



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden
From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

God's precious and exceedingly great promises in hard times

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Scripture

Reflections on not being afraid from the NT:

Matthew 10:30-32

³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

Luke 12:31-32

³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Romans 8:14-16

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Romans 8:31-34

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

II Timothy 1:6-7

⁶ or this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Hebrews 13:5-6

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

I John 4:17-19

¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

Revelation 2:10

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Song

Psalm 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

("In Christ Alone" words and music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, © 2002 Thank you Music, CCLI #358926, Streaming License 20317932)

Prayer

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Our heavenly Father, though we are cleaned up on the outside, maintaining a cheerful exterior, Lord, you know our hearts. We are those who are lost and ruined by the Fall. We represent all kinds of griefs, and sorrows, and burdens.

Oh God, you know the particular physical suffering that exists in this congregation. We are those who have been ravaged by all manners of sickness and disease—by cancers, by chronic illness, by incurable diseases, by mental illness, and much more. In our bodies, our minds, our emotions, we have felt the curse of the Fall. And God, we confess to you—this is hard. Oh God, surely You see the daily, moment by moment battles—the despair, the pain, the loss of perspective, the endless and seemingly ineffective treatments. Oh God, surely you hear the cries and prayers of your people, in all this—as we pray for ourselves, for our loved ones, for our children.

And yet, so often those answers seem to come so slowly—or even not at all. Oh God, we know your promises to work good in our trials, but Lord we confess, oftentimes, we just don't see it. It just doesn't make any sense. So God, help us. Do not abandon us. See our suffering and act, in your mercy.

Oh God, we are a people who have seen death. Many in our congregation grieve the death of a spouse, the death of a child, the death of a friend. We miss these loved ones. Our hearts ache. And the nights are long and lonely. And all around is the news of more death from the virus and from violence in our land. Oh, Lord, we know from your Word that death was not initially a part of your creation. We know that death is your judgment on sin. But Lord, we pray, do not abandon us in your judgment. You more than any of us feel the wrongness of death. You are the God of life.

So even as we live in the midst of all this death, as we ourselves live in these dying bodies, oh Lord, do not forsake us. Do not leave us in our sorrow. Please show us the light of your face.

Because in the midst of all this suffering and dying, our deepest sorrow is not our physical pain. Our deepest sorrow is the distance we feel from you. Our deepest sorrow is the fact that we are separated from you, our God, our Father. We do not see you face to face. We never have! And though we know and believe that you are here and that you have entered our world—still we live by faith and not by sight. We mourn that we are not with you now. In our suffering, we are again and again reminded of that separation, reminded of our sin, of the judgment we deserve, of your wrath against our sin. So God, please be merciful to us. Do not allow Satan to use our suffering to deceive us. In the midst of our suffering, hold on to us.

Oh God, we believe that you have provided the greatest answer to our suffering in the resurrection of your Son. Impress upon our hearts the truth and hope of the gospel. Help us to hear the comfort of the gospel louder than the condemnation of our pain. Help us to see Christ, our suffering Savior, our sympathetic High Priest. Cause our hearts to be satisfied in Him.

Be merciful to us. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

(from a prayer offered at Hinson Baptist Church, Portland, OR where a close family friend of the Woodyards pastored for several years)