

Prayer Power Tower

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Preparation

The old familiar stories are often comforting, but sometimes in our busy world, we may consider it a waste of precious time to reread what we have already read before, perhaps many times. This past week all those who participated in our “*Art in Heaven*” Vacation Bible School looked again at the wonder and greatness of God’s glorious creation. Some may have even seen this creation in a whole new light. The following words are just the beginning and closing of the first chapter of Genesis. As you prepare to encounter *your* Creator in this hour, take time to read the whole story of creation found in Genesis 1:1-2:7. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day’ and the darkness ‘night.’ And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day... Then God said, ‘Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground – everything that has life.’ And that is what happened. Then God looked over all He had made, and He saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day*” (Genesis 1:1-5; 29-31 NLT). Remember that all of creation came into being, not by some chemical reaction or cosmic coincidence, but by the word of God alone. The wonder of that alone should give us pause to praise the Lord and be in awe of His magnificence.

Scripture

It is not solely to Gentiles that Paul addresses his comments. He now speaks to Jews who are failing to act as leaders (Romans 2:17-24). As you study God’s word to us through the Apostle Paul, listen for words that speak to *your* heart and your actions.

- Since Jews have the law – the knowledge – that directs them, and they are not acting in accord with that law (2:17-18), Paul accuses them of living as hypocrites. As you take his words of warning to the Romans to heart, consider ways you may be behaving similarly.

- Saint Paul charges Jews of being “the blind leading the blind” (2:19-20; see Luke 6:39). Because of their knowledge of the Torah, these sons of Abraham should be guides to others, nurturing and leading them to follow the law. Instead, as blind guides, they direct others into danger and darkness. Pray that you may serve as a shining light to those who are in the darkness – living as a beacon to lead them to Jesus.
- To boast of knowing the law and yet not live by it is clearly to break that law (2:23-24), incurring the righteous wrath of the Law Giver. The frequency with which we know right from wrong, yet still violate the law is testimony to the fact that Paul’s words remain valid today. Ask God for the grace to see any failings of your own in this regard, and to walk by the light you have.

Adoration

It is easy to sing our praises to the Lord when we are happy and all is well. But this familiar hymn was reportedly written shortly after its author witnessed the drowning death of her husband. As you speak in prayer these words of assurance and joy, praise the Lord for both His clear blessings in your life, and also for those things that may seem to you to be not so good.

’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Louisa M. R. Stead, 1882

*’Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
And to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
And to know, “Thus says the Lord!”*

Refrain: Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er.
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

*O how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
And in simple faith to plunge me
’Neath the healing, cleansing flood!* **Refrain**

*Yes, ’tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.* **Refrain**

*I’m so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.* **Refrain**

Confession

When we think of those who have taught us wisdom and understanding across our years, we may remember most a teacher who showed genuine love and concern for us, thus living out his or her own love for wisdom and learning. The Apostle Paul condemns those who claim to be teachers, yet fail to understand their own need for learning (Romans 2:21-22). He rails against those who “*preach against stealing*” yet themselves steal. The prophet Jeremiah had similar words to speak centuries before: “*How can you say, ‘We are wise because we have the word of the LORD,’ when your teachers have twisted it by writing lies?*” (8:8 NLT) The hypocrisy of having right knowledge, yet not doing what is right, is justly condemned. Today, as we claim to be believers and followers of Jesus Christ, do we project a confusing image to those who know us? We who know the truth, the Good News, should be guides to new believers and unbelievers alike. At this time of confession, seek forgiveness for any of your own failings of wisdom and example that the Holy Spirit reveals to you.

When you’ve finished your prayers of confession, praise God for this promise to us in His eternal word:

If we say that we have fellowship with [God], and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7 NKJV)

Rejoice in the Good News: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Thanksgiving

Paul accuses some of the Jews of boasting about their relationship with God, but not acting as if they were full of the joy of that relationship. As you consider all the blessings you have been granted, give thanks for each of them.

- Give thanks that, by God’s grace, you have welcomed Him into your heart.
- Thank God for the many teachers and leaders who have blessed your life’s journey.
- Give thanks for ways that you are able to minister to others, serving as the very hands and feet of Christ.
- Thank God for the wonder and endless variety of life.
- Thank Him for the light that shines upon His word as you study and reflect upon it.
- Thank God for your prayer partners as you reap the blessings of being lifted by them in prayer each day.
- As you look to a wise and sound Teacher, rejoice that “*God is all-powerful. Who is a teacher like Him?*” (Job 36:22 NLT)

Supplication

The Bible assures us that “*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results*” (James 5:16b NLT). Intimidated by the “righteous” part? Be encouraged by the truth that God gives to all believers the very righteousness of Christ, and pray confidently, even boldly – especially for those who stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this great ministry of prayer.

Daniel Adams, Kristen Agnew, Audrey and Bill Allen, Corinne Baker, Jon Baker, Cyndy Beech, Joyce Bett, Ed and Goldie Black, Betty Bowser, Barbara and David ‘Skip’ Byers, Jan Carr, Lisa Cook, Ray and Jane Cornelius, Jennifer and John Culp, Ed Daggitt, Gina Brenda Dolan, Jane Dunmire, Ruth Dykstra Entwistle, Mickey Edmiston, Becky Elliott, Janice Good, Dorothy Gooden, Kathleen Graham, Dorothy Henderson, John and Marilyn Hicks, Joy Holland, Suzanne Howat, Gail Jablonovsky, Alberta Keener, Louise Keough, Joann Kettler, Dana Krepps, Michelle Kurtz, Donna Lewis, Jean Longnecker, Linda Longwell, Rich Madsen, Don McAninch, Myrna Jane McCamey, Greg McElroy, Colleen McGaffic, Bob and Joanne Miller, Sandy Minor, Shirley Minshull, Jane and John Moser, Alan and Terry Northcott, Sean O’Brien, Edna Orange, Phyllis Osborne, Hazel Palmer, Joan Pashley, Jeannette Patterson, Nancy Rankin, Joanne Raymer, Andrea and Tod Reiser, Rachael Renick, Megan (Illsley) Sateia, Erin Scott, John Snow, Mary Jane Surrena, Charles Timmons, Beth Utsch, Betty Walters, Toni Walters, Alice Winger, Tami Witzke and Chris Yeakle.

- Please pray for all who serve with our Stewardship Team, for their leadership in this key area of discipleship.
- Please pray for prayer partner John Snow as he serves in the care of our church building and grounds.
- Please pray for Pastors Janice and John, and for all who will be in worship this week, that God will speak to each of us through preaching.
- Please pray for the workers of the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, as they take the Gospel to unreached peoples.
- Please ask Christ to guide our session and trustees, and all of us as His church, as we weigh specific plans for a proposed elevator and new building entryway, lifting up especially our July 25 congregational meeting.
- Following our Vacation Bible School – *Art in Heaven* – please ask God to nurture seeds planted during the week in the hearts of students and teachers.
- Please pray that we will all be growing to be, more and more, “*People helping people to know Jesus Christ.*”

- Please ask the Spirit to move mightily among us this week.