*Our life/death situations are a win/win.*

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## Day 8

### Productive in Christ

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup> but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me."

Philippians 1:21-26

Dear Jesus,

It's easy to feel listless and without purpose when my job or even my normal routine has been taken from me. The satisfaction of meaningful work is a blessing from you. Give me zeal like Paul to take whatever opportunities I'm given to help others grow in their progress and joy in Christian faith. Make me live for you—to be a productive servant for my family, my church and my world. Amen

*If you're not in heaven yet, it's because God intends to bless others through your life.*

## Day 9

### Fearless in Christ

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel<sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.<sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,<sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”

Philippians 1:27-30

Dear Jesus,

I don't just want to serve you when people I respect are watching. I want to serve you when people I don't respect are watching. I want to serve you when no one but you is watching. I want to live for you no matter what circumstance surrounds me. That will mean struggle and suffering because I live for you and not for self. Protect my heart from fear so I do not make the mistakes that come from self-preservation thinking. Oh Jesus, help me suffer for the great cause of love and truth for the salvation of others. Amen

*We live with Christian integrity when we remember who we are and whose name we bear.*

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## Day 10

### Selfless in Christ

“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,<sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,<sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:1-4

Dear Jesus,

Your love didn't just change my destiny. It changed my heart. It deposited in me the force of love to drive out my selfishness and make me want the betterment of everyone around me. And there are so many who need Christ-like compassion right now. Your love makes me want to be united with others and to make their lives better. It releases me from the master of self who always forces the question, “What's in it for me?” It gives me freedom to ask, “What's in it for them?” Thank you for giving me the higher ground of love that comes from knowing you and your saving love. Amen.

*Humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less. - C.S. Lewis*

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## Day 11

### Christ Humbled

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Philippians 2:5-8

Dear Jesus,

We've seen people selfishly hoard all kinds of things for themselves—even guns—when this pandemic started. You are the opposite! You didn't even insist on holding onto your divine firepower for your own advantage, but set it aside to be a servant of others. I love how Paul makes your refusal to tout your divinity the example of how I should refuse to think of myself first. Help me to have spiritual self forgetfulness so I think of how to serve and bless instead of taking inventory of how well I am being served or blessed. Create in me the same attitude that led you to choose death on a cross out of love for me. I am ready, Lord, to serve out of love and not ambition. Amen

*“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. And to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20)*

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## Day 12

### Christ Exalted

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:9-11

Dear Father in Heaven,

You have exalted your Son to where he was before the world began. Only now there are people you have created both in this life and the next that are acknowledging him for who he is, the gracious heavenly imperial king who gave it all up to save us. He is the ruler over all things. Use our current crisis, Lord, to drop us to our knees in repentance. Lead all the world to realize, that even with our collective strength, we are not the masters of our fate. May more souls bend the knee willingly now before it's too late for them. And they'll be filled with the peace that Christ is in total control. Amen

*I know that my Redeemer lives...and reigns!*

## Day 13

### Obedient in Christ

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

Philippians 2:12-13

Dear Jesus,

Since you have made the salvation of my soul the priority of your divine will, I will make it my biggest priority too. What it must be like as the eternal God who gave himself only 33 years on earth to watch us waste our time as if we will be here forever. Help us to redeem our time. Instead of overindulging in binge watching shows on our televisions where others act out make-believe stories spun in the human mind, work within me a heart eager to see the real life drama in front of us. Lead me to action in taking my salvation seriously, and in taking others' seriously, too, Amen.

*The real life drama right in front of us is a great opportunity for us to grow internally and have a greater impact on human life.*

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## Day 14

### Brilliant in Christ

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing,<sup>15</sup> so that you may become blameless and pure, ‘children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.’ Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky<sup>16</sup> as you hold firmly to the word of life. When you do everything without grumbling and complaining, then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.”

Philippians 2:14-16

Dear Jesus,

I knew you wanted me to be joyful in all circumstances but this verse makes it very clear that my joy in living the Christian life in all circumstances is very important to make my crooked and warped generation see your beauty through me. I want my life to speak as loud as my words. But I will need your help making that happen. Fill me with your Holy Spirit so I am joyful in hope, patient in affliction and void of grumbling about the difficulties that I am facing in life. Help me to live in such a way that that my Christian mentors would smile before you when they witness the light of my faith. Amen.

*Christianity prospers in hard times. It shines against the backdrop of a dark and broken world.*

## Day 15

### Sacrificing in Christ

“But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.<sup>18</sup> So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”

Philippians 2:17-18

Dear Jesus,

Almost everyone is walking a different road than what we expected. So many of my plans have yielded to the more important goal of keeping my community safe. I was looking forward to special events that are either delayed or cancelled altogether. Remind me how Paul had travel plans that you cancelled, so that you could take him on the road to Philippi instead. And there he was beaten and imprisoned. That wasn't his chosen path! But you were guiding him to meet new people whom he taught and baptized and became close Christian friends with. And they were glad they found each other and rejoiced together through difficulty. That was your plan. Jesus, you've made me sacrifice important things through this. Lead me to new and deeper friendships—friends who can rejoice with one another in all things. Amen.

*God's road to blessings are sometimes longer than mine.*

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## Day 16

### Servants in Christ

“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.<sup>20</sup> I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.<sup>21</sup> For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup> But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.<sup>23</sup> I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

<sup>24</sup> And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.”

Philippians 2:19-24

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for the several faithful friends I have in the work of your gospel who make the spiritual needs of your people a priority in their lives. I have come to trust them implicitly with your word and your people. I know how Paul felt about Timothy because I feel that way about several people. They are a gift from you to all of us. Thank you for putting people by my side to serve the flock. Make me as dependable as Timothy along side of them for all of your saints. Amen.

*A friend in ministry  
makes carrying burdens a joyful fellowship.*

## Day 17

## Courageous in Christ

"But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. <sup>26</sup> For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. <sup>27</sup> Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. <sup>29</sup> So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, <sup>30</sup> because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me."

Philippians 2:25-30

Dear Jesus,

We thank for you for the courage of all who risk their safety to serve others. We especially honor the nurses, doctors, and others who serve on the front lines of this pandemic, battling for the life of one person after another. Have mercy on them as well as their patients who suffer from this deadly virus. Give them stamina and all they need to serve others. Protect their health and heal the disease of their patients to spare their loved ones sorrow upon sorrow. Amen.

*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15)*

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## Day 18

## Boastful in Christ

"Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. <sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence."

Philippians 3:1-4

Dear Jesus,

Help me to live in the joy and freedom of the gospel. There may not be first century Judaizers in my face, telling me that I don't measure up to your standards. But there are plenty of Facebook and other postings that can make me feel like I fall short by comparison. But my Christian life isn't about what I do, but about what you've done for me. You have freed me by your grace and motivated me with your love. So I will boast in your work and not mine. Amen.

*There is far greater joy in bragging about Jesus rather than self.*

## Day 19

## Worthy in Christ

"If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."

Philippians 3:4-7

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for freeing me from the squirrel cage wheel of sifting through all my talents and accomplishments to look for my personal worth. All the things I used to treasure are worthless compared to the gift you have granted to me because you love me. I am loved and I am saved. I will live forever way above my puny earthly life. Nothing compares to this and the hope it gives. Thank you, thank you, thank you for lifting me up and putting me on higher ground. Amen

*When we know our worth in Christ we love our worthlessness in this world.*

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## Day 20

## Righteous in Christ

"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:8-11

Dear Jesus,

If anyone in the history of the world could have appealed to you on the basis of his moral or religious goodness, it was Paul. But he doesn't. He throws his own righteousness away like it was garbage. He only wanted to stand before you on the basis of your righteousness. Same with me. When I'm tempted to think that I've been a pretty moral person lately, or that my church life is the cream of the crop, remind that you alone are my righteousness. And when my failures push my head into my chest, remind me that you are my righteousness. And I will experience the power of your resurrection, just as you did. I am at peace in you. Amen.

*On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.*



## Day 21

### Forward in Christ

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:12-14

Dear Jesus,

You have freed me from my past, even the last hour when I failed you. I no longer have to be paralyzed by guilt and shame over my sins. I am free to look ahead without concern about my past catching up with me. Instead, I am bold to love those I have hurt by being honest and apologetic when I see them. I am bold to love those who are difficult to love because I know you will change their future through my love. I can have amnesia about all things behind me and simply focus on loving you and people. What a joy-filled life this is. You really did give me life to the full. Amen

*When you want to go back and relive your mistakes,  
picture Jesus standing in the way saying,  
"Turn around and enjoy your future."*

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## Day 22

### Mentored in Christ

"All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us live up to what we have already attained. <sup>17</sup> Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do."

Philippians 3:15-17

Dear Jesus,

I know the greatest thing you did was live and die for me so that I might be saved. But that also makes you the supreme example of how I should live my life. Because he so faithfully followed in your footsteps, Paul is an example for me too. He says so here in the passage. Help me listen to, O Paul and find living examples around me who model faith, hope and love in such simple and powerful ways that I can catch the vision for how to live my life just by observing their words and actions. Thank you for upholding people like that for me. Amen.

*One good living example is worth a thousand descriptions.*

## Day 23

### Glorified in Christ

"For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

Philippians 3:18-21

Dear Jesus,

I'm in a constant battle within to not let my life be about things, places, entertainment and pleasure. These all perish with the using. They are blessings in life but like icing on a cake, their sweetness soon fades and sometimes they even put unwanted weight on my life. Give me that eternal perspective that guides me to gratefully use the blessings in my life for the betterment of others and myself so we both live by faith for heaven. Jesus, I trust that the power you'll use to raise for me a glorified body one day is the same power by which you have all things in life under your complete control. Amen

*We cannot know yet what great things God has in store for us, but we know it's got to be good if he sacrificed his own Son so that we could be there to get them.*

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## Day 24

### United in Christ

"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! <sup>2</sup> I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life."

Philippians 4:1-3

Dear Jesus,

I know that you want all of your children to get along and exude love for one another. It's easy for me when others are gentle and kind. But when they don't listen or poke me with their porcupine needles, I quickly want to get along without them rather than get along. Oh Father, help me to be of the same "I love you" mind with those that are like sandpaper in my family and church. Make me love their soul as much as I love mine. Please make me like you—forgiving and accepting those who have been close enough to hurt me. Amen

*Being of the same mind as Christians means the same love and grace, not same opinion on everything.*



## Day 25

### Rejoicing in Christ

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

<sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:4-7

Dear Jesus,

I love this passage because it gives me your divine plan for what I am to do with my stress. I can bring every problem to you and dump it off at your feet like your mother did at that the wedding of Cana in John’s gospel, chapter 2. I do not have to helplessly mull over all the scenarios of how things might go for me and my loved ones. Instead, I can give it to you and let you handle it. Then I can be stress-free, gentle and loving to all those around me. Thank you for teaching us through Paul the secret of spiritual stress management. It’s a relationship with you, our loving and powerful Savior, who listens to our needs and promises to work out the best for us. Oh Jesus, guard my heart and mind from the ravages of worry! Amen.

*God loves being God not just of the universe  
but of our vulnerable hearts.*

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## Day 26

### Noble-minded in Christ

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:8-9

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for giving me permission to take a vacation from dwelling on the negative things that affect my life. Open the eyes of my heart to ascertain the great value of so many blessings you bring my way every day. Help me to lose track of time, being amazed by the good with which you bless me. Help me see the good in my friends, family, coworkers, and even my enemies. Make me crave purity and godly beauty. Make me noble, and not petty or captivated by puny selfishness. Oh Jesus, give me the peace that comes from a heart that knows it’s safe in the good news of acceptance into your blessed family. Amen.

*God gives all his children enough goodness every day to  
keep them from the distraction of negativity.*

## Day 27

### Grateful in Christ

“I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.”

Philippians 4:10

Dear Jesus,

It’s a privilege to be loved and cared for by people you have put in my life. Too often I take them for granted and forget to tell them how much they mean to me. Today, give me a name or two of people whom you have sent to care for me. Guide my mind to creative and honest ways to show them my gratitude for their selfless concern for me. Bless each one of them with people who take care of their needs and reshape me into a caregiver for them too. Make me a giver and not a taker, a blessing and not a drag, an encourager and not a downer. Fill my life with the ability to change lives by serving them. Amen.

*Love for people is a blessing waiting for opportunity.*

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## Day 28

### Content in Christ

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:11-13

Dear Jesus,

I love that I understand this verse. It doesn’t mean that I can achieve whatever dreams I want as long as I slap your name on it. This doesn’t mean “name it and claim it”. It means I can be content in all circumstances. I need to pray this more. I need you, Lord, to be content. Paul’s circumstances confront my puny thought that I must see change around me in order to be happy. Paul was in prison and had very little when he told the Philippians here that he was content in all circumstances. With you and your promises to guide my ship wherever is best, I can be content on rough seas and calm, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in skinny. Thank you for the wisdom and strength to be at peace no matter what air I breathe. Amen.

*Finding contentment through Christ who strengthens us is  
about acceptance in the heart as much as about action of  
the body.*

## Day 29

## Generous in Christ

“Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

## Philippians 4:14-20

Dear Jesus,  
When people share with me to relieve my difficulties they are giving you a gift. In serving me they serve you. Knowing this makes it easier to receive help. It makes me gracious and encouraging. It makes me want to tell them how great their love is in your eyes. I want to give to you by giving to others too. Lead me where you want me to give. You gave to your father the greatest gift when you redeemed my soul with your death. Give me the same giving heart, trusting that you'll meet all my needs from the riches of all you own, which is everything. Amen

*God loves to watch his blessings cycle through his people,  
multiplying usefulness.*

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## Day 30

## ***Family in Christ***

“Greet all God’s people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. <sup>22</sup> All God’s people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household. <sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”

## Philippians 4:21-23

Dear Jesus,  
I can see how important the family of faith is to one another. This book of the Bible is a love letter between real Christian people whose friendships and greetings lifted each others' spirits. I'm thankful for my family of faith, too. But most of all I'm thrilled that I'm part of your family. I find my place in you. My spirit is lifted by grace. Be with the spirit of my church family and all Christians everywhere. Amen.

## Notes & Prayers

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.