



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 from Scripture on our enemies.

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Proverbs 24:17-18 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,
¹⁸ lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.

Luke 6:27-36 But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³² "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Romans 12:19-21 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

I Peter 3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

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.]

Christ, Your Words of Love Confound Us

Christ, your words of love confound us,
even as we give you praise,
for the lessons that you teach us seem
so far from this world's ways.
How can we love those who hate us?
How can we love enemies?
What of people who abuse us?
How can we love even these?

Make us mindful: love is action,
not a feeling that uplifts. In each daily situation,
love's the greatest of all gifts.
It's the wiser, stronger person
who will break the chain of hate.
Love can usher in redemption;
love can make a people great.

Faced with those who seek to hurt us,
make us confident and free:
you don't call us to be helpless
but to stand with dignity.
Lord, when others are demanding,
may we know they matter more than
our money or possessions.
May we share, not keeping score.

If we love just those who love us,
where's the giving? Where's the grace?
Even sinners try to do this;
they have friends that they embrace.
May we do, Lord, unto others
as we'd have them also do.
You have shown us: Love is action.
May we love, and make things new.

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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.*

A Prayer for My Enemy, by St. Nikolai of Zicha and Ochrid

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Enemies have driven me into Thy embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an un hunted animal, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Thy tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world. They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance. Bless, my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand. Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep. Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Your garment. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me-so that my fleeing to You may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know-what hardly anyone knows-that a person has not enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends. It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies. Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies. A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.