

TEACH US TO *Pray*

An Order of Worship for the Home

Easter Sunday
April 4, 2021

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we continue our Covid adjustments related to gathering, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Easter Greeting

Reader 1: Christ is risen!
Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!
Together: Alleluia!

The Easter Gospel, Mark 16:1-8

¹When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and

Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Invocation

Reader 1: Christ is risen!
Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!
Together: Alleluia!

Reader 1: We invite you, Father,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We ask you, Jesus,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We desire your presence, Holy Spirit,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We need you, God...
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Reader 1: Teach us to pray.
Together: Amen.

Reader 1: Christ is risen!
Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!
Together: Alleluia!

Psalm 16:1-11

¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

²I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.”

³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.

⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.

⁵The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

⁸I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.

¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.

Christian Confessing: My prayers are weak and faltering. My thoughts waver and my words wander. Some days I enter prayer oblivious to my own sin and the holiness of the God I approach. Other days, I struggle to pray on account of the guilt I feel. I fail in the action of prayer. I fail in the attitude of prayer. My struggles in prayer reflect my

struggles in all of life. I need forgiveness. I need faith. I need a Savior.

Christian Responding: Know for certain, that your God loves you. He meets your weak prayers with his strength. He meets your faltering prayers with the certainty of his promises. Jesus is your Savior, and he grants you forgiveness. He sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith. He invites you to pray to your Father in confidence. Your heavenly Father gives good gifts to his children. You are his child, and his gifts are yours.

Together: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: The Conclusion (Luther's Small Catechism)

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

What does this mean?

This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means "yes, yes, it shall be so."

Colossians 1:15–23

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and

blameless and above reproach before him, ²³if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Apostles' Creed

Reader 1: Christ is risen!

Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!

Together: Alleluia!

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.

Reader 1: Christ is risen!

Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!

Together: Alleluia!

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Reader 1: Christ is risen!

Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!

Together: Alleluia!

Message

The Body Redefined

He is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Since Ash Wednesday, we've been allowing the sequence of the Lord's Prayer to guide our themes in worship. We've walked through each of the petitions, and we finish the prayer today with the conclusion.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

It's a beautiful declaration we make at the end of our prayer, and it reminds us why we can pray with confidence. After all, we pray to the God who raises the dead to new life. We pray to the One who sent his own Son to die for our sake. We pray to the One who has told us he wants to hear our prayers, and he intends to answer our prayers. At so many levels, the resurrection of Jesus reminds us that the kingdom, power and glory truly belong to our God.

In his own way, the apostle Paul directs us toward this same confidence in the words we read earlier from Colossians. I'd like to spend a little time looking at what the apostle Paul writes in that section. It's not the Easter story – we heard that at the start of worship – but it is all about Easter.

Let me call your attention to this phrase in the middle. I'm going to call this the center, because it really is the central thought in verses 15 through 20. This phrase stands at the center of two halves of Christ's work.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. (Colossians 1:18a)

You heard that read earlier, but Paul's writing is pretty dense and we don't have handouts this morning, so let me try to explain why this is central to this section.

The verses leading up to this describe Jesus as the one who defines all things. He is the source, the beginning. He was at creation and took part in creating all things.

Every structure of authority and power derives power from him. Every system of organization was defined by him, and was organized around him.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)

That's what we read leading toward the center. This is Jesus as the one who *defines* all things. Flowing out from center, Jesus is the one who *redefines* all things.

As Paul describes this redefining role of Jesus, he connects the first half and second half through similar language. In the first half Jesus was the "firstborn of all creation." As he redefines, Jesus is the "firstborn from the dead." In our opening verse, Jesus was called the "image of the invisible God." In this second half, Jesus is the one in whom "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."

The point Paul is making is this: the work Jesus did to define all things is closely connected to his work to redefine all things. He was the source of all, and the Creator of all. Now, he is the reconciler of all.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:18-20)

This is how Paul describes the work of Jesus redefining all things. But what's interesting is the middle. What lies in between the defining and the redefining is what I want to consider for a moment.

First of all, what we expect to find goes unstated. With the move from Christ defining all truth and creating all things to Jesus redefining and reconciling we recognize that something went wrong. Yet, there's no mention of sin which is the whole reason the redefining was needed. We know the original relationships were damaged or there would be no need for reconciling. Still, this problem is not even mentioned.

What is mentioned at the center is possibly more interesting, even if it is initially hard to understand.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. (Colossians 1:18a)

This is the central thought connecting the two halves of Christ's work. He's both Creator and Redeemer. He's the source and the reconciler. He's the One who defines and the One who redefines.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. (Colossians 1:18a)

That phrase ties the two halves together. It's a link which reveals a consistency in his work. It's a bridge which maintains one reason for all of his work. This is the center.

This is the "why" behind all of Paul's dense theological phrases. Jesus is intimately connected with his people. He is connected to his people in a way not unlike how a head is connected to the body. He is also distinct from his people, but distinct in a manner like your body and head can be thought of as distinct, but certainly not disconnected.

If you can conceive of the original relationship between Creator and creation in this way, it becomes more clear how devastating the separation of sin truly is. Think about it in terms of your physical person; how much separation between head and body is too much? It's not even a question. You can't separate the two. It's not a matter of how much. Separation has to be avoided at all cost!

Yet, this is what happened. We were separated from the head. In addition, we were separated from the body. What's frightening is how often we still live as if we prefer this separation. This is the insidious side of independence. We chase after opportunities in the name of personal freedom, but in our freedom we make choices which keep us disconnected from the body of Christ.

In our culture we celebrate those individuals who "do life on their own terms," and we often desire the same for ourselves. However, it was the apostle Paul who wrote elsewhere that one body part cannot live independent from the rest of the body.

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you.’” (1 Corinthians 12:21) Body parts are not independent. The parts of the body are actually *dependent* on one another. The brothers and sisters in Christ’s church are *dependent* on one another, even as together we depend on Christ.

Having a place in the body of Christ means others can depend on you. It also means you’re willing to depend on them. Even as I say that, some of you are coming up with the parameters and limits to this dependence, because you’re not sure how much trust you’re willing to give others – or you’re not sure how much freedom you’re willing to give up.

Remember that sin separates us, but Christ unites us as his body. We do not become a unified body by our own work. It’s a task impossible on our own. It requires an authority and a power far beyond us. Thankfully, we pray to a God whose kingdom, power and glory stand forever. He raised his Son from the dead. He’s in the miracle business.

The work of reconciling is a miraculous work of mending. By placing the image of head and body at the center of Jesus’ work, Paul is reminding us that this is not a new relationship. This is a restored relationship. This is what God desired for you from the start. This is the redefining work of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Notice that Paul didn’t tell us Jesus is the head of each person. Instead, he declares Jesus is the head of the church. If Jesus is the head of an individual it’s because that individual has a place in his church.

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. (Colossians 1:18a)

This truth stands at the center of the two halves of Jesus’ work because it reveals his work more fully. From the start, Jesus was the head of all things. He was in intimate relationship with creation and with his people. When that relationship suffered, he suffered. When sin hurt us, Jesus was hurting. When the body is sick, the head knows.

Jesus died to bring healing. It was part of his redefining work. He rose to bring that healing to us. He rose to redefined your life. He died and rose for his body, the church. By his resurrection, Jesus has redefined death and life for his church.

This raises a question: Am I part of that church? I know that's not how you usually hear questions of salvation framed. You're used to hearing a question about whether or not you're connected to Jesus. That's good to ask, but why does Paul place the body of Christ at the center of this section?

When we are redefined by Christ and his work, our lives conform to his body, not the other way around. We don't connect ourselves to Christ and expect the rest of the body to work around us. By his redefining work Jesus connects us to his body, and within that body we find ourselves connected to him.

You cannot be connected to Jesus and be disconnected from his body. Everything he does – from defining to redefining – is for his body. He wants to include you in his work; his life; his body, the church.

Following these two halves of Christ's work, Paul goes on to tell us what results for us individually and collectively.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

You're reconciled to Jesus by being reconciled to his body. You have a place with Jesus because you're given a place in his body, the church. Having a place in the church is not what makes you holy, but the One who makes you holy always places you in his church.

²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23)

The Greek word for minister is the same word for servant. In that sense, this is an invitation from a fellow servant, and an invitation you get to share as a servant. It's an invitation to be redefined by Christ through his death and resurrection. It's an invitation to receive the new life of Easter and a reconciled place within his body, the church.

The resurrection of Jesus means we are redefined. We are reconciled to God, and we are reconciled to one another. We are redefined as his body.

I mentioned earlier that we are united by the God whose kingdom, power and glory stand forever. He's proven his power in raising Jesus and defeating death. We can pray in confidence and hope. We can expect reconciliation. Not only is he strong enough to bring it about; he desires to reconcile us. That's why the Lord's Prayer doesn't start with "I". Instead, Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father."

Everything Jesus does he does for his body, the church. He has a place for you in his body. He has a place for us together in his resurrection. Amen.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

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;

and 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.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own. Amen.

Blessing *(Philippians 4:4-7)*

Reader 1: The Lord is at hand;

Reader 2: do not be anxious about anything,

Reader 1: but in everything by prayer and supplication

Reader 2: with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.

Reader 1: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Reader 2: will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Together: Amen.

Reader 1: Christ is risen!

Reader 2: Christ is risen indeed!

Together: Alleluia!

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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