

Sing beforehand: Psalm 100:1-4ⁱ

1. All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,
Him serve with mirth, His praise forthtell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice.
2. Know that the Lord is God indeed;
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.
3. O enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His name al-ways,
For it is seemly so to do.
4. And why? The Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earthⁱⁱ. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christⁱⁱⁱ. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Psalm of praise 92: 3, 6

3. Your works are great and splendid. O how profound Your thought!
The senseless fool cannot begin to understand it.
Though evil men may flourish, though like the grass they sprout,
LORD, You shall root them out. They shall forever perish.
6. The just will He remember, to them His favor show:
They like the palm tree grow, like Lebanon's fine timber.
Those whom the LORD will cherish within His house He plants.
There God His blessing grants: within His courts they flourish.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Law

¹And God spake all these words, saying,

²I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

⁴Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

⁶And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

⁷Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

¹²Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

¹³Thou shalt not kill.

¹⁴Thou shalt not commit adultery.

¹⁵Thou shalt not steal.

¹⁶Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

¹⁷Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Exodus 20:1-17 KJV

After the Law we sing

Psalm 99:4,5,6^{iv}

5. Moses to Him prayed,
Aaron sought His aid;
Later Samuel
Called on Him as well.
They cried out to Him,
And He answered them;
He in tribulation
Heard their supplication.
6. He to Israel spoke
In a cloud of smoke;
They His glory saw,
Worshipped Him with awe.
He, the LORD, their Guide,
Statutes did provide
Which His chosen nation
Kept with dedication.
7. When they called on Thee,
Thou didst hear their plea;
Thou didst pardon them,

Though avenging sin.
Come to Zion's hill
And perform God's will;
Praise Him, high and lowly,
For the LORD is holy.

Prayer.

- **Doxology:**
- **Worship:**
- **Confession:**

Supplication (for pardon of sins):

- **Thanksgiving:**
- **Intercession (for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)**
- **General supplication:**
- **Illumination of the Holy Spirit (necessary for the ministry of the Word):**

Amen.

Psalm 145: 2, 3,4

2. LORD, Thou art good to all that dwell below;
Thou in Thy works Thy steadfast love dost show.
They all present to Thee their thankful praise;
Thy saints shall bless Thee to the end of days.
They shall recount Thy kingdom's exaltation
And praise Thy wondrous acts with veneration,
That men may for Thy mighty deeds adore Thee,
For they unfold Thy kingdom's radiant glory.
3. Thy kingdom shall continue without end,
Thy sovereignty from age to age extend.
Thou art a help and stay to those who fall;
The lowly ones Thou liftest when they call.
The eyes of all look unto Thee with reason,
For Thou preparest food for them in season;
Thou openest Thy hand in gracious giving
To satisfy the needs of all things living.
4. The LORD is just in all His will and way,
And all His works His steadfast love portray.
All men who seek His mercy find Him near;
He satisfies all those who Him revere.
He hears the cry of those who seek Him truly
But shall destroy the wicked and unruly.
My mouth to Him its praises shall deliver
And all flesh bless His holy Name forever

Scripture reading: Ephesians 3^v

Scripture text: Ephesians 3:21

²¹ Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21)

Jesus Christ's death on the cross-made the mightiest grace of God possible for every congregation. Stated differently: By His death on the cross, the intervention of the living God becomes a practical reality in every church and its members.

That is how it was with the congregation at Ephesus. The congregation is well known in the Bible.

- There were sinful relationships amongst them.
- There was a serious want of mutual love - there was friction amongst them
- Many members were haughty and could not stand each other.
- Flippancy in word and deed was common.
- Impurity abounded - to such an extent that in some respects they were no different than the heathens. (4: 2vv)

We should be honest, and openly confess:

- Such a church and its members can surely not lay claim to a future heavenly inheritance, because they do not bear the image of God.
- Nothing of the Lord's holiness and righteousness is visible in people who are so full of evil!

Perhaps we could say that they were not even a true church, because they practices such falseness and treachery, while claiming to be members of the church of the living God.

The matter is however not that simple.

- We read that the Lord calls these dreadful sinners *saints*.
- Just read where Paul greets them in verse 1: **to the saints which are at Ephesus!**

Why could such unholy people be called saints?

- Because the Lord Jesus Christ died for them.
- Because every church gains access to the grace of God by Jesus Christ's death on the cross.
- That is why the Lord works so gently with the sinful members of the congregation at Ephesus – and with us.

The motivation is recorded in chapter 1.

- God the Father favours us
- And the Spirit works in us.
- Which is the Spirit who gave Christ the strength to die and to rise from the dead.

²⁰Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²²And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:20-23)

The Holy Spirit wrought in Christ the exceeding greatness of his power, **when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,**

The same is written in Romans 8, namely that the Holy Spirit raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and that the same Holy Spirit lives in us too:

¹¹But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

In Ephesians 1:22 and in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 the Bible reveals that all things are placed under the Lord Jesus Christ's feet, and that, as Head of all things, He is given to the congregation.

²⁴Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. ²⁸And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also

himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.(1 Corinthians 15:24-28)

That is why abundant grace is granted us.

- The Redeemer is the Head of the Church.
- He shows mercy where we do not keep to a godly life.

That is why, word for word, this letter is written to us, to our congregation.

- Herein we are warned to live lovingly.
- To be chaste in our conduct.
- The Holy Spirit commands us to live with each other in unity and not be quarrelsome.
- We are encouraged to live with holy joy.

A true Christian does not live as if each moment is onerous and full of bitterness. And true godliness and piety is demanded of us.

The Holy Spirit chooses these exhortations for no other reason than that it fits the sins of the Church. Just look at ourselves – we fit into this as comfortably as the church at Ephesus.

- We do not always consider the grandeur of God in all that we do and say.
- Oftentimes we sink into sinful melancholy, and we forget the abundance of God's grace.
- How often we lose hope - to our own shame, because each time the Lord provides for us.

The sin, into which we fall most easily, is surely that we forget the sanctity of our calling.

- We do not always remember that it is exactly in Christ that we are called to be here - to live to God's glory.
- We do not always remember that God's glory must be reflected in our lives.

The matter annexed hereto is naturally our congregational life. We either forget or ignore the loftiness of the congregation itself.

It is not a secret when God joins us to the church. If, when due to invalid excuses, we do not live with the Lord's congregation to the full, then our communion with God is thereby harmed.

Perhaps it seems perfectly simple: it's a number of people who worship together.

- But what in actual fact happens is that it is a number of people who come together with the Triune God.
- Where we worship together, God pampers our heart.
- Here He folds His holiness and presence around us in a particular way.
- He awakens our consciences and converts us.
- We are strengthened.

Would we remember it if we do not come to church?

In the passage we read, that Paul prays for the church.

- If we wish to be honest, we must admit that it is indeed God the Holy Spirit praying for the Church.
- Paul is repeating His words.

This prayer is a confirmation of the Lord Jesus Christ's majesty, and of the salvation that the church received in Him.

- The prayer begins solemnly and with admiration for God - there is so much reverence and worship for God's wisdom.
- In deep humility Paul bends his knee in worship.

Then the following verse follows. Here the apostle writes why God is worthy of worship.

- He gave us power according to the abundance of His magnificence.

- His magnificence is the moment when in brilliant splendour the power of God was revealed.
 - It is the moment of the resurrection.
 - The moment when Satan fell like lightning from heaven.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated beyond all doubt God's omnipotence in heaven and earth.

- Think about it: the Lord gave us, the church power according to the abundance of His magnificence.
- Practically it means that we have no excuse when we sin - just as the Ephesians had no excuse. We are equipped with inner strength to conquer whatever battle is brought to us.

We also have sufficient strength to withstand any temptation forced upon us.

- The Holy Spirit works this strength in us - the Spirit works in the inner man.
 - The innermost part of man is his being: his heart, his soul, and his spirit.
- Our spiritual ability thus increases.
- We are carried on the way to regeneration.

The inner man stands over against the outer man.

- The outer man is the physical.
- Visible.
- The senses which exposes itself to sin.

Over against the external is the internal where the Spirit of God labours, so that feebleness against the devil may disappear.

The Lord Jesus Christ also lives in our hearts.

¹⁷That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17).

- The Spirit and the Father and the Son are One after all.
- Hence it is the same God who lives within our hearts.
- That the Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are distinguished is to emphasise the tremendous force of the revelation and of grace as revealed to us.

God lives in our heart, is written here.

- It is our heart where love is found, and our will to know and thank God.
- Here the prayer is that Christ may live in our heart, so that we may have faith, and be grounded and rooted in love.

Practically the apostle is thus praying that we may not stumble in sin, so as to not obscure our communion with God.

The prayer is that we may be animated by truth.

- Which is to say that we may live the desire to know God, and truly serve Him alone.
- We living this holy fiery love for God and our neighbour must fulfill the prayer.

Just look at the figures of speech used by the apostle.

- He says we must be **rooted**.
 - We must be like trees that drink up the lifeblood from the depths of the earth.
 - We must draw life from love, in the same way that a tree draws from the ground.
- And we must be **grounded**.
 - Which means we must have a foundation similar to that of a house.
 - A high building, which cannot be blown over and cannot crumble, because it has a strong foundation.

Together this image means that we must display an unshakable firmness and an ineradicable permanence of faith.

Our lives must elicit the world's admiration for God's unshakable care and preservation of us.

The apostle prays that this grounding must be so that we may comprehend the height and depth of God's providence.

- Which is exactly what is written in verse 19: **¹⁹And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.**

The love of the Lord Jesus Christ is that in suffering and death He gave Himself over for our sake.

- His love is that He rose from the dead, and He made us to rise with Him.
- His love is His Spirit, which leads us to regeneration and self-discovery.
- His love is that we are not destroyed due to our sin, but that God delicately cultivates and pardons us.

Therefore to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glory in our congregation unto all eternity.

And together with the Holy Spirit we say: **Amen**

- Because Amen means that it is true and certain before God.
- It is truly so that the Spirit prays and pleads for us for the sake of Jesus Christ, in spite of our transgressions.

Amen

Prayer.

Lord, Almighty God, may that your holy Name not be slandered for the sake of our sins, because our sin is multiplied by our disobedience to your Holy Word, by our ignorance, our ingratitude and continuous murmurings.

We know that we thus heap on ourselves Your wrath.

Lord, chastise us, so that we know You in truth.

For Christ's sake

Amen

Psalm 105: 1

-1-

O thank the LORD with great rejoicing,

His deeds among the peoples voicing!

Praise Him, His wondrous works proclaim

And glory in His holy Name.

Let those who seek Him praise the LORD,

Their hearts exulting in His word.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.^{vi}

Amen.

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Date: 1 August 2010

ⁱ http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs100_Kethe.HTM

ⁱⁱ Psalm 124:8

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 1:3

^{iv} http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs099_Helder1980.HTM

^v <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203&version=KJV>

^{vi} 2 Corinthians 13:14