

John David Walt, Jr.
Prayers

The following prayers are faithful ways of remembering God's story and inviting response from the people of God. While the prayers engage the texts explored in the prior article by Rev. David Thomas, they span the wider canonical context. In this way the prayers could serve in a worship setting to create a larger narrative framework for the sermons.

Blessed are you O Lord, the King of the Universe.

You are the giver of every good and perfect gift. In the beginning, you created the Heavens and the Earth. Into formless, ageless darkness you spoke, "Let there be light." And the unfolding of your Word brought light. From the dust of the ground you formed us, saying let us make people in our own image. And the unfolding of your Word breathed life. You made all of creation your good and perfect gift to us.

But instead of responding, we rebelled. Instead of rejecting, you redeemed. Through matriarchs and patriarchs, priests and prophets you formed a people to declare your Glory. In the fullness of time, you sent your only Son into the World as our Savior. And the unfolding of your Word birthed Love. Jesus Christ: Light of the World, Lamb of God, Living Water. Jesus Christ: Son of God and Son of Man. Jesus Christ: Holy One of Israel, Hope of the World. But instead of responding we rebelled. Instead of rejecting, you redeemed. You reconciled us to God through the shedding of your blood on the cross. And the unfolding of your Word beheld Grace and Glory. Jesus Christ: Alpha and Omega, you are the risen and exalted Lord of Heaven and Earth. You are the Father's good and perfect gift to us.

Your mercy is the very air we breathe; a gift we presume yet without which we perish. Forgive our arrogant self-reliance and restore to us the joy of our salvation. Deliver us from the sophisticated selfishness of our age and restore to us the simplicity of humility. Set us free to respond with depth of gratitude and release within us the radical generosity of the Kingdom.

How can we ever repay you Lord for all your goodness to us? All of life is a gift from you: our children, our parents, our homes, our health, in success and suffering, through pain and persecution, in life and in death. How can we ever repay you? Because you have given we want to give. Indeed, "Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small. Love so amazing so Divine, demands my soul my life my all." May our lives be conformed, Lord Jesus, to the pattern of your praise.

Come Holy Spirit and conform our lives to the pattern of your praise, joining with the ten thousands upon ten thousands of angels encircling your throne singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and wealth, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory and praise." Conform our lives to the pattern of your praise, joining with every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever. Amen."

Blessed are you O Lord, the King of the Universe.

From the rising to the setting of the sun, your name is great among the nations and greatly to be praised. Who is like you, a God who has made extravagant sacrifices for your people. You are the Provider who has become our Provision. We remember your daily gifts of manna, quail and water from the rock given to your people Israel as they wandered in the wilderness. We remember your provision of cloud by day and fire by night to guide them in the way they should go.

We recall the many ways you have provided for us. You have given us daily bread beyond our wildest imaginings. You have provided a community of people to love us into reality. You have guided our path with remarkable providence, leading us in the right way despite even our ignorance and at times resistance.

We remember the sign of the Passover, the costly offering of a perfect lamb, without spot or blemish whose blood covered the doorframe, delivering your people from cruel slavery and death. We remember Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, without spot or blemish, whose blood once and for all time delivered us from slavery to sin and death. Your love has been so boundless yet our response so measured. We confess what we have called sacrifice has cost us little. To the spotless Lamb we have often done little more than offer crippled and diseased animals.

Deliver us from cautious measuring to joy-filled freedom, from calculated giving to extravagant generosity. Make us like David who said 'I will not offer to God as a sacrifice that which cost me nothing.' Make us like Mary, who broke the jar of expensive perfume, wasting it in worship at the feet of Jesus. Transform us from timid owners who calculate with subtraction and division into bold stewards who imagine your ways of multiplication and addition. Teach us the secret of Abel's faith that we, too, might offer a better sacrifice.

We bless you Lord Jesus Christ, our Provider and our Provision. By your Spirit live within us that we might lay down our lives for others. Make our lives together to become a living sacrifice, storing up treasure in heaven, to the end that your Kingdom would come upon the Earth. Amen.



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