

# Come Let Us Worship Together...

(please go through this all out loud and together)

## WORSHIP IN PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the air that we breathe, for the people that we love, and for the blessings you give us every day. Help us to lay them all before you and honor you by actively, consciously living like we truly do trust in you today. Be glorified in our lives today.

In Jesus' name we pray, *Amen*.

## MARTIN LUTHER - *writing under the threat of plague...*

I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.

## C.S. LEWIS - *writing under the threat of the atomic bomb...*

In one way, we think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. "How are we to live in an atomic age?" I am tempted to reply: "Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents.

In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Believe me, dear sir or madam, you and all whom you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented: and quite a high percentage of us were going to die in unpleasant ways. We had, indeed, one very great advantage over our ancestors--anesthetics; but we have that still. It is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things--praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts--not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.

## APOSTLE PAUL - *writing under the threat of Rome...*

**Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. <sup>9</sup>Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup>I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup>I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

<sup>12</sup>I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup>I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

## INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

1. What are the differences between living in a state of fear, living in a state of denial, and living in a state of contentment? How are some people today denying the dangers of threats like war or COVID-19? How are some people today living with an irrational fear of those threats? How is Paul suggesting a better way for us to live? Please be specific in each of those answers, and discuss what you come up with.
2. Just because something is *simple*, that doesn't make it *easy*. What is the simple answer that Paul has learned to the question of how to find contentment whatever the external circumstances we find ourselves in? What does he *mean* by that--for instance, does he mean that God will make everything okay for us? Why or why not? That may be *simple*, but how can it often be *hard* for us to do? Be specific and honest with one another about how it can be hard for you personally sometimes.
3. How did Martin Luther find a way to balance recognizing the dangers around him with trusting in the sovereignty of the God who sculpted him? How can we today? How did C.S. Lewis find a way to balance recognizing the dangers in this world with reminding himself that there are *always* dangers--but that we should focus our time and our lives on more excellent, praiseworthy things than on what we fear?
4. What practical process does Paul give us in verses 5-7 about how to live out this simple-but-hard mindset? How can gentleness ("*put-up-with-ness*") and consistently praying *with thanksgiving* about our specific concerns make a difference in how we see the world around us? Please spend time praying this way together right now.

## WORSHIP IN SONG - *Blessed Be Your Name...*

Blessed Be Your Name

In the land that is plentiful

Where Your streams of abundance flow

Blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your name

When I'm found in the desert place

Though I walk through the wilderness

Blessed Be Your name

*Chorus:* Every blessing You pour out,

I'll turn back to praise

When the darkness closes in, Lord

Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord

Blessed be Your name

Blessed be the name of the Lord

Blessed be Your glorious name

Blessed be Your name

When the sun's shining down on me

When the world's "all as it should be"

Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name

On the road marked with suffering

Though there's pain in the offering

Blessed be Your name

*Chorus*

You give and take away

You give and take away

My heart will choose to say

Lord, blessed be Your name

