



Following Christ in Groans and Sighs

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Rom 8:22-23)

Call to Worship

Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD,
who stand by night in the house of the LORD!

**Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the LORD!**

**May the LORD bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth!**

(Ps 134)

Let us pray.

**Sovereign Lord, our Heavenly Father,
it is our heart's desire, our deepest longing,
to know you, to love you, and to worship you.**

**It is our greatest pleasure,
our highest privilege, our chief delight,
to meet with you, the one true and living God,
and experience your grace and favour.**

**Grant us power by your Holy Spirit
to worship you now, in spirit and in truth.
Amen.**

Valley of Vision

Psalm 139. Your Hand Upon Me.

O Lord You have searched me,
and You know my ways;
You perceive all my thoughts from afar.
Your hand is upon me wherever I go;
before I can speak, You already know

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
You are there;
If I rest on the far side of the sea,
Your love hems me in
both behind and before;
You have laid Your hand upon me;
You have laid Your hand upon me.*

Where can I flee
from Your presence, O Lord?
If I sleep in the depths,
You are there.
Your day will consume
all the shadows of night;
The dark cannot hide
from Your brilliant light.

Chorus

Eric Grover, © 2001 Sov. Grace

Confession and Assurance

Hear what God's word says:

"O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether." (Ps 139:1-4)

Have mercy on us, O God

**According to your unfailing love;
According to your great compassion.**

God's word tells us:

*If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn 1:8-9)*

Let us therefore confess our sins against God,
and against our neighbour, first in silence and then aloud together.

Please kneel or be seated.

Prayer of Confession

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin! For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Against you, you only, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement. Hide your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Cast us not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit. O Lord, open our lips, and our mouths will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or we would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. Our sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Ps. 51)

Assurance of Pardon

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." (Ro 8:1-2)

Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea;
a great High Priest whose name is love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
my name is written on His heart.
I know that while in heav'n He stands
no tongue can bid me thence depart,
no tongue can bid me thence depart

When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see Him there
who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,

My sinful soul is counted free;
for God the Just is satisfied
to look on Him and pardon me,
to look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there, the risen Lamb,
my perfect, spotless righteousness,
the great unchangeable I Am,
the King of glory and of grace.
One with Himself, I cannot die;
my soul is purchased by His blood,
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Saviour and my God,
with Christ my Saviour and my God.

Bancroft, Cook, © 1997 Sov. Grace Music

God's Word

First Reading: Jer 16:14-21, "Hope!", p. 644

This is the Word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 102

Hear my prayer, O LORD; let my cry come to you! **Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call!**

For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. **My heart is struck down like grass and has withered; I forget to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh. I am like a desert owl of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places; I lie awake; I am like a lonely sparrow on the housetop.**

All the day my enemies taunt me; those who deride me use my name for a curse. **For I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink, because of your indignation and anger; for you have taken me up and thrown me down. My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass.**

But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations. **You will arise and have pity on Zion; it is the time to favour her; the appointed time has come. For your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust. Nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory. For the LORD builds up Zion; he appears in his glory; he regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer.**

Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD: **That he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die, that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD, and in Jerusalem his praise, when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.**

He has broken my strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days. **“O my God,” I say, “take me not away in the midst of my days— you whose years endure throughout all generations!”**

Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. **They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you.**

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning,
is now, and shall be forever,
age after age.**

Amen

Second Reading: Rom 8:14-30, p. 944

This is the Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: Following Christ in Groans and Sighs (David Field)

Psalm 63. O Lord My God Most Earnestly.

O LORD, my God, most earnestly
I seek your holy face,
within your house again to see
the glories of your grace.

In you my soul is satisfied,
my darkness turns to light,
and joyful meditations fill
the watches of the night.

Apart from you I long and thirst,
and naught can satisfy;
I wander in a desert land
where all the streams are dry.

Beneath the shadow of your wings
I sing my joy and praise.
Your right hand is my strong support
through troubled nights and days.

The loving-kindness of my God
is more than life to me,
so I will praise you all my days
and pray continually.

All those who seek my life will fall;
my life is in your hand.
God's king and people will rejoice;
in victory they will stand.

George. C. Stebbins (1878)

Creed (Heidelberg Catechism)

Believer, what is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death,
am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ,
who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins,
and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;
and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven
not a hair can fall from my head;
indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.**

**Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit,
He also assures me of eternal life,
and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on
to live unto Him.**

Prayers of Intercession

After each petition:

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

The Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

All baptised Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, are welcome at this table. If you do not profess faith in Christ, simply allow the bread and wine to pass by, and reflect on what is taking place.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Please join in saying the Sanctus ("The Holy", based on Isaiah 6:3)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty and eternal God,

We thank you for reassuring us at this meal

of your favour and goodness towards us, of your word for us.

We thank you that we are truly members of the body of your Son,

that we are heirs, by grace, of your eternal kingdom.

We humbly beg you, heavenly Father,

to keep us as faithful members of your church, to strengthen us by your Spirit,

to draw us together in love and unity, that we may serve through those good

works which you have prepared for us to do

through Jesus Christ our Lord, and for His glory.

Amen.

Gifts and Offerings

Gifts and offerings may be placed in the offertory box at the back of the hall. *"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9:6-7)*

Be Thou My Vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art.
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom,
and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father and I thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my battle shield,
sword for my fight;
Be thou my dignity, thou my delight,

Thou my soul's shelter
and thou my high tow'r:
Raise thou me heav'n-ward,
O Pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and thou only the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys,
O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Pub Domain (Eleanor Henrietta Hull,
Mary Elizabeth Byrne)*

Benediction

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the Name of Christ, Amen.

Notices

Please diarise and pray for the items below:

IN THE WEEK		
Mon 20 th Mar	Fellowship Group	The Lord's Prayer
Tue 21 st Mar	Food & Chat	Speak to Jenny
Wed 22 nd Mar	Fellowship Group	The Lord's Prayer
Thu 23 rd Mar	Prayer Mtg (In-person)	7:15pm. Acts 19:11-20
FURTHER AHEAD		
6 th -9 th Apr Easter Services	Thanksgiving (Thu pm) Resurrection (Sun am)	Please diarise and invite others Publicity will be available soon
27 th Apr	CAL Event	Billy McCurrie: <i>Would God forgive a terrorist?</i>