



SUBSCRIBE



DIARY OF AN ARTS PASTOR

A diary of an arts pastor who never wanted to be a pastor and never thought he could be an artist.

ABOUT · LINKS · RECOMMENDED READING · MY BOOKS · SHOP

March 31, 2020

PRAYERS FOR A TIME OF SUFFERING



"Station #1: Jesus is Condemned," by Kevin Vandivier (2003)

I've been writing Collect Prayers for sometime now. Last summer I [wrote](#) about how I get my students in my course on worship at Fuller Theological Seminary to write Collect Prayers all term-long, because I believe it's simply one of the best forms of prayer on offer. It's a form that frees us to pray in deeply biblically, richly theological, pastorally sensitive, and relationally attuned ways.

This year I took on the challenge of writing at least 100 Collect Prayers by the end of 2020; mainly for the fun of it but also as a way to put into words the things that I would like to tell God in prayer about all of life, not just the so-called "religious" or "usual" parts of life.

That includes, for example, a **Prayer for Dashed Plans**, a **Prayer for Driving to Work**, a **Prayer for Feeling Stressed Out**, a **Prayer for Grocers**, a **Prayer for the Adoption of a Child**, a **Prayer for Those Who Feel Crummy on Valentine's Day**, and a **Prayer for a Fresh Start to the Day**.

I've been writing a good deal of prayers since this COVID-19 pandemic irrevocably changed our world and disrupted our common patterns of life. I thought I'd share a few of them here (some of which, granted, stretch the idea of a proper Collect Prayer), in case they might be helpful to others who are struggling to find the words to make sense of this trying and troubling time and who may be struggling also with God's perceived absence in the face of widespread suffering.

I'm also including below a couple of songs that I co-wrote with [Paul Zach](#) and that I'm hoping might become a source of comfort to both adults and children during these difficult days.

PRAYERS FOR A TIME OF SUFFERING

A PRAYER FOR A TIME OF PESTILENCE

Oh Lord, you who are the refuge of the poor and needy,
 we ask that you would save us
 from the pestilence that stalks in the darkness
 and the plague that destroys at midday.
 Be our sun and shield.
 Be our fortress.
 Be our comfort this day.
 May we not fear any evil
 but rather trust in your might to save and your wisdom to guide,
 so that we might rest always in the shadow of the Almighty.
 In the name of the One who heals our diseases. Amen.

UNA COLECTA PARA UN TIEMPO DE PESTILENCIA

(Translation by William D. Taylor and Paul Sywulka)

O, Señor, tú quien eres el refugio del pobre y necesitado,
 te pedimos que nos salves de la peste que acecha en las sombras
 y la plaga que destruye a mediodía.
 Sé nuestro sol y escudo.
 Sé nuestra fortaleza.
 Sé nuestro consuelo este día.
 Que no temamos ningún mal,
 sino que más bien confiemos en tu poder para salvar
 y tu sabiduría para guiar,
 a fin de que podamos descansar siempre bajo la sombra del Omnipotente.
 En el nombre de Aquel quien sana nuestras dolencias. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR A NEIGHBOR WHO IS BEHAVING LIKE AN IDIOT

Oh Lord, you who commanded us
to love our neighbors as ourselves,
I confess to you an utter lack of desire
to love my neighbor who is behaving like an idiot.
As much as I am tempted to ask you “to teach them a lesson”
and “to put them in their place”
and “to give them what-for,”
I ask rather for the seemingly impossible:
that you would perform a miracle in my heart
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
so that I might be freed from bitterness, hatred,
and the oppressive feeling that I live ultimately in an unfair universe
where neighbors get away with things that they shouldn’t
and that God remains detached and uncaring.
I pray this in the name of the One
who loves my neighbor and me alike
and who will do right by each of us in the end.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR AN UNTIMELY DEATH

Oh Lord, you who wept
over the untimely death of your beloved friend Lazarus,
we too weep over the untimely death of our beloved one.
We weep over all that has been lost—
their touch, their voice, their presence in a room,
all that they would have made of the world that you so love,
all that they called out in each of us,
all the beauty that shone through them.
As their life has been suddenly snatched from us,
we pray that you would grasp us with your care.
As they are now far from us,
we pray that you would be near to us.
Where we feel empty inside,
fill us up with your resurrection life.
Watch with us, we pray, and watch over us.
Be our comfort in the face of all that feels inconsolable.
Bless us as we mourn.
We pray this in Jesus’ name,
the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and
the Lamb of God, who makes all things new.

Amen.

A PRAYER BEFORE HARD MEETINGS

Oh Lord, you who told us that we would have trouble in this world,
we confess to you:
our worries over things that we cannot control,
our distress over things that seem wrongheaded, and
our frustration with those who oppose us on things that we hold dearly.
Grant us the ability to bear with one another in love,
along with an abundance of patience and humility,
and may the peace of God guard our hearts and minds,
so that together we might trust your leading
and walk in the way of unity
that only the Spirit of Christ can make possible.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR HEALTH WORKERS

Oh Lord, you who touched the leper and healed the sick,
Be with me this day.
Be a succor in the time of trial.
Be a comfort in the hour of loss.
Be a refuge in a storm of needs.
Use my hands to heal the broken in body
And my words to heal the crushed in spirit.
Make things possible, I pray, in the face of all that seems impossible.
Be my haven, dear Jesus, and my true companion
Throughout these tireless days and lonely nights.
In your compassionate name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE START OF A NEW DAY

Oh Lord, you who keep watch over my life:
I rise from my bed this day by your grace,
I face the tasks of this day by your grace,
I embrace all the unpredictable and
uncontrollable things of this day by your grace,
I receive all the gifts of this day by your grace,
And I hold lightly, and joyfully,
the outcome of this day by your grace.
In the name of the One who did some things
but not all things in his earthly sojourn. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR GOD'S SHEPHERDING CARE

Oh Lord, you who know your sheep by name, be my Shepherd this day.
Where I am burdened by the cares of life, give me rest.
Where I am helpless against the enemies of my soul, be my defender.
Where I am hungry, feed me.
Where I am weary, restore me.
Where I am vulnerable, protect me.
Guard me, keep me, shield me,
so that I might feel your loving care this day.
In the name of the One who lays down his life for his sheep night and day. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR SINGLE PEOPLE

Oh Lord, you who were alone in the wilderness and in the garden,
be with me in this time of singleness and solitude;
and when I feel tempted to believe
that I have been abandoned by friends and forsaken by God,
may I sense the sweet presence of your Spirit
and the ministering care of your angels,
nourishing me in my hour of need,
so that I might know that I am never alone
but rather filled and fortified by your very real presence.
In your name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR WEARIED PARENTS

Oh Lord, you who hold all things together,
help me not to lose my mind;
you who calmed the tempest,
help me not to lose my temper;
you who promised rest to the weary and heavy-laden,
speak a word of peace to my body;
you who healed the blind,
open my eyes to see your presence;
you who speak and things come to life,
help me to hear your still, small voice
over the din of my own noisy world;
you who welcomed the children,
please take care of my own;
you who promised to be with us always,
be with me here and now in my hour of need.
Though I struggle to believe these things are possible,
I pray them nonetheless in the name of
the compassionate and wounded One for whom nothing is impossible.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR GROCERS

Oh Lord, you who are the True Grocer
who gives your life as bread and wine to a needy world,
bless the farmers who make the food
and the manufacturers who make the goods that we consume;
bless the distributors and the drivers
who go the extra mile to make our groceries handy;
bless the stockers and the shelvers
who put all things in their place;
bless the clerks who care for the customer and the cashiers who count their money;
bless the baggers and the bakers and the butchers, too;
bless the night crews and the day crews;
and bless the managers who direct it all.
Bless them with your hand of provision and protection.
Bless them with your ministering angels in their long hours of need.
Bless their families as well.
May they know your care this day, this hour, this moment,
as Living Water and Bread of Life,
as God of Refuge and of Angel Armies as well.
In your name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR STIR-CRAZY CHILDREN

Dear Jesus, I feel frustrated right now.
I don't know what to do with myself and I need your help.
I feel tired and bored and my feelings are all mixed up and out of place.
But you can help me,
and I thank you that you know exactly how I feel
and that you have a special place in your heart
for children like me—and that you love me very much.
Please give me that peace that you told your disciples you have lots off.
I need it. Thank you.
In your name I pray. Amen.
PS: Please help mommy and daddy too.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEARIED AND ALONE

Oh Lord, you who entrusted your mother to the care of your beloved disciple
and who promised not to leave us as orphans
but instead to provide us your very own body
and the care and comfort of your Spirit,
be with all who feel afraid and alone this day.
Care for the least of these in our community

and grace us to be your Body in word and in deed,
bringing your word of peace to the fearful and the friendless.
We pray this so that we might behold your glory
and praise your lovingkindness,
in the name of the Shepherd who walks with us through darkest valley.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE BELEAGUERED

Oh God of angel armies,
be my defender this day where I am defenseless,
be my refuge where I feel exposed,
be my vindicator against all false accusations,
from Satan, from others, from my own thoughts.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE IRRITATED

Oh God, you who see the hearts of all with perfect clarity,
I confess my irritation with those who bully their way with words,
who fail to take responsibility for their actions,
who think no one sees what they do in the shadows,
and who live in a world of denial.
I'm angry and scared and tired of doing the right thing.
Strengthen my heart so that I not lose hope.
In the name of the Just Judge and Merciful Shepherd.
Amen.

A PRAYER FOR WAKING UP TO A HARD DAY

Oh God, you who promise new mercies every morning:
where I am low, lift me up;
where I am weak, carry me;
where I am vulnerable, shield me;
where I am heavy-hearted,
grant me new strength and refreshment for my soul.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR A NEW MORNING

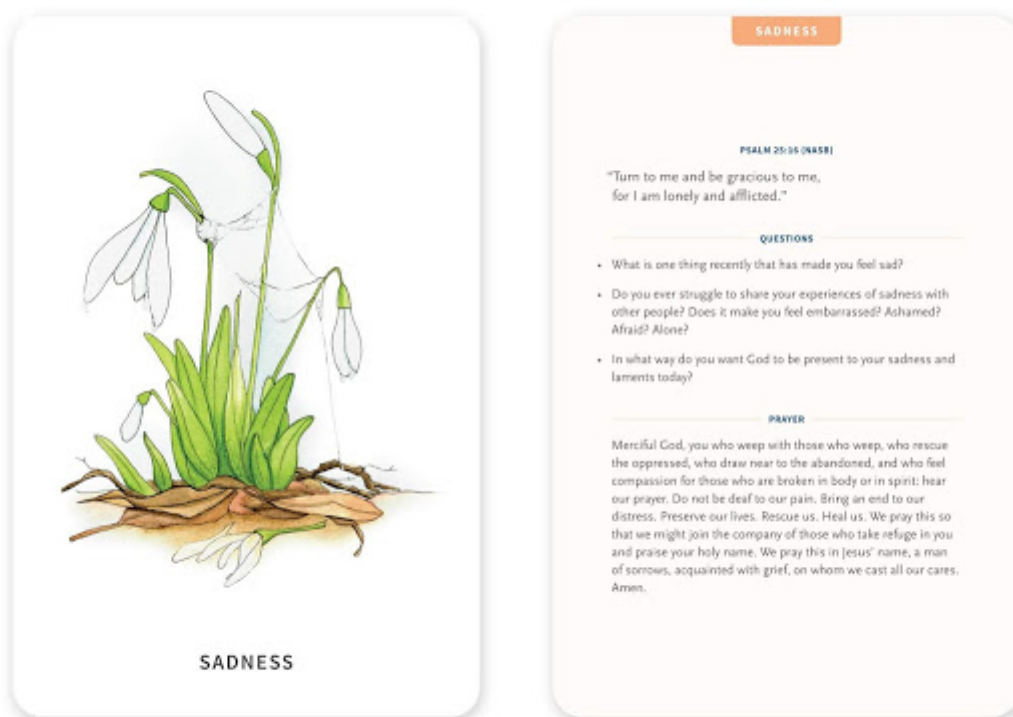
Oh Lord, may I walk in the way of life today,
faithful to what you have entrusted to me for this day,
no more and no less.
Let me not become anxious over the things that I cannot control
but instead receive your grace to face these things trustingly.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

recommend a collection of illustrated [Psalms Prayer Cards](#) that my wife Phaedra and I made together. You can buy them [here](#) at the Rabbit Room store. You can see three sample prayer cards below.

Each 4x6 card includes an image on one side, corresponding to a specific chapter in my book, *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life* (Thomas Nelson: 2020), and text on the other: a passage from the psalms, three questions for reflection, and a prayer.

Each original watercolor illustration corresponds to a specific theme in the psalms and the text on the back offers an opportunity to reflect on one's life in the light of the good news that we discover in the psalms.

And if you're in need of good resources on prayer and worship in light of COVID-19, let me heartily recommend a [list of resources](#) that the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship has put together, along with this list of "[Hymns for a Pandemic](#)," as well as a list of [resources](#) that Cardiphonia has compiled. This [list](#) of resources is really good, too.





CREATION

PSALM 34:7-12 (THE MESSAGE)

"Praise God from earth,
you sea dragons, you fathomless ocean deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and ice,
hurricanes obeying his orders;
Mountains and all hills,
apple orchards and cedar forests;
Wild beasts and herds of cattle,
snakes, and birds in flight;
Earth's kings...
and yes, graybeards and little children."

QUESTIONS

- At what times have you felt most connected with nature?
What things make it harder to feel connected to nature?
- What is one way that you might try to get out in nature more often?
- What is one way that you might try to take care for the unique flora and fauna in your part of the world?

PRAYER

Maker of heaven and earth, all your creatures, animate and inanimate, stand before you. May we take pleasure in your creation as you take good pleasure in it. May we care for the earth as you lovingly care for it. And may we offer up all the creative work of our hands in praise of you, in service of our neighbor, and in anticipation of that day when the cosmos shall be made forever alive. In the Triune Name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR RENEWED HOPE

Oh God, you who make new, again and again,
enliven the thoughts of my mind,
revitalize the cells of my body,
and cause a fresh outburst of praise to surge in my heart,
so that I might taste the Life that is truly life this day.
In the name of the One whose face is like the shining sun.
Amen and amen!

"I Shall Not Want" (Psalm 23), by Paul Zach and W. David O...



A Bedtime Song for Anxious Children



PS: If you would like a practical resource for prayer during this time, or at any time, I would love to



PRAYER

PSALM 5:3 (NLT)

"Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly."

QUESTIONS

- When have you felt that God answered your prayers? When have you felt that God did not answer them?
- The psalms invite us to say all things to God in prayer. How does this make you feel in light of the things that your family or church told you that you could say to God in prayer?
- What is one way that the psalms might help you to pray for others today?

PRAYER

Lord Christ, you who taught the disciples to pray, teach me also how to pray. Teach me how to listen and not to be overly anxious when I do not hear your voice. When I am fairhearted in my prayers, strengthen my heart. When I lack the will to pray, grant me the grace to begin again. And when I am wordless, let me hear the voice of your Spirit praying in me. Amen.

Share

Labels: coronavirus, COVID-19, global pandemic, Prayer, prayers, suffering, trials, troubles

COMMENTS

POST A COMMENT

POPULAR POSTS



September 26, 2017

WORSHIP, THEOLOGY AND THE ARTS: A SYLLABUS

Share Post a Comment

 Powered by Blogger



w. david o. taylor

Houston, Texas, United States

VISIT PROFILE

Archive 

Labels 

Report Abuse

Links

Book: For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts

FAQs: For the Beauty of the Church

Retreat for ministers to artists

Phaedra Taylor's Contemporary Art

My top 10 Sci-Fi Novels: 2012

My top 10 Sci-Fi Novels: 2013

Christians in the Visual Arts

Church & Arts Symposium (2008)

Video: A Vision for Art, the Church, and the City

Video: 3 Exciting Things Happening with Art and the Church

Video: Tyndale Seminary talks