

LECTIO 365

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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In order to listen and read at the same time, you need to select the day page then right-click the date and set your screen for two separate windows

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By opening a PDF version from above along with the appropriate audio selection you should be able to read and listen at the same time with two different windows open.

February 01 2021 (click for audio)

SHALOM

Today is Monday the first of February and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes, the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and Pray

Prayer of Approach

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice that God is high over and above everything today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 29.

*'The voice of the Lord twists mighty oaks
and strips the forests bare.*

In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"

The Lord rules over the floodwaters.

The Lord reigns as king forever.

The Lord gives his people strength.

The Lord blesses them with peace.'

Psalm 29: 9-11

Today, as I approach the end of this season of reflection on the beatitudes, I am focusing on one that is particularly meaningful in a divided and broken world.

'Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them... He said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

Matthew 5: 1-2,9

When I read or hear the word 'peace', I tend to think about the absence of war and conflict, or the absence of busyness and noise. However, the Hebrew word for peace is 'shalom', and it means a whole lot more than this.

Shalom is about well being and health, wholeness and completeness. Shalom means restoring life to all it is meant to be. William Barclay writes that shalom means "everything that makes for humankind's greatest good."*

*William Barclay, Daily Study Bible, vol 1, p.108

Hebrew speakers sometimes greet their friends with the phrase, 'Mah Shalomcha?' (male) or 'Mah Shalomech?' (female), which literally means 'How is your shalom?' How is your peace? How is your completeness?

Ask

I imagine Jesus standing before me now, asking me this question - 'Mah shalomcha?' How is my peace? How is my completeness? I take a few moments to talk with him about this.

Pause and pray

I allow my mind to wander for a few moments, naming people and places I know that lack peace. In faith, I bless each of them in turn, in the name of Jesus... Peace be with you. Shalom be with you. Be made whole.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself amongst the crowd listening intently as Jesus makes this revolutionary statement... and I yield to it in my life.

'Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them... He said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

Matthew 5: 1-2,9 (NIV UK)

When Jesus says that peacemakers will be called children of God, he isn't making a statement about their status, but about their character. It's not that those who make peace will become children of God, but that those who make peace are like God. Like Father, like children.

Pause and pray

Yielding prayer

Jesus, Prince of Peace, in you all things hold together (Colossians 1:17). In you all things find their place and their purpose. In you, all things are made holy and whole, they are made complete. Including me. I yield to you and I receive your blessing, your call to me to go and make peace.

Yielding promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 29 that he 'reigns as king forever, [He] gives [me] strength, [and He] blesses [me] with peace' (Psalm 29:10-11 NLT).

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.

February 02 2021 (click for audio)

Peace With Myself

Today is Tuesday the 2nd of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of approach

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice that in God, all of my needs are met today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23.

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows;
He leads me beside peaceful streams.
He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
Psalm 23:1-3 (NLT)*

Today, I am continuing to reflect on ways that Jesus demonstrated and taught about peacemaking. I want to learn more about being a peacemaker for others, but first, I need to learn more about how to receive Christ as the peacemaker in my own life.

I begin by reflecting on an event that took place shortly after Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.
Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'
John 20:19-21 (NIV UK)*

The disciples were confused about what was happening and they were afraid about what might happen to them, so they found a place to hide and they locked the doors.

In a similar way, when I am confused and afraid I often try to lock the doors of my life. I hide what I'm feeling, and I try to hide *from these* feelings. On the outside I may seem OK, but on the inside I am anything but OK.

John writes that Jesus 'came and stood among them'. Nobody let him in, and the locked doors didn't keep him out. As he looked around the room, into the fearful faces of his friends, he said these incredible words, 'peace be with you.' And then he said to them once again, 'peace be with you.'

Ask

I think about the rooms in my life, the places where I hide my confusion and the things that I am afraid of. I imagine Jesus coming and standing there too. He looks at me and speaks those powerful words of blessing, 'peace be with you!' And then once again... 'peace be with you.'

Pause and pray

I think about those who are suffering terribly with all kinds of fear and trauma today. I ask you Jesus, Prince of Peace, to come and stand beside them. Be with them. I speak blessing over them in your name... Peace be with you.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'

John 20:19-21 (NIV UK)

This scene reminds me of the ancient blessing found in the book of Numbers. As I read it now, I open my ears to hear the words, and my heart to receive them.

'The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.'

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yielding prayer

Prince of Peace, I yield myself to you today.

Keep me with you, Lord.

Make your face shine upon me and be gracious to me, Lord.

Turn your face towards me, Lord.

And give me peace, Lord.

Yielding promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 23 that, ultimately, he will '[let] me rest in green meadows; [and lead] me beside peaceful streams.' Psalm 23:2

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

February 03 2021 (click for audio)

Keeping The Peace

Today is Wednesday the 3rd of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of approach

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's extravagant blessings today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 133

*How wonderful and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in harmony!
For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil
that was poured over Aaron's head,
that ran down his beard
and onto the border of his robe.
Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon
that falls on the mountains of Zion.
And there the Lord has pronounced his blessing,
even life everlasting.
Psalm 133:1-3 (NLT)*

Today, as I continue to reflect on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am focusing on his very practical advice about resolving conflict.

*If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."
Matthew 18:15-16 (NIV UK)*

Peacemaking sometimes means sorting things out. It sometimes means asking difficult questions and challenging bad behavior. 'Admonish one another with all wisdom,' writes the Apostle Paul (Colossians 3:16).

Appeasing people to keep them happy isn't peacemaking. Accommodating bad behavior., avoiding

confrontation, putting my head in the sand in the hope that 'the unpleasantness will all go away' isn't peacemaking.

The problem is, I don't really like sorting things out. I get embarrassed. I worry about saying the wrong thing and making things worse. I wonder if it's all my problem anyway. I feel intimidated. Most of the time, I'd rather just keep the peace... but maybe it isn't really peace at all?

Ask

Holy Spirit, show me a relationship or a situation where I have been avoiding sorting something out, where I have been keeping the peace instead of making peace.

I invite you to search me. Is there a 'plank' that I need to remove from my own eye before I go and speak to the person about the speck I think is in theirs? (Matthew 7:3)

Pause and pray

While I may not have any *actual* enemies (Matthew 5:44), I can think of a few people who annoy me, people who have upset me, hurt me and offended me.

Jesus, help me to love them. And as I pray my best prayer for them now, I choose to bless them in your name... Peace be with you. Shalom be with you. Be made whole.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear your word, and my heart to yield to your will once again.

If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."
Matthew 18:15-16 (NIV UK)

The passage doesn't end there, of course. In the verses that follow, Jesus explains what to do when a person *still* doesn't listen, when a problem still isn't resolved.

Sadly, the very best efforts to make peace don't always end in peace.

The Apostle Paul acknowledges this and writes, 'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.' (Romans 12:18 NIV UK) *If* it is possible... meaning that sometimes it isn't possible to live at peace with everyone. My job, says Paul, is simply to do the best I can - to do everything that depends on me.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, Prince of Peace, I am deeply grateful that you love me as I am, but also that you don't leave me as I am. Because you love me, you admonish me, you don't let me get away with bad behavior., you discipline me... and I yield to it all again. Help me to become a little more like you in the way that I love others today.

Yielding promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says that 'as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.' Psalm (103:12)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

February 04 2021 (click for audio)

Rosa Parks

Today is Thursday the 4th of February, and for the whole of this week we are meditating on just one of the Beatitudes; 'blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God'. (Matthew 5:9 NIV UK)

As regular users of the Lectio 365 app will know, we occasionally take a break from our daily rhythm to reflect on the life of a hero of faith. Today isn't really a break at all though, because we're celebrating the birthday of a true peacemaker, Rosa Parks.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how to 'act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly' with You today (Micah 6:8).

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's strength and safety, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62...

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,
for my hope is in him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress where I will not be shaken.
My victory and honor come from God alone.
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.
O my people, trust in him at all times.
Pour out your heart to him,
for God is our refuge
Psalm 62:5-8 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

On the 1st of December 1955, Rosa Parks' polite refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, USA, sparked a protest movement that changed the United States of America.

Rosa's journey that Thursday began like many others. She finished work, boarded a bus home, and sat just behind the seating reserved for white passengers. After a few stops, the bus began to fill up. When the driver saw a white man standing, he told Rosa, and three other African Americans, to give up their seats.

Rosa refused.

The police arrived and told her that if she didn't move, she would be arrested. Rosa defied cultural, legal and social pressure by simply responding, 'You may do that.'

Inspired by Rosa's arrest, the Montgomery bus boycott began and lasted more than a year. This simple act of nonviolent protest attracted national attention and eventually resulted in changes to the laws of the land.

Sharing her memories of that famous day to the Academy of Achievement's 1995 gathering in Virginia, USA, Rosa Parks said, 'As I look back on those days, it's just like a dream and the only thing that bothered me was that we waited so long to make this protest, and to let it be known that wherever we go, all of us should be free and equal and should have all opportunities that others should have.'*
*<https://youtu.be/bqiQqM9nQ0U>

Ask

Rosa Parks stood (or in this case, remained seated) for what was right. She acted justly and she did it with humility.

Lord Jesus, what are you asking me to stand for? If an opportunity arises for me to act justly today, even if it feels like a small thing, please give me the courage to stand (or sit) for what is right.

Pause and pray

As I think about my community and my nation, who am I aware of that is experiencing oppression and discrimination today?

Lord Jesus, teach me to pray, and show me what I can do, to change this.

Pause and pray

Yield

The author Parker J. Palmer wrote: 'You and I may not have Rosa Park's particular battle to fight... But if the Rosa Parks story is to help us discern our own vocations, we must see her as the ordinary person she is. That will be difficult to do because we have made her into super-woman – and we have done it to protect ourselves. If we can keep Rosa Parks in a museum as an untouchable icon of truth, we will remain untouchable as well: we can put her up on a pedestal and praise her, world without end, never finding ourselves challenged by her life.'**

**Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation by Parker J. Palmer, Pg. 35.

Many issues of injustice seem too big for me to tackle. What difference can I make to human trafficking, the exploitation of factory workers, or the devastating effects of climate change around the world? I feel overwhelmed by all of this, paralyzed because I can't do everything, and so I do nothing.

When Rosa Parks made the brave decision to stay seated, she didn't know the domino effect that it would have. She made a simple choice, the only one available to her in that moment – she made the stand she could. And God used that choice, that simple act, to bring the civil rights movement to the attention of her nation.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I confess that I sometimes allow the enormity of injustice to paralyze me. Guide me as I read, as I shop, as I pray, as I work and as I interact with others. Show me the battles You want me to fight to see Your kingdom come and Your will be done for all people.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 62 that 'he alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.' Psalm 62:6

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

February 05 2021 (click for audio)

Peacemakers and Troublemakers

Today is Friday the 5th of February and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of approach

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's greatness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

*Please, Lord, rescue me!
Come quickly, Lord, and help me.
May those who try to destroy me
be humiliated and put to shame.
May those who take delight in my trouble
be turned back in disgrace.
Let them be horrified by their shame,
for they said, "Aha! We've got him now!"
But may all who search for you
be filled with joy and gladness in you.
May those who love your salvation
repeatedly shout, "The Lord is great!"
Psalm 40:13-16*

Today, as I continue to reflect on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am considering how this compares with the way of the world.

*[Jesus said] 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'
John 14:27 (NIV UK)*

It's no wonder that hearts are troubled and afraid, when people are so openly offensive towards one another and others are so easily offended, especially online. These days, it seems easier to use words to make trouble instead of make peace.

In his letter, James warns about the trouble that words can cause. 'The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person...' (James 3:6 NIV UK) And then the Apostle

Paul says this, 'If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.' (Galatians 5:15)

These words could be written to the world today, and perhaps particularly to the world of social media.

Ask

As I think about the day ahead, how can I use my words to be a peacemaker for others, particularly on social media? *Jesus, how can I be a safe, calming presence?*

Pause and pray

I think about celebrities and politicians, people on my Facebook feed, even members of my own family who stir up trouble, whether they mean to or not. *Lord Jesus, I bless them and I ask You to give them Your peace today*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

[Jesus said] 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'
John 14:27 (NIV UK)

The Apostle Paul introduces every one of his letters with the phrase 'grace and peace be with you...' (e.g. Romans 1:7, Galatians 1:3, Philippians 1:2) and it's always that way round. Grace then peace.

It's possible that the words just sound better in that order, but I wonder if there's more to it than that? As I receive the grace of God at the foot of the cross of Christ, only then can I truly experience peace for myself and make peace for others.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, Prince of Peace, I receive your grace and peace, and I use a line from one of David's Psalms as my prayer of yielding today. 'Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips...' (Psalm 141:3) and keep watch over my fingertips on my phone too.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the book of James that 'peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness' (James 3:18).

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.*

February 06 2021 (click for audio)

Seeing Others

Today is Saturday the 6th of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

Rejoice and Reflect

I rejoice in God's goodness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 34...

*Taste and see that the Lord is good.
Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!
Does anyone want to live a life
that is long and prosperous?
Then keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies!
Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.
Psalm 34:8,12-14 (NLT)*

Today, in my final reflection on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am considering the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus, and to his surprise, was seen *by* Jesus. 'Come down,' Jesus called to him, 'I must stay at your house today.'

*All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'
Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'
Luke 19:7-9 (NIV UK)*

Peacemaking begins with seeing people - seeing them the way that God sees them. And Luke seems to want to make this point in his retelling of this story.

Zacchaeus wanted to *see* Jesus, but he didn't expect to be *seen* by Jesus. The Pharisees *saw* that Jesus was going to Zacchaeus's house, and it made them angry. When Jesus got there, Zacchaeus demanded, '*Look! I will live differently.*' And then Jesus responded with these incredible words, '*See, this is a Son of Abraham.*'

Can you see him? He's not 'other', he's one of us.

Ask

I pause and think about my own family, my household, my local network of friends.

Loving Father, I place my hands over my eyes and I ask You to open them, really open them - help me to see what You see when I look at people today, whether that's in person or on a screen.

Pause and pray

I think about specific groups of people who seem unable to see or hear each other. Maybe people from different racial groups, cultures or political perspectives. Maybe cliques and teams where I work. Maybe even those who disagree within the Church.

Jesus, Prince of Peace, help us to see others the way You do. Raise up peacemakers in all of these situations. And show me what I can do too.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'

Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'

Luke 19:7-9 (NIV UK)

Seeing the other as 'one of us' leads towards reconciliation. And this, writes the Apostle Paul, is the ministry that Christ gave us (2 Corinthians 5:18).

This is what it means to be peacemakers. God reconciled me (and the whole cosmos!) to himself through Christ, and then God commissioned me to join in with this ministry of reconciliation. Reconcile people, reconcile the world. Bring it all back together, in Christ. Make peace. Make all things whole. Make shalom.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Wow. Thank you for reconciling me to Yourself in Christ. You did this. It wasn't me, it was You. All You. I yield to your great love and Your grand plan, and I gladly receive Your call... to be a peacemaker, an agent of reconciliation. To bring people, all things back to You, Jesus.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Colossians that 'he has reconciled [me] by Christ's physical body through death to present [me] holy in his sight...' (Colossians 1:22 NIV)

Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

Amen.

February 07 2021 (click for audio)

Rest in the Blessing – A Sabbath Prayer

It's Sunday the 7th of February and today we leave our usual P.R.A.Y rhythms behind and pray in a simpler way, on this day of rest.

'Sabbath time,' says Wayne Mueller, "assumes that if we step back and rest, we will see the wholeness in it all. We will naturally apprehend the good in how things are, taste the underlying strength, beauty, and wisdom that lives even in the difficult days, take delight in the gift and blessing of being alive.'*

* Muller, Wayne. Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives (p. 42). Random House Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

In this season as I am focusing on the Beatitudes, I choose this Sabbath day to rest in the blessings...

Today I rest in the blessing of poverty of spirit. *God, I am small and You are great. I am weak and You are powerful. I have everything I need in You. I rest knowing that it is your good pleasure to give me the kingdom*

Pause and pray

Today I rest in the blessing of mourning. *I rest in the embrace of the Father of Compassion and the God of all comfort. I know that I can 'walk all the way into my sadness'** and find Your presence there.*

** Ruth Haley Barton. Course notes the Transforming Center

Pause and pray

Today I rest in the blessing of meekness. *I don't have to fight to make my own way. Shout to make my voice heard. Jesus, You go before me. You prepare a place for me. I rest knowing that the earth is my inheritance.*

Pause and Pray

Today I rest in the blessing of hunger. *I join with the groaning of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26) and hold my longing for a world where you make all things right and all things new, and give voice to my cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' (Rev. 22:20)*

Pause and pray

Today I rest in the blessing of your mercy. *'Because of Your great love for me, You, who are rich in mercy, made me alive with Christ even when I was dead in transgressions – it is by grace I have been saved' (Ephesians 2:4-5).*

Pause and pray

Today I rest in the blessing of purity of heart. *Jesus you have my attention. You have my affection. You have my allegiance*

Pause and pray

Today I rest in the blessing of peacemaking. *Good, good Father, you are gathering us, your children together. Prince of Peace, by Your Spirit you are expanding your rule and reign in and through me.*

Pause and pray

Today I even rest in the blessing of being persecuted because of righteousness. *'I want to know Christ —yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead' Philippians 3:10-11.*

Pause and pray

I pause now and choose one of these blessings to pray over someone I know today.

Pause and pray

Sabbath blessing

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness

in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

*May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.****

*** Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info