

## LECTIO 365

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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***In order to listen and read at the same time, you need to select the day page then right-click the date and set your screen for two separate windows***

### February 2021

<b>February 1</b>	<b>February 2</b>	<b>February 3</b>	<b>February 4</b>
<b>February 5</b>	<b>February 6</b>	<b>February 7</b>	<b>February 8</b>
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### Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

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#### [Month of February 2021](#)

By opening a PDF version from above along with the appropriate audio selection you should be able to read and listen at the same time with two different windows open.

[February 01 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

SHALOM

Today is Monday the first of February and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes, the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and Pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice that God is high over and above everything today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 29.

*'The voice of the Lord twists mighty oaks  
and strips the forests bare.  
In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"  
The Lord rules over the floodwaters.  
The Lord reigns as king forever.  
The Lord gives his people strength.  
The Lord blesses them with peace.'*

Psalm 29: 9-11

Today, as I approach the end of this season of reflection on the beatitudes, I am focusing on one that is particularly meaningful in a divided and broken world.

*'Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them... He said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'*

Matthew 5: 1-2,9

When I read or hear the word 'peace', I tend to think about the absence of war and conflict, or the absence of busyness and noise. However, the Hebrew word for peace is 'shalom', and it means a whole lot more than this.

Shalom is about well being and health, wholeness and completeness. Shalom means restoring life to all it is meant to be. William Barclay writes that shalom means "everything that makes for humankind's greatest good."\*

\*William Barclay, Daily Study Bible, vol 1, p.108

Hebrew speakers sometimes greet their friends with the phrase, 'Mah Shalomcha?' (male) or 'Mah Shalomch?' (female), which literally means 'How is your shalom?' How is your peace? How is your completeness?

### **Ask**

I imagine Jesus standing before me now, asking me this question - 'Mah shalomcha?' How is my peace? How is my completeness? I take a few moments to talk with him about this.

### **Pause and pray**

I allow my mind to wander for a few moments, naming people and places I know that lack peace. In faith, I bless each of them in turn, in the name of Jesus... Peace be with you. Shalom be with you. Be made whole.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself amongst the crowd listening intently as Jesus makes this revolutionary statement... and I yield to it in my life.

*'Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them... He said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'*

Matthew 5: 1-2,9 (NIV UK)

When Jesus says that peacemakers will be called children of God, he isn't making a statement about their status, but about their character. It's not that those who make peace will become children of God, but that those who make peace are like God. Like Father, like children.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding prayer**

Jesus, Prince of Peace, in you all things hold together (Colossians 1:17). In you all things find their place and their purpose. In you, all things are made holy and whole, they are made complete. Including me. I yield to you and I receive your blessing, your call to me to go and make peace.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 29 that he 'reigns as king forever, [He] gives [me] strength, [and He] blesses [me] with peace' (Psalm 29:10-11 NLT).

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. Amen.

## February 02 2021 (click for audio)

*Peace With Myself*

Today is Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice that in God, all of my needs are met today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23.

*The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have all that I need.  
He lets me rest in green meadows;  
He leads me beside peaceful streams.  
He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honor to his name.*

*Psalm 23:1-3 (NLT)*

Today, I am continuing to reflect on ways that Jesus demonstrated and taught about peacemaking. I want to learn more about being a peacemaker for others, but first, I need to learn more about how to receive Christ as the peacemaker in my own life.

I begin by reflecting on an event that took place shortly after Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'*  
*John 20:19-21 (NIV UK)*

The disciples were confused about what was happening and they were afraid about what might happen to them, so they found a place to hide and they locked the doors.

In a similar way, when I am confused and afraid I often try to lock the doors of my life. I hide what I'm feeling, and I try to hide *from these* feelings. On the outside I may seem OK, but on the inside I am anything but OK.

John writes that Jesus 'came and stood among them'. Nobody let him in, and the locked doors didn't keep him out. As he looked around the room, into the fearful faces of his friends, he said these incredible words, 'peace be with you.' And then he said to them once again, 'peace be with you.'

### **Ask**

I think about the rooms in my life, the places where I hide my confusion and the things that I am afraid of. I imagine Jesus coming and standing there too. He looks at me and speaks those powerful words of blessing, 'peace be with you!' And then once again... 'peace be with you.'

### **Pause and pray**

I think about those who are suffering terribly with all kinds of fear and trauma today. I ask you Jesus, Prince of Peace, to come and stand beside them. Be with them. I speak blessing over them in your name... Peace be with you.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'*

*John 20:19-21 (NIV UK)*

This scene reminds me of the ancient blessing found in the book of Numbers. As I read it now, I open my ears to hear the words, and my heart to receive them.

*'The Lord bless you and keep you;*

*The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;*

*The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.'*

*Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV UK)*

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding prayer**

*Prince of Peace, I yield myself to you today.*

*Keep me with you, Lord.*

*Make your face shine upon me and be gracious to me, Lord.*

*Turn your face towards me, Lord.*

*And give me peace, Lord.*

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 23 that, ultimately, he will '[let] me rest in green meadows; [and lead] me beside peaceful streams.' Psalm 23:2

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## February 03 2021 (click for audio)

### *Keeping The Peace*

Today is Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice in God's extravagant blessings today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 133

*How wonderful and pleasant it is  
when brothers live together in harmony!  
For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil  
that was poured over Aaron's head,  
that ran down his beard  
and onto the border of his robe.  
Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon  
that falls on the mountains of Zion.  
And there the Lord has pronounced his blessing,  
even life everlasting.*  
*Psalm 133:1-3 (NLT)*

Today, as I continue to reflect on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am focusing on his very practical advice about resolving conflict.

*If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*  
*Matthew 18:15-16 (NIV UK)*

Peacemaking sometimes means sorting things out. It sometimes means asking difficult questions and challenging bad behavior. 'Admonish one another with all wisdom,' writes the Apostle Paul (Colossians 3:16).

Appeasing people to keep them happy isn't peacemaking. Accommodating bad behavior., avoiding

confrontation, putting my head in the sand in the hope that ‘the unpleasantness will all go away’ isn’t peacemaking.

The problem is, I don’t really like sorting things out. I get embarrassed. I worry about saying the wrong thing and making things worse. I wonder if it’s all my problem anyway. I feel intimidated. Most of the time, I’d rather just keep the peace... but maybe it isn’t really peace at all?

### **Ask**

Holy Spirit, show me a relationship or a situation where I have been avoiding sorting something out, where I have been keeping the peace instead of making peace.

I invite you to search me. Is there a ‘plank’ that I need to remove from my own eye before I go and speak to the person about the speck I think is in theirs? (Matthew 7:3)

### **Pause and pray**

While I may not have any *actual* enemies (Matthew 5:44), I can think of a few people who annoy me, people who have upset me, hurt me and offended me.

Jesus, help me to love them. And as I pray my best prayer for them now, I choose to bless them in your name... Peace be with you. Shalom be with you. Be made whole.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear your word, and my heart to yield to your will once again.

*If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”*

*Matthew 18:15-16 (NIV UK)*

The passage doesn’t end there, of course. In the verses that follow, Jesus explains what to do when a person *still* doesn’t listen, when a problem still isn’t resolved.

Sadly, the very best efforts to make peace don’t always end in peace.

The Apostle Paul acknowledges this and writes, ‘If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.’ (Romans 12:18 NIV UK) *If* it is possible... meaning that sometimes it isn’t possible to live at peace with everyone. My job, says Paul, is simply to do the best I can - to do everything that depends on me.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Jesus, Prince of Peace, I am deeply grateful that you love me as I am, but also that you don’t leave me as I am. Because you love me, you admonish me, you don’t let me get away with bad behavior., you discipline me... and I yield to it all again. Help me to become a little more like you in the way that I love others today.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says that 'as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.' Psalm (103:12)

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## February 04 2021 (click for audio)

Rosa Parks

Today is Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, and for the whole of this week we are meditating on just one of the Beatitudes; 'blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God'. (Matthew 5:9 NIV UK)

As regular users of the Lectio 365 app will know, we occasionally take a break from our daily rhythm to reflect on the life of a hero of faith. Today isn't really a break at all though, because we're celebrating the birthday of a true peacemaker, Rosa Parks.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how to 'act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly' with You today (Micah 6:8).*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice in God's strength and safety, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62...

*Let all that I am wait quietly before God,  
for my hope is in him.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress where I will not be shaken.  
My victory and honor come from God alone.  
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.  
O my people, trust in him at all times.  
Pour out your heart to him,  
for God is our refuge  
Psalm 62:5-8 (NLT)*

### **Pause and pray**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1955, Rosa Parks' polite refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, USA, sparked a protest movement that changed the United States of America.

Rosa's journey that Thursday began like many others. She finished work, boarded a bus home, and sat just behind the seating reserved for white passengers. After a few stops, the bus began to fill up. When the driver saw a white man standing, he told Rosa, and three other African Americans, to give up their seats.

Rosa refused.

The police arrived and told her that if she didn't move, she would be arrested. Rosa defied cultural, legal and social pressure by simply responding, 'You may do that.'

Inspired by Rosa's arrest, the Montgomery bus boycott began and lasted more than a year. This simple act of nonviolent protest attracted national attention and eventually resulted in changes to the laws of the land.

Sharing her memories of that famous day to the Academy of Achievement's 1995 gathering in Virginia, USA, Rosa Parks said, 'As I look back on those days, it's just like a dream and the only thing that bothered me was that we waited so long to make this protest, and to let it be known that wherever we go, all of us should be free and equal and should have all opportunities that others should have.'\*  
[\\*https://youtu.be/bqjQqM9nQOU](https://youtu.be/bqjQqM9nQOU)

### **Ask**

Rosa Parks stood (or in this case, remained seated) for what was right. She acted justly and she did it with humility.

*Lord Jesus, what are you asking me to stand for? If an opportunity arises for me to act justly today, even if it feels like a small thing, please give me the courage to stand (or sit) for what is right.*

### **Pause and pray**

As I think about my community and my nation, who am I aware of that is experiencing oppression and discrimination today?

*Lord Jesus, teach me to pray, and show me what I can do, to change this.*

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

The author Parker J. Palmer wrote: 'You and I may not have Rosa Park's particular battle to fight... But if the Rosa Parks story is to help us discern our own vocations, we must see her as the ordinary person she is. That will be difficult to do because we have made her into super-woman – and we have done it to protect ourselves. If we can keep Rosa Parks in a museum as an untouchable icon of truth, we will remain untouchable as well: we can put her up on a pedestal and praise her, world without end, never finding ourselves challenged by her life.'\*\*

\*\*Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation by Parker J. Palmer, Pg. 35.

Many issues of injustice seem too big for me to tackle. What difference can I make to human trafficking, the exploitation of factory workers, or the devastating effects of climate change around the world? I feel overwhelmed by all of this, paralyzed because I can't do everything, and so I do nothing.

When Rosa Parks made the brave decision to stay seated, she didn't know the domino effect that it would have. She made a simple choice, the only one available to her in that moment – she made the stand she could. And God used that choice, that simple act, to bring the civil rights movement to the attention of her nation.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

*Lord, I confess that I sometimes allow the enormity of injustice to paralyze me. Guide me as I read, as I shop, as I pray, as I work and as I interact with others. Show me the battles You want me to fight to see Your kingdom come and Your will be done for all people.*

## **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 62 that 'he alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.' Psalm 62:6

## ***Closing Prayer***

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.*

## February 05 2021 (click for audio)

*Peacemakers and Troublemakers*

Today is Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> of February and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice in God's greatness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

*Please, Lord, rescue me!  
Come quickly, Lord, and help me.  
May those who try to destroy me  
be humiliated and put to shame.  
May those who take delight in my trouble  
be turned back in disgrace.  
Let them be horrified by their shame,  
for they said, "Aha! We've got him now!"  
But may all who search for you  
be filled with joy and gladness in you.  
May those who love your salvation  
repeatedly shout, "The Lord is great!"  
Psalm 40:13-16*

Today, as I continue to reflect on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am considering how this compares with the way of the world.

*[Jesus said] 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'*  
*John 14:27 (NIV UK)*

It's no wonder that hearts are troubled and afraid, when people are so openly offensive towards one another and others are so easily offended, especially online. These days, it seems easier to use words to make trouble instead of make peace.

In his letter, James warns about the trouble that words can cause. 'The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person...' (James 3:6 NIV UK) And then the Apostle

Paul says this, 'If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.' (Galatians 5:15)

These words could be written to the world today, and perhaps particularly to the world of social media.

### **Ask**

As I think about the day ahead, how can I use my words to be a peacemaker for others, particularly on social media? *Jesus, how can I be a safe, calming presence?*

### **Pause and pray**

I think about celebrities and politicians, people on my Facebook feed, even members of my own family who stir up trouble, whether they mean to or not. *Lord Jesus, I bless them and I ask You to give them Your peace today*

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*[Jesus said] 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'*  
*John 14:27 (NIV UK)*

The Apostle Paul introduces every one of his letters with the phrase 'grace and peace be with you...' (e.g. Romans 1:7, Galatians 1:3, Philippians 1:2) and it's always that way round. Grace then peace.

It's possible that the words just sound better in that order, but I wonder if there's more to it than that? As I receive the grace of God at the foot of the cross of Christ, only then can I truly experience peace for myself and make peace for others.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, I receive your grace and peace, and I use a line from one of David's Psalms as my prayer of yielding today. 'Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips...' (Psalm 141:3) and keep watch over my fingertips on my phone too.*

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the book of James that 'peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness' (James 3:18).

### **Closing Prayer**

*Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.*

## February 06 2021 (click for audio)

### *Seeing Others*

Today is Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, and we are continuing to meditate on the beatitudes; the blessings that lay the foundation for Jesus' transformative message, known as 'the Sermon on the Mount'.

Together we are exploring some of the ways that Jesus taught and embodied each of the beatitudes, and how we can follow him and live in a radically different way.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I rejoice in God's goodness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 34...

*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

*Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!*

*Does anyone want to live a life  
that is long and prosperous?*

*Then keep your tongue from speaking evil  
and your lips from telling lies!*

*Turn away from evil and do good.*

*Search for peace, and work to maintain it.*

*Psalm 34:8,12-14 (NLT)*

Today, in my final reflection on what Jesus' taught and demonstrated about being peacemakers, I am considering the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus, and to his surprise, was seen by Jesus. 'Come down,' Jesus called to him, 'I must stay at your house today.'

*All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'*

*Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'*

*Luke 19:7-9 (NIV UK)*

Peacemaking begins with seeing people - seeing them the way that God sees them. And Luke seems to want to make this point in his retelling of this story.

Zaccaeus wanted to *see* Jesus, but he didn't expect to be *seen* by Jesus. The Pharisees *saw* that Jesus was going to Zacchaeus's house, and it made them angry. When Jesus got there, Zacchaeus demanded, 'Look! I will live differently.' And then Jesus responded with these incredible words, 'See, this is a Son of Abraham.'

Can you see him? He's not 'other', he's one of us.

### **Ask**

I pause and think about my own family, my household, my local network of friends.

*Loving Father, I place my hands over my eyes and I ask You to open them, really open them - help me to see what You see when I look at people today, whether that's in person or on a screen.*

### **Pause and pray**

I think about specific groups of people who seem unable to see or hear each other. Maybe people from different racial groups, cultures or political perspectives. Maybe cliques and teams where I work. Maybe even those who disagree within the Church.

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, help us to see others the way You do. Raise up peacemakers in all of these situations. And show me what I can do too.*

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'*

*Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'*

*Luke 19:7-9 (NIV UK)*

Seeing the other as 'one of us' leads towards reconciliation. And this, writes the Apostle Paul, is the ministry that Christ gave us (2 Corinthians 5:18).

This is what it means to be peacemakers. God reconciled me (and the whole cosmos!) to himself through Christ, and then God commissioned me to join in with this ministry of reconciliation. Reconcile people, reconcile the world. Bring it all back together, in Christ. Make peace. Make all things whole. Make shalom.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

*Wow. Thank you for reconciling me to Yourself in Christ. You did this. It wasn't me, it was You. All You. I yield to your great love and Your grand plan, and I gladly receive Your call... to be a peacemaker, an agent of reconciliation. To bring people, all things back to You, Jesus.*

## **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Colossians that 'he has reconciled [me] by Christ's physical body through death to present [me] holy in his sight...' (Colossians 1:22 NIV)

## **Closing Prayer**

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.*

**February 07 2021 (click for audio)**

*Rest in the Blessing – A Sabbath Prayer*

It's Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of February and today we leave our usual P.R.A.Y rhythms behind and pray in a simpler way, on this day of rest.

'Sabbath time,' says Wayne Mueller, 'assumes that if we step back and rest, we will see the wholeness in it all. We will naturally apprehend the good in how things are, taste the underlying strength, beauty, and wisdom that lives even in the difficult days, take delight in the gift and blessing of being alive.'\*

\* Muller, Wayne. Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives (p. 42). Random House Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

In this season as I am focusing on the Beatitudes, I choose this Sabbath day to rest in the blessings...

***Today I rest in the blessing of poverty of spirit.*** *God, I am small and You are great. I am weak and You are powerful. I have everything I need in You. I rest knowing that it is your good pleasure to give me the kingdom*

**Pause and pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of mourning.*** *I rest in the embrace of the Father of Compassion and the God of all comfort. I know that I can 'walk all the way into my sadness'\*\* and find Your presence there.*

\*\* Ruth Haley Barton. Course notes the Transforming Center

**Pause and pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of meekness.*** *I don't have to fight to make my own way. Shout to make my voice heard. Jesus, You go before me. You prepare a place for me. I rest knowing that the earth is my inheritance.*

**Pause and Pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of hunger.*** *I join with the groaning of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26) and hold my longing for a world where you make all things right and all things new, and give voice to my cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' (Rev. 22:20)*

**Pause and pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of your mercy.*** *'Because of Your great love for me, You, who are rich in mercy, made me alive with Christ even when I was dead in transgressions – it is by grace I have been saved' (Ephesians 2:4-5).*

**Pause and pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of purity of heart.*** *Jesus you have my attention. You have my affection. You have my allegiance*

**Pause and pray**

***Today I rest in the blessing of peacemaking.*** *Good, good Father, you are gathering us, your children together. Prince of Peace, by Your Spirit you are expanding your rule and reign in and through me.*

**Pause and pray**

***Today I even rest in the blessing of being persecuted because of righteousness.*** *'I want to know Christ –yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead' Philippians 3:10-11.*

**Pause and pray**

I pause now and choose one of these blessings to pray over someone I know today.

**Pause and pray**

**Sabbath blessing**

*May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.*

*May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.*

*May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.*

*May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness*

*in the arms of God's infinite greatness.*

*May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*\**

\*\*\* Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

## February 08 2021 (click for audio)

### *Blessed Are The Persecuted*

Today is Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of February. This week we complete our journey through Jesus' Beatitudes, the blessings that lay the foundation of Jesus' transformative message: The Sermon on the Mount.

Together we will explore the final blessing, that given to those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of Jesus' name. We will look at what it means to accept Jesus' radical invite into this place of unexpected blessing.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer Of Approach**

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's encouragement today, joining in the ancient cry of all God's people in the words of Psalm 69...

*The humble will see their God at work and be glad.  
Let all who seek God's help be encouraged.  
For the Lord hears the cries of the needy;  
he does not despise his imprisoned people.  
Psalm 69:32-33*

Today I reflect on the last of the Beatitudes, those blessings that invite us to participate in the life of Jesus. What does it mean to be invited into Jesus' persecution?

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them...  
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Matthew 5:1-2 & 10*

Have I ever been persecuted for the sake of righteousness? And could I receive it as a genuine blessing? I don't want to mistake mere opposition for persecution. Nor do I want to harbor a persecution complex born out of my own arrogance, rudeness, stubbornness, or self-righteousness. The only good I can see in persecution is if it means I am joining Jesus more deeply in his righteousness.

#### **Ask**

Lord, would You show me Your righteousness, and would You show me what it will mean for me to join You in it? I ask for courage in any area where I am afraid.

#### **Pause and pray**

Lord, give courage and comfort to my sisters and brothers in faith who face persecution around the world for the sake of righteousness. I name any individuals or situations I know of where this is happening.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them....*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*  
*Matthew 5:1-2 & 10*

What is this righteousness that I am invited into, that will cause persecution?

I consider the righteous life of Jesus: the way he welcomed the outcast and unwanted; the way he resisted the temptations of Satan, religious leaders, and worldly powers; the way he committed himself completely to the will of his Father, though it led him to the cross.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Father God, frightened as I may be, I want to say along with Jesus, 'Not my will, but yours be done.' Help me to receive the blessing of Your righteous way, even if it also means receiving the blessing of persecution.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation,

*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*  
*Revelation 2:7*

## **Closing Prayer**

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

*Amen.*

## February 09 2020 (click for audio)

*By His Wounds We Are Healed*

Today is Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of February. Today we will continue to explore how Jesus blesses those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's promised deliverance today, joining in the ancient cry of all God's people in the words of Psalm 71...

*You have allowed me to suffer much hardship,  
but you will restore me to life again  
and lift me up from the depths of the earth.  
Psalm 71:20*

Today I reflect on a passage from Isaiah, which foreshadows the way Jesus would suffer persecution for the sake of his love for us.

*Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
Isaiah 53:4-6*

I am amazed by Jesus' sacrificial love for me. He was persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of rescuing and healing a wandering sheep like me. Righteousness and love are intimately connected in the life of Jesus.

### **Ask**

Lord, help me to see who You want me to righteously love today, even if it requires sacrifice. I listen as You bring to my mind those who need to experience Your love through me today.

### **Pause and pray**

Lord, I pray for those who are in prison right now, and especially for those awaiting execution in various places. I ask You to show me how You feel about these people for whom You died.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.*

*Isaiah 53:4-6*

When I think of the wrath, sin, and woundedness of the world being poured out upon Jesus, I am overwhelmed. He did not deserve the scorn of the world. Yet God, in Christ, took this violent hatred upon himself, carrying it with Him into the grave, so that He might carry me into the liberating love of the kingdom of heaven. This, I think, is what it means to be blessed.

Jesus has done something for me on the cross that I could never do. Yet whenever I face unjust persecution and accusation, I know that I am journeying alongside Jesus, the one who is utterly familiar with suffering.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

I receive, oh Lord, your offer of healing and deliverance. Now, apprentice me in Your way of righteous, sacrificial love.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 16:33, I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

### **Closing Prayer**

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

*Amen.*

## February 10 2021 (click for audio)

*Behold, The Man*

Today is Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. Today we're exploring Jesus' personal experience of persecution for the sake of righteousness.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's trustworthiness today, joining in the ancient cry of all God's people in the words of Psalm 22...

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?  
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?  
Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.  
Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.  
Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
Our ancestors trusted in you,  
and you rescued them.  
They cried out to you and were saved.  
They trusted in you and were never disgraced  
Psalm 22:1-5

Today I reflect on the unjust persecution and suffering of Jesus during his trial in front of Pilate.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they slapped him in the face.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.' When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!'

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify! Crucify!'  
But Pilate answered, 'You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.'  
John 19:1-6

'Here is the man.' I am struck by this phrase. Here Jesus stands, in his full humanity, suffering the fate of all the accused and abused humans throughout history. Jesus knows exactly what it is to experience unjust persecution, to suffer punishment even though he is proclaimed innocent. Yet even this is called a blessing, a passage-way into the kingdom of heaven. How can this be?

### **Ask**

Father, help me not to run from righteousness for fear of persecution. Help me to see where You are calling me

deeper into Your radical life, and show me how this is an invitation into greater intimacy and identification with You.

#### **Pause and pray**

I pray for those who have been treated unfairly or unjustly accused. I pray especially for those who face systemic racial and economic biases in the criminal justice system. I ask You to show me any prejudice that still lurks within my heart.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they slapped him in the face.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.' When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!'

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify! Crucify!'

But Pilate answered, 'You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.'  
John 19:1-6

I wonder if I really want to identify with Jesus in this persecution, this false accusation? I consider how attached I am to my comfort, my reputation, my livelihood, my life. Jesus surrendered it all for the sake of righteous love. Am I willing to follow him there, to the cross, to receive the blessing of the persecuted?

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yielding Prayer**

Lord, I think of times when I have been treated unfairly, accused, abandoned. I think of the feelings of bitterness and resentment I have harbored towards others, and even towards You. Help me to trust you even with these experiences, feelings and fears.

#### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 22:30-31,

Future generations will be told about the Lord.  
They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## February 11 2021 (click for audio)

*The Order of the Mustard Seed*

Today is Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, and we are pausing our Beatitude series to celebrate a special anniversary. On this day in 2005, the Order of the Mustard Seed (OMS) was re-launched at Holy Trinity Church in London. The OMS lives out the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365: these are Prayer and Creativity, Justice and Hospitality, Learning and Mission.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*Father God, I welcome Your Spirit. Help me to be true to Your Son Jesus, kind to those around me, and take the gospel to every nation today and everyday.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

In 2005, 100 people came together at Holy Trinity Church, in London, England; the very church in which William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect had worshiped and prayed for the abolition of slavery, 200 years before.

They gathered to re-launch the Honorable Order of the Mustard Seed. A religious order first established by Count Zinzendorf and his friends at the German university of Wittenburg, in the spring of 1716. The renewed Order of the Mustard Seed centers on the same big promises of that original group. Based on the three great loves at the heart of Christianity, members commit to love God by being true to Christ, love their neighbor by being kind to people (Matt. 22: 37-40), and to love the world by taking the gospel to the nations (Matt 28:19).

Today, the re-launched Order has spread into many nations, and been formally acknowledged by the Church of England. The members are mostly dispersed, but there are now also a few modern day monasteries, like the emerging Seed Community in Waverley Abbey House in the UK.

Day to day, the three promises of the OMS are outworked practically through the six practices you've discovered at the heart of Lectio 365. Being true to Christ through prayer and creativity. Being kind to people through hospitality and justice. Being missional through evangelism and learning.

### **Ask**

Promises can feel large and scary. Long-term commitment is increasingly counter-cultural. And yet, covenants lie at the heart of Christian faith. 'Come now,' says Laban to his son-in-law Jacob, 'Let's make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us.' (Genesis 31:44)

What are the promises I have made in my life? Are there promises or covenants I am afraid of making or taking? I take time to review or renew them before God now.

### **Pause and pray**

The vow of the Order of the Mustard seed is a simple call to follow Jesus into the world and serve the people in it.

Jesus, where are You calling me into the world today? Who are You calling me to be kind to, today? How can I take Your gospel to my community today?

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yield**

Count Zinzendorf's promises kept his passion alive in a way that has changed millions of lives today. 'I have but one passion,' he said. 'It is [Christ] alone. The world is the field and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ.\*

\*Count Zinzendorf, cited in Simon Guillebaud, *More than Conquerors, A Call to Radical Discipleship* (2011), p169.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yielding Prayer**

God, I confess that I often don't live up to Jesus' example. I frequently fail to be kind. I don't take every opportunity to share Your good news with others. Today I yield to You alone and re-center myself on Your call to be faithful, kind, and to take Your gospel into the world.

#### **Yielding promise**

Today I am thankful that You, Lord, have made a promise to never leave me:

"As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants – from this time on and forever," says the LORD.

Isaiah 59:21

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## February 12 2021 (click for audio)

*Blessed Insults and Accusations?*

Today is Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. Today we're exploring the second part of Jesus' final beatitude, the blessing of those who are persecuted because of Him.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's salvation today, joining in the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 109...

But I will give repeated thanks to the Lord,  
praising him to everyone.  
For he stands beside the needy,  
ready to save them from those who condemn them  
Psalm 109:30-31

Today I reflect on Jesus' expansion on the blessing of persecution. This is the one Beatitude where He explains in further detail what it means to be persecuted, and what it means to be blessed

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them....  
'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.  
Matthew 5:1-2 & 11-12

Insults and false accusations do not make me feel blessed. But I notice that Jesus says we are blessed when we receive these things 'because of me.' It is my allegiance to and identification with Jesus that is meant to bring about this persecution, and this blessing. This makes me consider: what aspects of my life are so clearly identifiable with Jesus that the powers which oppose Him will naturally also oppose me?

### **Ask**

Jesus, will You bring to my mind someone who has insulted or slandered me? And will You help me to see them as You see them, to identify with Your love for them and Your desire to bless them and set them free?

### **Pause and pray**

I pray now for those who would be my persecutors, my accusers, my enemies. I name them and bring them before You, asking that they would be loved and blessed in real and practical ways. Where possible, and where wise, would You use me to do that?

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them....

‘Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:1-2 & 11-12

I think of those who have gone before me, the prophets and the faithful – including those whose names are not recorded in any history – who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for allegiance with Jesus. I am not alone in this journey of persecution and blessing. I am in good company with this great cloud of witnesses, and with Jesus himself.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Help me Lord to trust You enough to rejoice and be glad in the face of hardship and insult, knowing that fellowship with You is my perfect and lasting reward.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in James,

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

## **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## February 13 2021 (click for audio)

### *Outside the Camp*

Today is Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of February and this is the last day we will explore Jesus' declaration of blessing over the persecuted.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.*

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's invitation today, joining in the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 65...

Though we are overwhelmed by our sins,  
you forgive them all.  
What joy for those you choose to bring near,  
those who live in your holy courts.  
What festivities await us  
inside your holy Temple  
Psalm 65:3-4

Today I reflect on Hebrews 13, where Jesus is described as a very different kind of High Priest, one who is to be found in a very unlikely place.

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Hebrews 13:11-14

Outside the camp is the unclean place, the place of suffering and death. I cannot fathom the kind of love that would compel the God of creation – the one for whom the Most Holy Place was made – to go outside the camp and suffer for his people. To suffer for me. Yet here is where I find Jesus, just where I need him to be.

#### **Ask**

Lord, whenever I am tempted towards self-loathing, towards imagining that I am worthless and unloved, help me to remember that You suffered outside the camp for me. You thought I was worth pursuing.

#### **Pause and pray**

I think of anyone I know who believes they are worthless and unloved. I pray now that they too would know how much they are loved by God. Please use me to let them know this.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Hebrews 13:11-14

Receiving Jesus' invitation has always seemed like a 'religious' thing that happens in a big worship meeting. But here it seems to me more like joining Jesus in unclean, unseen places, places where reputations are risked and worldly comforts are let go.

Lord, where am I to find You outside the camp in my context? Help me to embrace the disgrace of joining You there.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

If I am holding onto anything that stops me from following You outside the camp, please show me, Jesus, and help me to yield it with joy.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew,

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:11-12

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## February 14 2021 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Prayer for Valentine's Day*

Today is Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, a day where we pause from our weekday rhythm to embrace a day of rest. Today is also the Feast of St. Valentine – the man who championed, endorsed and fought for love - so we are joining to celebrate love this Valentine's Day.

'The Sabbath,' writes Lynne M. Baab, 'helps us know experientially that nothing we do will make God love us more.\*

\*Lynne M. Baab, Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest, p28

*And so today, I praise You, Lord, that You are the source of all love. On this Valentine's Day, where romantic love is revered and adored, I choose to fix my eyes on Your radical, never-failing, sacrificial love, that casts out fear and brings transformation to my life and the world.*

### **Pause and pray**

It was on this day in 269 AD that saint Valentine was martyred in Rome. It is thought that he was killed for preaching the gospel to Emperor Claudius and secretly marrying Christian couples. One legend records that he healed the blindness of his jailer's daughter, and knowing that he was about to be killed, left her a note simply signed 'Your Valentine.' For many centuries Valentine has been venerated as a hero of love - and particularly of romantic love, although he himself was unmarried.

Valentine's Day is a confusing day for many people. For those who are in love, it can be a day of celebration. But for those who are not, it can be a day of loneliness or dread.

And so today, I pray a Valentine Prayer written by Pete Greig:

We pray today for those in love, those out of love, and those in between. We remember especially those who find themselves a little bit lonelier than normal.

We do not pray today for loved-up couples, exchanging overpriced flowers and foil wrapped hearts, leaking pheromones like diesel fumes at candlelit dinners. We are pretty sure, Lord, they will be OK (for now).

Instead, we hereby dedicate this happy-crappy day to all the brave teenagers who dared to send a card (hoping in vain with every fiber of their beings for something back.) Let them be a little bit more OK because we prayed.

We think of the mother, coping alone, who quietly bought herself flowers yesterday. Let her kids be kind today. Let her teenagers tidy their bedrooms. And if that's a miracle too far ... could they at least initiate a hug at bedtime. And, Lord, let those daffodils she bought herself last longer and shine brighter than those over-priced red roses that also caught her eye.

Finally, we ask you to look upon the elderly gentleman gazing today at a fading sepia photograph in a silver frame of a wedding in another time. Look at him and look with him and be with him in the remembering and the unremembering too,\*\*

\*\*Pete Greig, A Prayer for Valentines Day, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

### **Pause and pray**

King of Love, on this day named after one of your unmarried saints, embrace the unlovely and the unloving parts of our world and of ourselves today.

Song of Songs, inspire surprising turns of phrase and simple thoughtful acts, scatter sparks and rekindle the fires of romance wherever marriages are mired in the mundane. Melt our tiny, tinny expensive chocolate hearts.

And forgive us today we pray for this cheap, gaudy, hysterical, isolating thing we have sometimes somehow tried to make of love and of You.

At the start of this week, I recommit myself to receiving and giving the ultimate love of God:

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

### **Sabbath blessing**

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness

in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

**February 15 2021 (click for audio)**

*The God Flavors*

Today is Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> of February and today and tomorrow we are finishing our exploration of Jesus' manifesto, the Sermon on the Mount, and its invitation to radically practice the way of Jesus.

**Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

**Pause and pray**

**Prayer of Approach**

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

**Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's saving power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 98...

Sing a new song to the Lord,  
for he has done wonderful deeds.  
His right hand has won a mighty victory;  
his holy arm has shown his saving power!  
The Lord has announced his victory  
and has revealed his righteousness to every nation!  
He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel.  
The ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.  
Psalm 98:1-3

**Pause and pray**

Today I am reflecting on Jesus's words right after the Beatitudes, which seems to be a summary of His invitation to us:

Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

Matt: 5:13 MSG

For the last few weeks I've been reflecting on the life of Jesus and the way of Blessing. It's become very clear that God's ways are not my ways - they are higher, brighter and better.

One day I wrote on my mirror, 'Am I living a life worth imitating?'. It reminds me every day that people are watching. My friends, my family, even my instagram followers! I want to be able to say with

confidence, like Paul did 'Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.' (1 Corinthians 11:1)

### **Ask**

How salty is my life? Am I bringing out the God-flavors of this earth? Lord, in the quiet I ask You to show me where I have lost some of my zing, where my life has lost its Holy Spirit zip and sizzle. Lord, I repent, and I ask that You would infuse me with Your flavor again so that those around me can taste and see that You are good?

### **Pause and pray**

God, I pray for the church. Forgive us for all the ways we taste like, look like, sound like and act like the world around us. Where we have allowed the dominant culture of our day and time to dilute and diminish the glory of God and the good news of the Kingdom. God in Your mercy cleanse us, set us apart to Yourself. Let holiness adorn Your house (Psalm 93:5). Start with me and my church. I pray for them now.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

Matthew 5:13 MSG

I've been a prayer missionary, leading new monastic communities for almost 20 years. Our goal has been to give ourselves to the work of prayer, mission and justice, shaping our lifestyles around the Sermon on the Mount.

When people hear that they often ask, isn't that boring?

Boring! Ha! I'm not sure that I've had a boring day in my life. Some pretty horrific days, and some heavenly ones. But anyone who thinks that shaping their lifestyle around the way of Jesus is boring, I'm wondering if they have actually tried it?

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

God, I yield myself to the adventure of obedience, of following You in this counter cultural, downward way. Jesus, You have my attention. You have my affection. You have my allegiance.

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Peter,

'[My] divine power has given [you] everything [you] need for a godly life through [your] knowledge of [Me] who called [you] by [My] own glory and goodness. Through these [I] have given [you] [My] very great and precious promises, so that through them [you] may participate in the divine nature...'

2 Peter 1:3-4

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## February 16 2021 (click for audio)

### *The God Colors*

Today is Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of February and this is our final day of meditating on the Sermon on the Mount. Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) very simply – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

God of every blessing, in this new season I invite You to shape my soul with Your words and inspire my life through Your works. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing.

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God’s abundance today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 36...

How precious is Your unfailing love, O God!  
All humanity finds shelter  
in the shadow of Your wings.  
You feed them from the abundance of Your own house,  
letting them drink from Your river of delights.  
For You are the fountain of life,  
the light by which we see.  
Psalm 36:7-9

#### **Pause and pray**

As I finish up this series on the Beatitudes, I’m challenged by Jesus’ postlude...

Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16 MSG

Have I ever met someone luminous? Who lightens up a room when they walk into it? Who seems to radiate love, warmth, and light? I wonder if that is what Jesus is talking about in this passage?

### **Ask**

God, I'm aware that I've got dark bits in me - parts of me I hide from Your light, and light bits of me that I hide from the world. I'm sorry for hiding. I ask that You would flood me with Your light, and give me the confidence to let it shine for everyone to see. In the quiet, I imagine my soul as a dimly lit room. What happens when You come and turn the light on?

### **Pause and pray**

God, I'm so aware that when the world looks at the church, they see our darkness - our failures, our frailties, and our faults. Lord have mercy. God would You shine Your light on Your church. Would You expose our deeds of darkness. Would You help us to repent, to love the light. Transform us so that the good news would be enfleshed in our lives as individuals and as communities. In the quiet, I imagine my church as a dimly lit building. What happens when You come and turn the light on.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16 MSG

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

The invitation of the Beatitudes, the way of blessing? To be the light, in the same way that Jesus Himself was and is the light of the world.

In his book, *Recovery*, Aaron summarizes it this way: 'This is the purpose of the Beatitudes: not to bring us sobriety, progressive politics, good morals, or full churches, but to guide us toward the recovery of Jesus's divine image in us and in one another. If we seek this first, everything else that we need will come too.'\*

\*White, Aaron. *Recovering (Pastoring for Life: Theological Wisdom for Ministering Well)* (p. 171). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

## **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Jesus, I hear Your invitation to recover Your divine image in me and to cultivate it in those around me. I want to shine as a child of light, and shine like a star in the sky as I lay hold of the word of life (Eph 5:8, Phil 2:15,16). Come and fill me with Your light!

### **Yielding promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Corinthians 3:18: 'And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## February 17 2021 (click for audio)

*Dry as Dust*

Today is Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Today we are beginning a new series on Lectio 365. Lent feels particularly relevant this year.

Millions of us around the globe are wrestling with the far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us are living with loss and pain. In the coming weeks, as we prepare for Easter, we will meditate on Jesus' suffering and draw reflections from the book *God on Mute*, the story of how our friends Pete and Sammy Greig walked through illness and the pain of unanswered prayer.

If you, and your community, would like to go deeper in this season, you can explore [further resources from 24-7 Prayer](#).

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father right now, praying for me.(Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

The Lord is like a father to His children,  
tender and compassionate to those who fear Him.  
For He knows how weak we are  
He remembers we are only dust.  
Psalm 103:13-14.

### **Pause and pray**

Today on this first day of Lent, I am reflecting on how Jesus was led into the wilderness.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:1-4

I, ‘notice that it is the Holy Spirit who leads Jesus “into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt. 4:1). This isn’t the sort of thing I expect the Holy Spirit to do. Isn’t He supposed to protect me from satanic onslaughts, not lead me into them?’ \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute p. 290

### **Ask**

What is the landscape of my life right now? ‘As I think about my own wilderness, could it be the Holy Spirit who has led me here into this dry and difficult place? And if so, why?’

God, I admit that ‘I am generally hungrier for physical food than the spiritual variety... radically increase my desire for “every word that comes from the mouth of God” over these next forty days.’\*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute p. 290

### **Pause and pray**

God, on this Ash Wednesday I pray for those who feel dry as dust. For those who find themselves in wilderness places. As they feel emptiness and longing, may they hunger for Your word and may You sustain them. I bring to mind someone who is struggling right now and in the quiet I pray for them.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matthew 4:1–4

Pete Greig was thrust into the wilderness when his wife Sammy had a sudden and severe health crisis:

‘I prayed like I’d never prayed before, helplessly convinced that I was watching my wife die. I begged God to make the convulsions stop so that she could at least draw breath. I prayed in the name of Jesus. I tried to have faith. I invoked the power of His blood. I rebuked and renounced everything I could think of rebuking and renouncing. This was not prayer for a parking space or a sunny day. This seemed to me to be a matter of life and death. Sammy was turning blue, and bloodied spittle was blotting the pillow. The ambulance was taking forever. My prayers weren’t working.’ \*\*

\*\* Ibid p. 289

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

'As I embark upon this journey into the desert, I get my heart right with the words of Psalm 51:1–3, 10–12, traditionally prayed around the world on Ash Wednesday:

'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me . . . Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.' Amen.\*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute p. 290

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Hosea,

'Therefore I am now going to allure her;  
I will lead her into the wilderness  
and speak tenderly to her.'

Hosea 2:14

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## February 18 2021 (click for audio)

### *Overwhelmed with Sorrow*

Today is Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. This week we are continuing to meditate on the story of Jesus, and as well as drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's Book God on Mute, as we wrestle with unanswered prayer and challenges in our own lives.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father right now, praying for me.(Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23...

Even when I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.  
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.  
Psalm 23:4

#### **Pause and pray**

'Over the next five days [I am] exploring the prayer of Jesus on Maundy Thursday in the Garden of Gethsemane...' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute p.291

[Jesus] took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," He said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him.

Mark 14:33–35

Jesus is in trouble, and He asks his friends to support him in what ends up being the second worst day of his life. It's not much to ask is it? Stay with me. Watch with me.

#### **Ask**

'In Jesus' hour of need, He asked Peter, James, and John, His three best friends, to support Him in prayer. Who are these people for me?

I take a little time now to thank the Lord for those He's put around me, being honest, too, about any disappointments I may feel.' \*\*

\*\*Ibid p. 292

#### **Pause and pray**

God, I pray for those who have been disappointed by friends during challenging times and found themselves unexpectedly alone. Console them in their disappointment, help them to forgive - and maybe help them be a little more bold in asking for what they need from those around them.

I think of someone in my circles who may be suffering on their own right now - God how do You want me to reach out to them?

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

[Jesus] took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Mark 14:33–35

Pete Greig shares his own experience of feeling overwhelmed in the face of his wife's illness...

'When our souls, like Christ's, are overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, we do not necessarily pray like Jesus. In fact, we may barely pray at all. . . . I was scared that Sammy might die if I didn't pray enough, or if I didn't have enough faith, or if I didn't fast enough, or if I didn't bind some disembodied principality, or if I didn't repent of some root sin, or if I didn't strap her body on a stretcher bound for Bethel or Lourdes. Surely, I thought, God would not disqualify her on a technicality? I'm ashamed to admit that this was how my prayer life looked when it really counted. Sammy's faith frequently amazed me, but I prayed at best like a child and at worst like an addict needing to score.' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute p.291

Can I relate to this experience? Where do I find myself in Pete's story?

#### **Pause and pray**

## **Yielding Prayer**

I yield today with a fourteenth-century prayer of trust from Thomas à Kempis:

O Lord my God, do not be far from me.

My God, have regard to help me.

I have many thoughts and great fears afflicting my soul. How will I pass through unhurt?

How will I break them to pieces?

This is my hope, my one only consolation,

to flee to You in every tribulation, to trust in You,

to call on You from my inmost heart,

and to wait patiently for your consolation. \*\*\*

\*\*\*Thomas A Kempis Freely modified from Prayers of the Middle Ages, ed. J. Manning Potts (1954).

## **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I join with the hope of the Psalmist in Psalm 40,

'I waited patiently for the Lord;  
He turned to me and heard my cry.  
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;  
He set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.'

Psalm 40:1-2

## **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the [24-7 Prayer website](http://24-7 Prayer website).

## February 19 2021 (click for audio)

*Abba Father*

Today is Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, we are continuing to draw wisdom from the Scriptures and from Pete Greig's book *God on Mute* as we wrestle with unanswered prayer and challenges in our own lives. Today we join Jesus in another wilderness - the garden of Gethsemane.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because you pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that you pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because you're with the Father right now, praying for me.(Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's sustaining presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 46...

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;  
the God of Israel is our fortress...  
Be still, and know that I am God!  
Psalm 46:7 & 10

### **Pause and pray**

'Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is just twenty-one words long. Today, [I] am going to think about how it starts:' \*

*Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.*

Mark 14:36

'In His darkest hour, Jesus addresses Himself to "Abba, Father." 'The power of prayer depends almost entirely upon [my] apprehension of who it is with whom [I] speak. When [I am] scared and hurting, when life feels chaotic and out of control, it is more important than ever to anchor [myself] in the absolute and eternal truth that [I am] dearly loved and deeply held by the most powerful being in the universe. Let this be the great non-negotiable in [my life], the platform for all [my] other thoughts, and the plumb line for [my] prayers.' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p. 293

### **Ask**

‘Do the difficult things I’m experiencing ever make me question the Father’s love? How much does He actually care about my predicament? Is He trustworthy?’ \*\*

In the quiet, I gently pray over and over ‘Dearly loved...deeply held. Dearly loved...deeply held.

### **Pause and pray**

God, I pray for those who have had difficult relationships with their early fathers. Who have been disappointed, perhaps even devastated by dads who, as mere mortals, fall short of the glory of God. Would you heal hearts and help them to forgive. Would You reveal Yourself to them as a good good Father.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Abba, Father, everything is possible for You. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.*

Mark 14:36

When I think about Jesus’ relationship with His Father, I’m reminded of a prayer of Søren Kierkegaard: ‘Father in heaven, when the thought of you wakes in my heart, let it not wake like a frightened bird that flies about in dismay, but like a child waking from its sleep with a heavenly smile.’ \*\*

\*\*Ibid p. 294

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

I give myself to God today with a prayer of trust from Psalm 131...

*‘My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quietened myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content. Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and for evermore.’*

Psalm 131:1-3

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I hang onto the truth in Matthew 7:

'If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!'

Matthew 7:11

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the [24-7 Prayer website](#).

## February 20 2021 (click for audio)

*Everything is Possible*

Today is Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, and we are continuing to explore Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

*Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because you pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that you pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because you're with the Father right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)*

### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's power and unfailing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62..

God has spoken plainly,  
and I have heard it many times:  
Power, O God, belongs to You;  
unfailing love, O Lord, is Yours.  
Surely You repay all people  
according to what they have done.  
Psalm 62:11-12.

### **Pause and pray**

Today, I continue to explore Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Going a little farther, [Jesus] fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. "Abba, Father," He said, "everything is possible for You."

Mark 14:35,36a

'In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus recognizes God's unfailing love but also His power. He addressed His prayers tenderly to "Abba, Father" but also reverently to the One for whom "everything is possible." There's an old Hebrew saying: "God is not a kindly old uncle; He is an earthquake." This is great news for those... struggling with unanswered prayer, because a kindly old uncle can merely smile at things that an earthquake can actually shift. Without an omnipotent, omniscient God, there is neither hope for a miracle, nor meaning in [my] suffering.' \*

\*Pete Greig, *God on Mute* p.295

## Ask

'Am I tempted to downgrade my expectations of God's power in order to protect myself from disappointment? What attitudes and practices might help me to get the balance right between mountain-moving faith and patient trust?

...Abba, Father, help me to be a bit more like Abraham who "faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God" (Rom. 4:19–20). Give me greater faith in Your sovereign power\*\*

\*\* Ibid p. 296

## Pause and pray

## Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

As I pray this passage one more time, I picture myself in the Garden, praying as Jesus did...

Going a little farther, [Jesus] fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. "Abba, Father," He said, "everything is possible for You."

Mark 14:35,36a

I hold up my unsolvable problems. My broken relationships. My dreams crumpled up and left in the dust. And as I ponder each one, I pray this prayer over them.

"Abba Father, everything is possible for You."

## Pause and pray

## Yielding Prayer

I yield myself to God today using a prayer of limitless trust from the song "Oceans":

Your grace abounds in deepest waters

Your sovereign hand will be my guide

Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me

You've never failed and You won't start now

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders

Let me walk upon the waters wherever You would call me

Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander

And my faith will be made stronger in the presence of my Savior. \*\*\*

\*\*\*“Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)” composed by Matt Crocker, Joel Houston and Salomen Lightelm from the album Zion by Hillsong United, released on 22nd Feb, 2013, Record Company Hillsong Music.

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I lay hold of the hope of the psalmist in Psalm 28,

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.

Psalm 28:7

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website

## February 21 2021 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Prayer for Lent*

Today is Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, a day of rest on which we interrupt our weekday pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer.

Throughout Lent, I am meditating on Jesus' suffering, I am drawing on some of Pete and Sammy Greig's story, found in his book, *God On Mute*, and I am reflecting on how I navigate my own suffering and struggles too. This, of course, isn't the whole of the human story, and it's certainly not where the story ends. And so today, I pause to remember the resurrection of Jesus, which changes everything.

'Sabbath is not primarily about [me] or how it benefits [me];' writes the author Eugene Peterson, 'it is about God and how God forms [me]. It is not, in the first place, about what [I] do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. It means stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder - resurrection wonder.\*

\* Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (p.116-117)

Jesus' disciple, Peter, writes:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation...

1 Peter 1:3 (NLT)

### **Pause and pray**

Father God, thank You that You do not remain 'on mute' forever. You speak; in so many ways, and at just the right time. I choose to stop, to be quiet and listen today with great Expectation.

### **Pause and pray**

Jesus, thank You that You did not remain in the grave for long. You rose from the dead and You are alive today... and forevermore. I choose to receive the life You give to me, and live it to the full today.

### **Pause and pray**

Holy Spirit, thank You that You do not leave me to pray alone, but You pray with me and through me. Jesus, I am 'open-eyed with wonder' that You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34) I choose to put my trust in You today

### **Pause and pray**

I take a moment now to root these prayers in my life and my community. I pray now for someone I know who needs to hear God speak today...

### **Pause and pray**

'So be truly glad,' writes Peter. 'There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains

strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

1 Peter 1:6,7 (NLT)

**Pause and pray**

**Sabbath blessing**

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website

\*\* Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, [www.petegreig.info](http://www.petegreig.info)

## February 22, 202 (click for audio)

### *Take This Cup*

Today is Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February and this week we are continuing our journey to Easter. Lent feels particularly relevant this year. Millions of us around the globe are wrestling with the far reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of us are living with loss and pain. In the coming weeks, as we prepare for Easter, we will meditate on Jesus' suffering and draw reflections from the book *God on Mute*, the story of how our friends Pete and Sammy Greig walked through illness and the pain of unanswered prayer. If you're interested in going deeper further resources are available from the 24-7 Prayer website

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to cry out to God today, joining with the ancient prayer of all God's people in the words of Psalm 13...

O Lord, how long will You forget me? Forever?  
How long will You look the other way?  
How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,  
with sorrow in my heart every day?  
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?  
Psalm 13:1-2

#### **Pause and pray**

Today I return once again to Mark chapter 14 and join Jesus and His closest friends in the garden of Gethsemane. Knowing that He would be arrested and executed, Jesus prays a shocking prayer...

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' He said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.'

Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. 'Abba, Father,' He said, 'everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me...  
Mark 14: 32-36a

In the garden of Gethsemane, 'Jesus has been following the pattern of His own "Lord's Prayer," saying "Abba, Father" instead of "Our Father," and "everything is possible for You" instead of "hallowed be your name," but now, at the point where He's meant to pray "Your kingdom come," He says the exact opposite: "Take this cup from Me." He is going off script, admitting to the Father: "I don't want to suffer. I'm scared. There has to be another way!" If Jesus can be so honest with God in His hour of greatest need, then surely so can [I]?' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p297

### **Ask**

'In what ways do I pretend when I pray? Are there any "tricks" I use to try to avoid or persuade God?

...I take a little time now to speak to the Father honestly from my heart about what I'm really feeling and thinking, remembering that He loves me, values my honesty, and is never shocked.' \*\*

\*\*Ibid, p298

### **Pause and pray**

I think about someone I know who feels 'deeply distressed and troubled', 'overwhelmed' by what they are facing at the moment. Maybe someone with serious financial challenges, someone caring for a sick loved one or someone walking the path toward death themselves.

Jesus, You know what it's like to suffer. Please draw near to them. Help them to be honest about how they feel. Bring them comfort and hope.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I ask You, Holy Spirit to highlight one word or phrase for me today...

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' He said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.'

Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. 'Abba, Father,' He said, 'everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me...'

Mark 14: 32-36a

Everything is possible for the Father. Words like this build my faith, but they can sometimes make it hard for me to face disappointment and loss.

Everything is possible, but not everyone is healed right now.

Everything is possible, but not all prayers are answered in the way I hope.

Everything is possible, but not all evil is stopped immediately.

I ask You, Holy Spirit, to give me strength to persevere in prayer, and restore to me the gift of 'everything is possible' faith.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Yielding Prayer**

I join in with a beautiful and challenging prayer written by Richard Foster...

'Today, O Lord, I yield myself to You. May Your will be my delight today. May You have perfect sway in me. May Your love be the pattern of my living. I surrender to You my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions. Do with them what You will, when You will, as You will. I place into Your loving care my family, my friends, my future. Care for them with a care that I can never give. I release into Your hands my need to control, my craving for status, my fear of obscurity. Eradicate the evil, purify the good, and establish Your kingdom on earth. For Jesus' sake, Amen.' \*\*\*

\*\*\*Richard Foster, Prayers from the Heart (HarperSanFrancisco, USA: 1994)

#### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me reminds me through the Apostle Peter, that,

'the God of all grace, who called [me] to his eternal glory in Christ, after [I] have suffered a little while, will himself restore [me] and make [me] strong, firm and steadfast.' (1 Peter 5:10)

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

## February 23 2021 (click for audio)

*Yet Not My Will...*

Today is Tuesday February 23. This week we are continuing our Lent meditation on the suffering of Jesus and drawing from the wisdom of Pete Greig's book *God on Mute*. Together we are reflecting on how we can bring to God our own pain, loss and questions.

Each day, as we pray through this challenging topic we will **P.R.A.Y.**: **P** – pause to be still before God. **R** - rejoice with Scripture and reflect on a Bible passage. **A** - ask God to help us and others and **Y** - yield to God, trusting in His character and in His will for our lives.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's attentiveness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 17...

I am praying to You because I know you will answer, O God.

Bend down and listen as I pray.

Show me Your unfailing love in wonderful ways.

By Your mighty power You rescue  
those who seek refuge from their enemies.

Psalm 17:6-7

### **Pause and pray**

Today I return, one last time, to the Garden of Gethsemane and listen to Jesus' incredible prayer of honesty and surrender...

Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. 'Abba, Father' He said, 'everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.'

Mark 14:35-36

'Having acknowledged God's love ("Abba, Father"), God's power ("everything is possible for you"), and His own terror ("take this cup from me"), Jesus now surrenders Himself completely to the Father's purposes. Such surrender is never easy:

Maybe God has simply been replying to [my] prayers with a loving but firm no... It may well be the most painful possibility [I] have ever had to consider, and it may also seem to fly in the face of

everything [I] know of God's heart and will.' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p299

### **Ask**

'Having prayed "Take this cup from me," is it possible that God might be replying to me, as He replied to Jesus, with "a loving but firm no"? How can I discern what His will might be for me in my situation?

I take time now to surrender my will to God's will.' \*\*

\*\*Ibid, p300

### **Pause and pray**

I think of someone I know who is trying to discern God's will for them right now.

Lord, help them to hear You... Even if the answer is a loving but firm no.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

Today, rather than returning to the story of Jesus in Gethsemane, I reflect instead on a challenging invitation Jesus extends to me...

Then He said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

Luke 9:23-25

What is the one prayer I most want God to answer for me?

What if I heard God say, even in a loving way, that for some reason beyond my understanding, I couldn't have what I wanted here and now? Would I still be willing to pick up my cross and follow Jesus today? Are there any longings or desires I find too hard or too painful to surrender to God?

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

I make the famous hymn, All to Jesus I Surrender, by Judson W. Van DeVenter my prayer of yielding for today...

'All to Jesus I surrender,  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.  
I surrender all,  
I surrender all,  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.'

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me invites me to,

‘Trust in the Lord with all [my] heart and lean not on [my] own understanding; in all [my] ways submit to him, and he will make [my] paths straight.’ (Proverbs 3:5-6)

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

[February 24 2021 \(click for audio\)](#)

*Serenity*

Today is Wednesday February 24<sup>th</sup>. This week we are continuing our Lent meditation on the example of Jesus and how the Bible encourages us to bring to God our pain, loss and deepest questions.

Today we are also drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book *God on Mute*, and reflecting on part of his story.

**Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

**Pause and pray**

**Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)

**Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice today that my hope in God is not in vain, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 130...

I am counting on the Lord;  
yes, I am counting on Him.  
I have put my hope in His word.  
I long for the Lord  
more than sentries long for the dawn,  
yes, more than sentries long for the dawn.  
O Israel, hope in the Lord;  
for with the Lord there is unfailing love.  
His redemption overflows.  
Psalm 130:5-7

**Pause and pray**

Today I am reflecting on some very practical, yet deeply challenging, advice from the Apostle Paul to the persecuted church in Philippi...

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.

Philippians 4:5-7

This passage sounds a little like a motivational slogan; the kind I usually see on Instagram, cat posters or embroidered cushions. It would be easy for me to dismiss Paul's words as sentimental or unrealistic,

until I realize that this advice wasn't written when all was well. This command to turn my deepest anxieties into grateful prayers was likely written when Paul was in prison for His faith. These words had been tried and tested, lived out in the midst of real suffering and challenge.

### **Ask**

God, '...I'm going to try to see Your hand at work in the details of the next twenty-four hours. Let Your peace guard my heart... and calm my mind... Make me more aware of You in spite of my circumstances today.' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p302

I take a moment now to bring my worries to You, challenging myself to also share what I'm grateful for.

### **Pause and pray**

Who do I know who is struggling with their mental health and maybe even falling victim to anxiety today?

I pray on their behalf, Lord. Thank You for all the good things You have shaped in and through them. Give them Your peace which, 'transcends all understanding.'

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.

Philippians 4:5-7

Pete Greig describes how this passage shaped his prayers, as his wife prepared for brain surgery...

'As the day of Sammy's surgery approached, we found great comfort in the promises of the Bible. I'm not just saying this because it's the sort of thing Christians are supposed to say in situations like this. The Bible addressed our fears in a way that no person could and gave words to things we were struggling to express. Almost every night we went to sleep clutching a verse for dear life... One of our favorite verses at that time was Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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 minds in Christ Jesus."

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Today, I make The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr my own:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it,  
Trusting that You will make all things right,  
If I surrender to Your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says,

‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.’ (John 14:27).

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

## February 25 2021 (click for audio)

*Making the Ask*

Today is Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and this week we are continuing our Lent meditation on the life and teaching of Jesus drawing wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *God on Mute*, and examining our own pain, loss and questions.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to place my hope in God today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 62...

Let all that I am wait quietly before God,  
for my hope is in Him.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress where I will not be shaken.  
Psalm 62:5-6

### **Pause and pray**

Today I am reflecting on some of Jesus' foundational teaching on prayer...

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and He knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.

Matthew 6:7-8 MSG

'The great theologian Karl Barth said that true prayer is primarily very simple. "In the first instance, it is an asking." This is reassuring... [when I] struggle to issue anything more than six-year-old "Dear God" type requests when [I'm] under intense pressure." Maybe [my] simplest prayers are enough...

When my simple "Dear God" prayers don't work, what "formulas and programs and techniques" do I tend to try "for getting what [I] want from God"? Jesus tells [me] to remember the Father's love when [I] pray. Could there be a link between getting over-complicated in prayer and forgetting the simplicity and immediacy of His love?' \*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p304

## **Ask**

‘I take a little time now to “pray very simply,” laying my requests before You once again, telling You how I’m feeling, and remembering as I do that You are not scowling but smiling with an expression of tender affection.’ \*\*

\*\*Ibid, p305

## **Pause and pray**

I think of a family member or friend I know who finds prayer hard. For whatever reason, talking with God just doesn’t come easily to them.

God, I ask You to meet with them today. Teach them the way You made them to spend time with You.

## **Pause and pray**

## **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and He knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.

Matthew 6:7-8 MSG

It would be a whole lot easier if prayer functioned like a computer game. If I could just learn the hacks to overcome every obstacle, then I could guarantee the outcome of my prayers. I sometimes wish there were fool-proof techniques for getting what I want, to bend God’s will to mine, to be in control. But, Jesus’ simple and life changing teaching isn’t an invitation to climb a ladder of expertise, but to trust in the downward motion of surrender.

## **Pause and pray**

## **Yielding Prayer**

Today I turn again to the words of Judson W. Van DeVenter’s hymn, All to Jesus I Surrender...

All to Jesus I surrender  
All to Him I freely give  
I will ever love and trust Him  
In His presence daily live  
I surrender all,  
I surrender all  
All to Thee my blessed Savior  
I surrender all.

## **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me, reminds me that,

‘This is the confidence [I] have in approaching God: that if [I] ask anything according to His will, He hears [me].’ (1 John 5:14)

**Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

## February 26 2021 (click for audio)

*God's Love Languages*

It's Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> of February and this week we are continuing our Lent meditation on how we honestly bring God our own pain, loss and questions.

Today we will be meditating on the words of the Apostle Peter and reflecting on wisdom from Pete Greig's book, *God on Mute*.

### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34)

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to bring my deepest needs to God today, joining with the ancient cry of all God's people in the words of Psalm 4...

Answer me when I call to You,  
O God who declares me innocent.  
Free me from my troubles.  
Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.  
Psalm 4:1

### **Pause and pray**

Today I reflect on the teaching of the apostle Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends...

Cast all your anxiety on [God] because He cares for you.  
Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.  
And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.  
1 Peter 5:7-11

'God's voice can be muted by [my] wounded pre-conceptions about who He really is, how He speaks, and what [I] think He will say. But when [I] approach Him again and again with some deep need, His eyes are not angry, bored, or cold, assessing the merits of [my] request and the technique of [my] prayer. Whenever [I] come to God with an open wound of longing, [I] come to Abba, Father, who loves

[me] deeply. "Cast all your anxiety on Him," says the apostle Peter simply, "because He cares for you."  
\* \*Pete Greig, God in Mute, p306

### **Ask**

'Abba, Father, I cast the great burden of my anxiety on You, because You are stronger than me and You care for me deeply. I name before You now the particular burdens, large and small, which seem to be weighing me down today.' \*\*

\*\*Ibid, p307

### **Pause and pray**

The Apostle Peter's words are as true today as they were two thousand years ago. The 'family of believers throughout the world' are still 'undergoing sufferings'. For many, following Jesus can mean loss of home, relationships, freedom and more.

I pray now for my brothers and sisters who are experiencing persecution. Help them to cast their anxieties onto You. Restore them Lord. Make them, 'strong, firm and steadfast.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Cast all your anxiety on [God] because He cares for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:7-11

Jesus, like Peter, tells me that there is an enemy who wants to, 'steal, kill and destroy'. (John 10:10) Today, I pause and put on the armor God has given me to stand against the enemy's attacks...

Lord, I belt Your truth around my waist. I embrace the gift of righteousness, a breastplate protecting my heart. I stand ready in the shoes of the gospel of peace. I pick up the shield of faith. I cover my mind with the helmet of salvation and I take a firm grip of, 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' (paraphrase of Ephesians 6:13-17)

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

God, I yield to Your grace. Even if it means I may experience suffering, I trust that You will restore me and make me strong, firm and steadfast.

## **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says,

‘...do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.’ (Isaiah 41:10)

## **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

## February 27 2021 (click for audio)

### *Dealing With Doubt*

It's Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> of February and we are continuing our Lent reflection on how we can bring God our own, pain, loss, and questions. Today we will fix our eyes on Jesus and draw from the story of Pete and Sammy Greig in the book, *God on Mute*.

#### **Pause**

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### **Pause and pray**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

Holy Spirit, when I feel alone, I am comforted because You pray with me. When I am silenced by suffering, I am grateful that You pray through me. And Jesus, when I feel helpless, I am strengthened because You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34).

#### **Rejoice and Reflect**

I choose to rejoice in God's voice today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 3...

So many are saying,  
"God will never rescue him!"  
But you, O Lord, are a shield around me;  
You are my glory, the one who holds my head high.  
I cried out to the Lord,  
and He answered me from His holy mountain.  
Psalm 3:2-4

#### **Pause and pray**

Today I reflect on a moment when Jesus' teaching proved both difficult and unpopular...

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him. He went on to say, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled them.' From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.  
'You do not want to leave too, do you?' Jesus asked the Twelve.  
Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God.'  
John 6:63-69

Pete Greig reflects on a moving conversation with His wife as she walked through a difficult and painful recovery from brain surgery...

'One morning, I asked Sammy if she ever doubted God's existence or His power to intervene. She was back in hospital after a particularly vicious epileptic attack. It was really more of a confession on my part than a question for her. But without hesitation, Sammy replied, "No! I never doubt God these days, Pete." Pausing, she examined my face with a mixture of affection and reproach. "How can I doubt God?" she continued more softly. "God is all I've got!"'\*

\*Pete Greig, God on Mute, p308

### **Ask**

'What doubts do I experience? Is there anything that holds me back from admitting them to myself, to God, or to someone I trust?

[Lord,] "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).\*\*

\*\*Ibid, p309

### **Pause and pray**

Who do I know who is wrestling with questions and doubts about God?

In their confusion or disappointment, Lord, I ask You to draw near to them, speak with them and bring them peace.

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yield**

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your Word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him. He went on to say, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled them.' From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.

'You do not want to leave too, do you?' Jesus asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God.'

John 6:63-69

What I measure shapes my perception of success. If the size of my Instagram following, my church or my social calendar pre-occupies me, then popularity might be replacing more important things. Jesus wasn't afraid of losing followers. He didn't soften His teaching to be more palatable. Can I follow Jesus' example and value God's call and my integrity, more than my influence?

### **Pause and pray**

### **Yielding Prayer**

Today, I echo the words of St. Ambrose of Milan, praying...

‘O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of Your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore You, a heart to delight in You, to follow, and to enjoy You, for Christ’s sake.’

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord Jesus who loves me says,

‘I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full.’ (John 10:10b)

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

## February 28 2021 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Prayer for Lent*

Today is Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, a day of rest on which we interrupt our weekday pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer. Throughout Lent, I am meditating on Jesus' suffering, I am drawing on some of Pete and Sammy Greig's story, found in his book, God on Mute, and I am reflecting on how I navigate my own suffering and struggles too. This, of course, isn't the whole of the human story, and it's certainly not where the story ends. And so today, I pause to remember the resurrection of Jesus, which changes everything.

'Sabbath is not primarily about [me] or how it benefits [me];' writes the author Eugene Peterson, 'it is about God and how God forms [me]. It is not, in the first place, about what [I] do or don't do; it is about God completing and resting and blessing and sanctifying. It means stopping and being quiet long enough to see, open-eyed with wonder – resurrection wonder'\*

\* Eugene Peterson, Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places (p.116-117)

Jesus' disciple, Peter, writes:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation...

1 Peter 1:3 (NLT)

### **Pause and pray**

Father God, thank You that You do not remain 'on mute' forever. You speak; in so many ways, and at just the right time. I choose to stop, to be quiet and listen today with great expectation.

### **Pause and pray**

Jesus, thank You that You did not remain in the grave for long. You rose from the dead and You are alive today... and forevermore. I choose to receive the life You give to me, and live it to the full today.

### **Pause and pray**

Holy Spirit, thank You that You do not leave me to pray alone, but You pray with me and through me. Jesus, I am 'open-eyed with wonder' that You're with the Father, right now, praying for me. (Romans 8:34) I choose to put my trust in You today.

### **Pause and pray**

I take a moment now to root these prayers in my life and my community. I pray now for someone I know who needs to hear God speak today.

### **Pause and pray**

So be truly glad,' writes Peter. 'There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

1 Peter 1:6,7 (NLT)

## **Pause and pray**

### **Sabbath blessing**

May this day bring sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

*N.B. Further resources related to the God on Mute series are available from the 24-7 Prayer website.*

\*\* Pete Greig, A Sabbath Blessing, [www.petegreig.info](http://www.petegreig.info)