

Welcome to the Day of Prayer!

Friday April 7, 2023

As you enter the Worship Center on this Good Friday, take time to quiet your heart. Clear your mind of all busyness so you can focus on God. Relax for a minute before you start reading. Take a deep breath. Quietly fix your mind upon Jesus...

Today is Good Friday. This is the day we remember what our Lord and Savior went through to save us from our sins – the mocking, the humiliation, the scourging, the spitting, the nails and the painful separation from His Father.

In Matthew 21, the Bible tells us that five short days before this event He received a hero's welcome. All Jerusalem cheered as He rode into the city on a donkey. It was seen as a triumphal entry for Jesus, the man the people praised as their King. The celebration was premature, because the people who cheered didn't understand Christ's real triumph. Their "Hosannas" on Palm Sunday turned to shouts of "Crucify Him" on Good Friday.

But Jesus would triumph over death and sin, over Satan and hell! Jesus, the promised one, the Messiah, fought and won the greatest battle because of His great love for you. His victory, His triumph delivered you and all who believe in Him from sin and gives us new life in Him.

*This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24*

Now, it is time to pray.

ADORATION OF GOD:

Start your prayer time by telling God what you know about His character and think of Him. When we ponder and praise God first, our problems are quickly put into perspective. Praise Him for His characteristics:

- *God, You are self-existent; You created all things; every living thing owes its existence to You.*
- *God, You are infinite in time (i.e. You are eternal), and space (i.e. You are omnipresent), and in power (i.e. You are omnipotent), and in knowledge (i.e. He is omniscient).*
- *God, You are absolutely holy; there is none like You, and no wickedness or evil is a part of Your nature.*
- *God, You are personal; You aren't just a force, but a person, and You deal personally with every other person.*
- *God, You are righteous; You are the standard by which we know right and wrong, and You will judge the world one day in righteousness.*
- *God, You are immutable; You do not change or grow. You are absolutely faithful to Your Word, and You remain the same yesterday, today and forever.*

- *God, You are loving; You define and embody love; You seek our best interests regardless of the cost to You or the worthiness of the recipient.*
- *God, You are sovereign; You accomplish Your will unhindered by external influences or forces; You exercise supreme power and authority.*

CONFESSION TO GOD:

The Apostle Peter (also known as Cephas) was sure that he would follow Jesus wherever He went. We read in Matthew 26:31-35 that Jesus said His disciples would all fall away. Peter said to Jesus, *“Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!”* And all the disciples said the same.” That same night, the night before the crucifixion, Peter denied Jesus three times, and then wept bitterly because he had failed... as Jesus knew he would. Peter must have been devastated by his sin and may have thought he could no longer be of any use to his Savior. But we know because of John 21:15-22 and 1 Corinthians 15:5, that the risen Christ appeared to Peter, probably to tell him personally that his sins had been forgiven. What a blessing for Peter.

Like Peter, we recognize the truth in God’s Word, which says, *“all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23) We also know the blessing of complete forgiveness thanks to what our Savior did on the cross on that horrible and blessed day.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

Take an opportunity now to quietly whisper to God what He already knows, what is never hidden from His gaze—acknowledge all your failings and sins; tell Him all the things you have done wrong, and the things you have left undone that you should have done. Having confessed, claim His forgiveness.

THANKSGIVING TO GOD:

Good Friday: A day we commemorate Jesus's death on the cross. It is a time to remember how He suffered and died for you as a sacrifice to cover all of your sins, now and forever.

Read and ponder the meaning of these verses from Mark 15:

And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads

and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

Now is a time to be thankful:

Give thanks to God because He loved you first.

Give thanks to God the Father because He had a plan for your salvation from the beginning.

Give thanks that God loves you so much He sent His one and only Son to complete the plan.

Give thanks that you are redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Give thanks that Jesus conquered the grave and rose again to give you new life with Him forever.

Give thanks that God is faithful.

Give thanks that God is merciful.

Give thanks that God is compassionate.

Give thanks that God is abounding in steadfast love.

Give thanks because all "I have needed His hand has provided." Great is His faithfulness!

QUIETLY LISTEN:

Before you continue your prayer, spend some quiet time listening; perhaps God has something to tell you today. It's not easy to listen, so ask God to clear your mind and give you the patience to sit quietly for the next few moments. Listen. Keep quiet. Listen. Stop thinking, just listen quietly. If Satan interrupts you — and he will try — say "Go away! Jesus Loves Me!" and Satan will flee. Keep your focus on Jesus' love for you. Now...

*Be still and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth! Psalm 46:10*

SEEK GOD FOR ANSWERS TO PRAYER:

Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us:

*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving
present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Matthew 7: 7-8 commands us:

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds,
and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”*

Don't withhold anything from God. Tell Him everything that concerns you. Entrust to Him your specific requests and ask Him to work according to His great love, His limitless power, His perfect wisdom and will.

Pour your heart out to God. Tell Him all your needs, your worries, your requests. Ask Him to answer and intervene, to do so according to His great power, infinite wisdom, and incomprehensible love. Remember to pray for leaders, for the health and strength of marriages and families, for the physical and financial needs of others, for those who do not know Christ to come to trust Him as Savior, and for all of us as Redeemer's Fellowship—for our spiritual health and growth.

You might use this prayer to stimulate your own prayers:

Lord God, You are older than the stars. You are called “The Ancient of Days,” and before time began You existed forever. Long after this world is done, You still will be God.

You are alive as no other; in fact all life has its source in You. With every birth, I see the marks of your creative genius. With every death, I am reminded that my hours are in Your hands. You give breath to every living thing, and when You take it away, my days end.

You know me more than I know myself, love me more than I love myself, and order all things according to the pleasure of Your will. Every pleasant thing in my life, every answer to prayer, every provision of need, every friend I enjoy and every trouble I escape is a sign of Your steady goodness.

I confess that I tend to take for granted all You have done for me. You have been so good for so long that I expect Your gracious gifts to continue. I confess that at times I have lost sight of Your purposes for me, and have instead become enamored with my expected standard of living. I have lived for pleasures and diversions, and may have forgotten that many people around me are without forgiveness and hope; their eternal future is eclipsed by my present convenience. Forgive me.

Lord, I want to be more responsive to the promptings of Your Spirit, and less enslaved to the plans and to-do lists of the day. Help me to read, to study, to memorize, and apply Your Word in my life because I know that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man (and woman) of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy, 3:16-17) I want Your Word to fill my mind, to bubble up in my quiet moments, reminding me who You are, who I am, and the direction You intend for me to go. I want to see You work in me so yesterday's failures and frustrations have less control over me tomorrow. I want You to work through me to do those things that are lasting. And I want You to work apart from me, to see Your power and glory evidenced in ways that strike awe in my heart and remind me that You alone are God.

Thank You, Lord, for our church, for each person woven into the fabric of this fellowship. Thank You for each new person who enriches us with fresh stories of Your working. May those who are seeking You in our midst find You; may each one come to understand and believe You are the Savior, the giver of grace, the one who changes hearts and restores relationships. Thank You for each person who serves our children and our young people, who love them and care about what happens to them spiritually in the days ahead. Thank You for those who serve us in hundreds of practical ways, but who rarely are seen or thanked. God, may You whisper to them how important they are and what they do. We ask You, Father, to minister to each person who serves and/or worships at Redeemer's Fellowship according to their needs. Thank You for the generosity and faithfulness of each person who gives; may You out-give them, Lord!

I pray for our Elders and leaders. Protect them from the evil one. I pray that they would shepherd us with Your wisdom and love and that they would have joy in their tasks and callings. Use them beyond what they'd ever think possible, for Your own glory. We thank You for calling them and equipping them for this service and pray that

they would “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33) as they lead, feed, guide and guard the people of Redeemer’s in Your name.

I pray, Father, for our Pastors, staff, and volunteers who serve us here at Redeemer's. You have assembled an amazing team, and I ask You to guide them and bless them. Help them to continue to rely on You and Your Word to accomplish Your will for Your people here in Roseburg and Douglas County. Put Your banner of protection around them and their families. We are grateful for them, Father.

Father God, I pray that all those among us who are married will be faithful to You and to their spouse and love one another as You have commanded us. I pray that each husband will cherish his wife and that each wife will love her husband. I pray that good marriages will become better marriages with You at the center. I pray that those who are struggling in their relationship will turn to You and Your Word for guidance on how to love their husband and cherish their wife. I pray that the Marriage Ministry here at Redeemer’s will bless married couples as they learn new ways to follow God’s plan for their marriage. I pray also, Lord, for the widows and widowers among us. Please bless, protect and comfort them. Thank You for the hope they have in You. I pray for those who have suffered through divorce, and thank You that Your love, grace and forgiveness covers them and helps them to rebuild their lives.

Lord God, Holy God, I come to You on bended knee, with my troubled heart, asking for You to protect our children and our teachers in the schools, both here in Douglas County and all across this great country of ours. Too often evil has broken into the schools bringing death and despair. I humbly ask You to intervene and block this evil from doing more harm. I ask for authorities to seek Your will in this matter and to use the tools we have available to make the schools safe. Give peace and comfort to those who have suffered great loss or injury because of this evil. Please bless them in ways that only You can do. Thank You in Jesus name.

Thank You for local ministries to young people in Douglas County. I lift my prayers for Young Life — Jon and Kimber; and Youth for Christ — Jaco, Mary, and Carol.

Now Lord, I ask that You would provide for those who are serving You elsewhere: For Dave and Bethany and Matt and Angela as they touch Malaysians with Your love; there are also many unreached people groups in that country, and I ask You to send more workers and teams. For Jason and Kaely as they challenge college student athletes to pray for their teammates, initiate spiritual conversations, and step out by faith to see the Gospel change lives. For Sarah and her team as they train Asian leaders to reach people of the mountain areas; I pray You would prepare hearts and minds to receive the Truth. For Steve and Sharon at the international school in Papua New Guinea, that they and their students would finish the year well, and that you would prompt additional teachers to come and fill open positions.

Lord, I pray fervently for Christians around the world, our brothers and sisters in Christ, who are being persecuted for Your Name. I know that many who proclaim the Gospel are being beaten, attacked, wounded and even killed because they will not deny You.

Help me to stand with them in prayer and support their efforts to fulfill the great mission of Matthew 28. Thank You, Jesus, that even through these persecutions your Name is being glorified. I pray also for the International Justice Mission and other Christian organizations as they carry out their vital mission to rescue and restore men, women, and children who have been forced into slavery and human trafficking.

Lord, it seems like every time I open my eyes I see that dark things are happening all around our world. In the midst of all the suffering, let me always focus on Your light of hope and Truth. I know what's at the end! And I pray that I will take the windows of opportunity I have to present clearly the Good News of Jesus, the lifesaving Gospel of Truth and Salvation. May many individuals pass from death to life because of Your working through me and all the believers who worship at Redeemer's!

*Father God, I am grateful that You are a Holy God who not only reveals my need for You, but planned from the beginning to send my Savior, Your Son Jesus the Christ, to show me the way, to walk with me, and to enable me to fearlessly follow Him. **Remind me every day of the great cost Jesus paid for my salvation by willingly and obediently going to the cross. His blood, poured out for me was the last and greatest sacrifice. His blood covered and continues to cover all of my sins!** I am grateful because His death on the cross was not the end – rather it led to the greatest event in history – the Resurrection of our Lord on Easter Sunday. As the song says,*

He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

Thank you, Jesus!

PRAYING FOR OTHERS TO KNOW JESUS:

Lord Jesus, I know that there will be people attending Redeemer's and other churches this weekend, family members and friends who do not know You. They come perhaps out of tradition, obligation or curiosity, or maybe their mothers will drag them in. Whatever the case, Lord, I pray that they will hear something (Your Word) or see something (a welcoming, friendly smile) that will open their hearts to the Holy Spirit, who will challenge them and draw them into a place where they can enter into a personal saving relationship with You, their Lord and Savior. When we gather with family and friends to celebrate Your resurrection, I pray that we will remember all that You have done for us. And I pray also that those who don't know You will see our love for our Savior when they look at us. And I pray for their salvation. Thank You, Jesus.

Thank You God, for all You are, and all You have done. Thank You for Your promises and Your unfailing love. Thank You that because of Christ, You will never treat us as our sins

deserve. Thank You that You will never leave or abandon us. With hearts of gratitude, we pray confidently in Jesus' name. Amen.

DEDICATION TO GOD:

End your time of prayer with communion, remembering that Jesus died in your place to bring you to God; you are forgiven and accepted in Him! Use 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 as your communion guide:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

As you prepare to leave, ponder this thought adapted from a commentary on Mark 15:39 in *A Closer Walk New Testament, Walk Through the Bible Ministries*:

There is no greater success story, no greater victory, no greater conquest than the Resurrection. The day Christ rose from the grave was the day the apparent tragedy of His crucifixion was transformed into eternal triumph!

And as if that weren't enough, there's more. Christ's resurrection makes His success story your success story because He lives in you.

He lives in the lives of all Christians who know the truth of this verse: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

That's a success story with new chapters being written every day. One of those chapters is reserved for you. How will today's page read?

This Good Friday, as we look forward to Easter Sunday, may your heart be filled with gratitude for your Savior, and may your heart be flooded with hope. Go in peace!

NOTE: Please join us for Redeemer's Good Friday worship service this evening at 6 PM.