



CALL TO WORSHIP



The earth is the Lord's, for he made it:

Come, let us adore him.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:

Come, let us adore him.

The mercy of the Lord is everlasting:

Come, let us adore him.

Lord, open our lips.

And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.



CONFESSION



ASSURANCE



The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

— Psalm 103: 8-17



PASSING THE PEACE



GIVING



There is nothing we have that we have not received; all we have and are belong to God, bought with the blood of Jesus. To spend everything on ourselves, and to give without sacrifice is the way of the world that Our Father cannot abide. Holy Spirit, strengthen us to give generously until there are no needy among us.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



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I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.



Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.



Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.



I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

— Philippians 1:12-26



**How does God take evil and
the pain it causes and
transform it into progress?**



**If we don't own our pain,
it will own us.**



His joy is not over his imprisonment as such; that kind of morbid ‘thanking God for all things’ lies outside Paul’s own theological perspective. No, the pain is there, and some are indeed preaching Christ ‘from false motives.’

— Gordon Fee



All great spirituality is about what we do with our pain. If we do not transform our pain, we will transmit it in some form.

— Richard Rohr



Pain provokes clarity
(18b-24)



To say living is Christ is to say that for him life means Christ. Life is summed up in Christ. Life is filled up with, occupied with Christ, in the sense that everything Paul does - trusts, loves, hopes, obeys, preaches, follows, and so on - is inspired by Christ and is done for Christ. Christ and Christ alone gives inspiration, direction, meaning and purpose to existence.

— Gerald Hawthorne



**Pain opens up surprising
opportunities for progress
(12-18; 24-25)**



Paul is not, then proposing a Christian version of Stoicism. He is offering a Jesus-shaped picture of a suffering, redeeming providence, in which God's people are themselves not simply spectators, not simply beneficiaries, but active participants. They are 'called according to his purpose,' since God is even now using their groaning, at the heart of the world's pain, as the vehicle for the Spirit's own work, holding that sorrow before the Father, creating a context for the multiple works of healing and hope.



Such God-lovers are therefore shaped according to the pattern of the Son: the cruciform pattern in which God's justice & mercy, his faithfulness to covenant and to creation, are displayed before the world in tears and toil, lament and labour.

— NT Wright



COMMUNION



BENEDICTION



May the grace of Christ, which daily renews us, and the love of God, which enables us to love all, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which unites us in one body, make us eager to obey the will of God until we meet again, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.

— Based on 2 Corinthians

