

**Special Prayer Service  
January 3, 2021**

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## **A Prayer of Confession**

(Bob Kauflin reprints a prayer of confession offered at the Worship God Conference)

Holy and righteous God, we confess that like Isaiah, we are a people of unclean lips. But it is not only unclean lips we possess. We are people with unclean hands and unclean hearts. We have broken your law times without number, and are guilty of pride, unbelief, self-centeredness and idolatry. Affect our hearts with the severity of our sin and the glory of your righteousness as we now acknowledge our sins in your holy presence.

We have had other gods before you.

We have worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.

We have sought satisfaction in this world's pleasures rather than in You.

We have loved to praise our own glory more than yours.

We have taken your name in vain.

We have prayed religious prayers to impress others.

We have uttered your name countless times without reverence or love.

We have listened to others use your name in vain without grieving.

We have murdered in our hearts.

We have often destroyed our neighbor with our tongues.

We have been quick to uncharitably judge others.

We have considered revenge when we were sinned against.

We have committed adultery with our eyes.

We have loved temptation rather than fighting it.

We have lusted after unlawful and immoral pleasures.

We have justified our lusts by using the world as our standard.

We have stolen what is not ours and coveted what belongs to others.

Our lives overflow with discontent, ungratefulness, and envy.

We have complained in the midst of Your abundant provision.

We have sought to exalt ourselves through owning more.

We have lied to you and to others.

We have told distorted truths, half-truths, and untruths.

We have despised the truth to make ourselves look better.

Even in our confession, we look for ways to hide our guilt.

O God, we have sinned against your mercy times without number. We are ashamed to lift up our faces before you, for our iniquities have gone over our heads. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? How shall we answer you? We lay our hands on our mouths. We have no answer to your righteous wrath and just judgment.

We have no answer. But God Himself has mercifully provided one for us.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Is. 53:6)

## **Modernized Shema**

Hear, O Church, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one; Father, Son and Spirit. Blessed is His glorious Kingdom forever and ever. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Amen.

## **A Prayer for our Country**

*(A prayer by Rebecca Barlow Jordan)*

Lord God, we desperately need your wisdom. You have given us a great country, founded on principles and truths from Your Word. We need men and women who will honor You, trust You, and lead us once again back to You. We pray for servant leaders who love the things You love and who care more about others than themselves.

Give us leaders with discerning hearts, bold faith, and wise minds that model Your character. Teach them—and us—not just what is good, but what is best. Guide them in the way our country should go. Give them purity in their intentions, and godliness in their convictions. Energize their spirits and bodies physically and spiritually, and keep them emotionally secure in the knowledge of who You are—and whose they are. Help them to be bighearted and sincere, energetic in goodness, and courteous in their manners.

Raise up leaders with the greatest potential of godly leadership, those who can ease confusion, expose illusion, and heal delusion. You alone hold the power to turn the hearts of leaders, but You listen and use our prayers to move them into right action. Help us to be faithful to care and to pursue Your heart in prayer.

Help our leaders to be quick to admit failure, but ready to rebound in persistent resilience. Encourage them to choose wisely, and when they don't know what to do, help them keep their eyes on You. Let them take a firm stand on issues that truly matter to You, regardless of the consequences or approval ratings. Make them God-pleasers, not puppets; leaders filled with conviction, not corruption.

As a nation, God, help us to desire righteousness more than rights, and to mirror sacrifice more than selfishness. You know us well, and You understand our flaws. Turn those weaknesses into strengths; bathe us with Your grace and mercy, though none of us deserve it. Fill us with the boldness to choose the kind of freedom that will benefit all, rather than a few. Open our eyes to see others as You do—with godly potential and value. But help us, too, to recognize our own pride in trying to elevate ourselves and others above You and Your purpose for our lives.

We need, You, God. Oh, how we need You! You have exercised nothing but faithfulness and fairness in Your treatment of our country, even when we've turned our back on You and forgotten Your goodness to us. Your discipline at times is hard, but You are just. Your purpose

is always to draw us close to You, to bless us, and to make us a great nation who honors You. You are a good, good, Father—and Your love for us has a proven track record.

Forgive us for wanting our own way and making our own paths—often the ones paved with least resistance. Forgive us for fence-walking, or for ignoring completely the truths that can so easily set us free. Deliver us from mindless quarrels and destinations that lead us nowhere, but away from You. Free us from divisiveness, and melt our hardened hearts to love, not hate, and to heal, not debate.

Our history has cried for king-like leaders who will solve our problems and meet our needs. But there is only one King, and that is You, Lord. We have blindly sought answers from others to life's unresolved questions through the years, but You are the only wise Counselor. We have longed for peace, but You are the only Peacemaker, and the only Prince of Peace. We've clung to our weapons of warfare, not as measures of defense, but as strongholds of selfish pride. We look at outward appearances; You see the heart. With You, nothing formed against us can prosper. Without You, we are nothing.

Make us a great nation, yes. But more than that, make us good, Lord, with a heartbeat that wants every person of every creed and color to know Your love, Your goodness, and Your worth. Make us wise as serpents, but gentle as doves. Turn our fears to faith, as we look to You and You alone for the future of our country. Give us God-confidence that no matter what happens, we will believe You are not only in control, but that You know exactly what is needed to accomplish Your purpose. Help us not to second-guess Your moves, but to move at Your command, always without hesitation.

We look to You and to You, only, Lord. Help us make wise decisions that move our country in the right direction. Help us to do our part in praying and in staying with what we know is right according to the truth of Your Word. Teach us to make our actions count and our words matter, and line them both up to Your sense of rightness, not ours. Guide us with Your eye; grip us with Your strong arm; teach us what we need to know to make our lives—and our nation—count for you. We pray for our leaders, but we ask You to make us both leaders and followers: leading in the way of Truth, and following those who honor You.

In the precious and powerful name of Jesus,  
Amen

### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

forever.

### **A Prayer for Adults**

Holy and just God, we thank you for the great gift of this church community and all the people who have been touched by your grace here. Keep us from pure self-serving behavior and stir us to serve people who are most in need of your mercy. Hear us, O God.

*Congregation: Your mercy is great.*

For your blessings upon this assembly, that it continue to dream dreams, sing new songs, and be a sign of your living presence in the world, let us pray.

*Congregation: Have mercy, O God.*

O God, challenge and strengthen our faith. Weed out what is soft and shallow; grow in us faith rich in nutrients, resistant to periods of drought and pests— faith that bears fruit in good times and in bad times. Hear us, O God.

*Congregation: Your mercy is great.*

Lord we thank you for this church, built through the sacrifices of our ancestors in faith. May our worship be genuine and sincere; may the ministries that flow out of this place lift up people in the name of Christ. And despite all our efforts, may we never forget that we are saved by grace alone. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

Gracious God, we thank you this morning for the gift of this church community and all the people who are active here in various ministries and roles, giving of their time, talent and treasure. Together we pray:

*Congregation: Thanks be to God.*

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day of rest and this opportunity to restore our souls. Strengthen our desire to keep your day holy and help us resist the urge to be busy at all times. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

O Lord, our God, we thank you for moments of revelation and insight. Let us be patient during all the other times when we don't hear your voice so clearly and seem to lose sight of our calling. Let us be faithful during those times. Hear us, O God.

*Congregation: Your mercy is great.*

Dear Lord, your word is living and active in the church, in our worship and in our spiritual discernment. By your Spirit, give us the will to leave behind the things that hold us back from following you and serving others. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

Everlasting God, deepen your people's commitment to worship, study, prayer and spiritual growth and begin here in our church. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the people of this congregation. Give us the desire to seek and love you with all our hearts and minds and souls. Revive our spirits; soothe those of us who have been tested by the hardships of life. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

O God our Savior, lead your people to generosity, charity and spiritual depth. Uphold and restore a good moral compass in our church and among the people in our community. Lord, in your mercy,

*Congregation: Hear our prayer.*

Reveal yourself to this congregation and to our community, gracious God. Deepen our love for one another. In this season, give us compassion for all who suffer, and keep us from selfish excess. Hear us, O God.

*Congregation: Your mercy is great.*

*All: Amen*

## **A Prayer for Seniors**

Loving Lord, we thank You for the thrill of life and all the mercies that You give to each of us day by day, but Lord as we advance in years our bodies can begin to lose their strength, our fingers can lose their dexterity and our knees can begin to tremble. And Lord, the time comes all too fast, when we are not able to care for ourselves as we would like to, but have to rely on help from other people to do the basic things of life.

Loving Lord, we bring before You all the elderly and infirm, not only those that we know, but all who are facing this stage of their life. Draw those that have never placed their trust in You into a saving relationship with Jesus, and give those that are of the household of faith Your peace that passes understanding in their heart, as they fulfil Your purpose for their lives, in whatever condition or situation they find themselves.

Give grace to those that find it difficult to come to terms with other people caring for them, knowing that Your grace is sufficient. And as they grow older, I pray that in Your love and mercy, You will draw each one into closer fellowship with Yourself. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## **Prayer for Leadership**

Loving Heavenly Father, thank You for all the staff, elders and deacons in our church family and for providing us with such a dedicated team of men and women, who work so hard in Your service. Lord I pray for each one, that they would keep You as the focus of their life and that they may be surrendered to You in thought word and deed.

Give each one godly wisdom day by day as they tackle their designated ministry work, and keep them from adopting the actions and attitudes of the world, in order to accomplish Your

work in this place.

Help them not to react to the urgent at the expense of acting on the important. Keep them from becoming weary of well-doing or discouraged in their various duties, and may each one be kept from trying to accomplish tasks in their own strength and wisdom, but rather I pray that each one may learn to rest in Your love and to be open to Your voice.

Lord, give each member of our church's leadership a servant heart and a caring spirit for the whole body of Christ. May each one continue to grow in grace and show forth in their lives and homes a genuine love for those to whom they minister and a deep love for the Lord Jesus, in Whose name I pray, Amen.