

CREATED FOR ETERNITY

*Having made peace through the blood of his cross,
by him to reconcile all things unto himself . . .
whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

COLOSSIANS 1:20

Men and women without God are helpless and hopeless human beings. We do well to remember that sin is to the human nature what cancer is to the human body!

Who can argue with the fact that sin has ruined us?

Our feverish activity is only one sign of what is wrong with us—sin has plunged us into the depths and so marked us with mortality that we have become brother to the clay—but God never meant it to be so.

Men and women may argue and make excuses, but it does not change the fact that in our human society we are completely surrounded by three marks of the ancient curse: Everything is recent, temporal and transient! That is why the Holy Spirit whispers faithfully, reminding us of the Christ of God, eternity walking in flesh, God Almighty come to live among us and to save—actually to give us eternity!

This we know: When we turn our faces toward the Eternal One, asking, “God have mercy on me, a sinner,” we are finally being what God intended us to be in the first place!



Almighty God and Eternal Father, help me to journey through the coming year with a new set of eyes. Enable me to see life from Your lofty, eternal perspective.

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God.

JOHN 1:1

None of us can approach a consideration of the eternal nature and Person of Jesus Christ without sensing and confessing our human inadequacy in the face of the divine revelation.

John, in his Gospel, provides a beautiful portrait of the eternal Christ, starting with those stark, incredible words: “In the beginning!” My brethren, that is where we start with the understanding and the revelation of Christianity!

Many others have made a variety of claims, but only our Christ is the Christ of God. Certainly it was not Buddha and not Mohammed; not Joseph Smith, not Mrs. Eddy and not Father Divine! All of these and countless others like them had beginnings—but they all had their endings too.

What an incredible difference! Our Christian life commences with the eternal Son of God. This is our Lord Jesus Christ: the Word who was with the Father in the beginning; the Word who was God; and the Word who is God! This is the only one who can assure us: “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).



Loving Heavenly Father, help me to live each day this year as a humble, grateful child of the eternal God.

MAN HAS LOST GOD

Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

PSALM 104:29

The average person in the world today, without faith and without God and without hope, is engaged in a desperate personal search and struggle throughout his lifetime. He does not really know what he is doing here. He does not know where he is going.

The sad commentary is that everything he is doing is being done on borrowed time, borrowed money and borrowed strength—and he already knows that in the end he will surely die! It boils down to the bewildered confession of many humans that they have lost God somewhere along the way.

Man, made more like God than any other creature, has become less like God than any other creature. Created to reflect the glory of God, he has retreated sullenly into his cave—reflecting only his own sinfulness.

Certainly it is a tragedy above all tragedies in this world that love has gone from man's heart. Beyond that, light has gone from his mind. Having lost God, he blindly stumbled on through this dark world to find only a grave at the end!



Dear Lord, thank You for the hope that I have found in Christ. And thank You for giving meaning and purpose to my life. Help me to glorify You today.

SAVIOR AND LORD

For by grace are ye saved through faith . . . it is the gift of God.

EPHESIANS 2:8

God chose His only begotten Son as the channel for His grace and truth, for John witnesses that “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

The Law was given by Moses—but that was all that Moses could do. He could only “command” righteousness. In contrast, only Jesus Christ produces righteousness.

All that Moses could do was to forbid us to sin. In contrast, Jesus Christ came to save us from sin.

Moses could not save anyone—but Jesus Christ is both Savior and Lord.

Grace came through Jesus Christ before Mary wept in the manger stall in Bethlehem. It was the grace of God in Christ that saved the human race from extinction when our first parents sinned in the Garden.

It is plain in history that God forgave Israel time and time again. It was the grace of God in Christ prior to the Incarnation that made God say: “I have risen early in the morning and stretched out my hands to you!”



Dear Lord, I want to be a reflection of Your grace and truth in the lives of my family and coworkers today.

OUR CHARTER IS FROM GOD

*Upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

MATTHEW 16:18

While we are right to thank God in appreciation for all of the great and good men in the history of the Christian church, we actually “follow” none of them. Our charter goes farther back and is from a higher source. They were rightly looked upon as leaders, but they were all servants of God, even as you and I are.

Luther sowed. Wesley watered. Finney reaped—but they were only servants of the living God.

In our local assemblies, we are part of the church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and perpetuated by the mystery of the new birth. Therefore, our assembly is that of Christian believers gathered unto a Name to worship and adore the Presence. So, in that sense, the strain is gone. The strain and pressure to abide by traditional religious forms all begin to pale in importance as we function in faith as the people of God who glorify His Name and honor His Presence!

If all of this is true—and everything within me witnesses that it is—we may insist that God is able to do for us all that He did in the days of the apostles. There has been no revocation of our charter!



Dear Lord, thank You for the people in my life who have helped to shape me spiritually. And thank You that You alone are still the Source of new life.

YES, GOD LOVES US

We love him, because he first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19

If we are to have any satisfying and lasting understanding of life, it must be divinely given. It begins with the confession that it is indeed the God who has revealed Himself to us who is the central pillar bearing up the universe. Believing that, we then go on to acknowledge that we have discovered His great eternal purpose for men and women made in His own image.

I heard a brilliant Canadian author being interviewed on the radio concerning world conditions, and he said: "I confess that our biggest mistake is the fond belief that we humans are special pets of Almighty God and that God has a special fondness for us as people."

We have a good answer: Man as he was originally created is God's beloved. Man in that sense is the beloved of the universe. God said, "I have made man in My image and man is to be above all other creatures. Redeemed man is to be even above the angels in the heavens. He is to enter into My presence pardoned and unashamed, to worship Me and to look on My face while the ages roll on!" No wonder we believe that God is the only certain foundation!



Dear Lord, thank You for Your unconditional love for me. I pray that I will not act like a spoiled child but that my life will honor You in all my relationships.

RICHES OF GRACE

*God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . .
by whom also he made the worlds.*

HEBREWS 1:1–2

Would it startle you if I dared to say that the living God has never done anything in His universe apart from Jesus Christ?

Christians seem to be woefully unaware of the full meaning and measure of the grace of God. Why should we question God's provision when the Holy Spirit tells us through the Apostle John that the Word who became flesh is "full of grace and truth"? Brethren, the stars in their courses, the frogs that croak beside the lake, the angels in heaven above and men and women on earth below—all came out of the channel we call the eternal Word!

In the book of Revelation, John bears record of the whole universe joining to give praise to the Lamb that was slain. Under the earth and on the earth and above the earth, John heard creatures praising Jesus Christ, all joining in a great chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (5:12).

Yes, surely the entire universe is beneficiary of God's rich grace in Jesus Christ!



Lord, I praise Your name. You alone are worthy of all my adoration. Help me to walk uprightly today as a testimony to Your presence in my life.

BENEFITS OF GRACE

But now in Christ Jesus ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

EPHESIANS 2:13

Only a believing Christian can testify, “I am a sinner—saved by the grace of God!” But that is not the whole story. All that we have is cut of His grace. Jesus Christ, the eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, is the open channel through whom God moves to provide all the benefits He gives, both to saints and to sinners—yes, even to sinners!

Even though you may still be unconverted and going your own way, you have received much out of the ocean of His fullness. You have received the pulsing life that beats in your bosom.

You have received the brilliant mind and the brain without which you could not function. You have received a memory that strings the events you cherish as a jeweler strings pearls into a necklace.

When we say to an unbelieving man, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” we are actually saying to him: “Believe on the One who sustains you and upholds you and who has given you life. Believe in the One who pities you and spares you and keeps you. Believe on the One out of whom you came!”



Lord, You are such a merciful God! Your offer of salvation is available to all men, women and children. You send Your rain on both the just and the unjust. Lord, open my eyes to those in my sphere of influence who don't know You.

GOD'S GRACIOUS ACT

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

JOHN 1:14

We do well to remember that mankind is only one order of God's beings or creatures. So we wonder: How could the Infinite ever become finite? And: How could the Limitless One deliberately impose limitations upon Himself?

In the book of Hebrews, we learn to our amazement that God took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham.

We would suppose that God in stepping down would step down just as little as possible. But instead He came down to the lowest order and took upon Himself the nature of Abraham—the seed of Abraham.

I like what John Wesley said concerning this mysterious act of God in stooping down to tabernacle with us: We should be sure to distinguish the act from the method by which the act is performed. Do not reject a fact because we do not know how it was done, Wesley advised.

With the saints of all ages, we do well just to throw up our hands and confess: "Oh Lord, Thou knowest!"



Heavenly Father, thank You so much for leaving the heights of heaven and stooping down to our lowly level. We didn't deserve this amazing visitation from above, but we are so grateful.

GRACE CAN BE COSTLY

*For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace . . .
grace be with you all. Amen.*

HEBREWS 13:9, 25

Christians all around us are trying every shortcut they can think of to get “something for nothing” in the kingdom of God. Talk to them and they will predictably flare up: “Isn’t grace something for nothing?”

That depends upon what kind of grace we are talking about.

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave his life as a martyr in Hitler’s Germany, but he left a book now known around the world: *The Cost of Discipleship*. He pointed out a sharp distinction between “cheap grace” and “costly grace.” Although God’s grace has been given freely to humans who do not deserve it, Bonhoeffer believed it rightly could be called “costly grace” because it cost our Lord Jesus Christ even the suffering of death.

Some men and women have actually turned God’s grace into lasciviousness. They do not know what the word *grace* means—that God gives us out of His rich and full goodness although we are unworthy of it. When I preach about the grace of God and point out that Jesus commanded us to take up our cross and follow Him, those who do not know the meaning of grace respond: “Oh, Tozer is now preaching legalism.”



Father, as I go about the activities of my day today—and for each month of this year—I want to be mindful of Your “costly grace” and desire to grow more deeply in my understanding of it.

UNITED WITH CHRIST

We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.

1 JOHN 5:20

The Spirit of God has impelled me to preach and write much about the believer's conscious union with Christ—a union that must be felt and experienced. I will never be through talking about the union of the soul with the Savior, the conscious union of the believer's heart with Jesus.

Remember, I am not talking about a “theological union” only. I am speaking also of a conscious union, a union that is felt and experienced.

I have never been ashamed to tell my congregations that I believe in feelings. I surely believe in what Jonathan Edwards termed “religious affections.” That is man's perspective.

I am aware also that from God's perspective there are qualities in the Divine Being that can only be known by the heart; never by the intellect!

Long ago John wrote: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16). So it is best for us to confess that as humans we have difficulty in understanding what God has said when He says that He loves us!



Heavenly Father, help me to be conscious of Your presence in my life today. And I pray that others will see You through me.

DEALING WITH SIN

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life.

ROMANS 6:23

Many evangelical teachers insist so strongly upon free, unconditional grace as to create the impression that sin is not a serious matter and that God cares very little about it!

They make it seem that God is only concerned with our escaping the consequences.

The gospel, then, in practical application, means little more than a way to escape the fruits of our past!

But the heart that has felt the weight of its own sin and has seen the dread whiteness of the Most High God will never believe that a message of forgiveness without transformation is a message of good news. To remit a man's past without transforming his present is to violate the moral sincerity of his own heart.

To that kind of thing God will be no party! For to offer a sinner the gift of salvation based upon the work of Christ, while at the same time allowing him to retain the idea that the gift carries with it no moral implications, is to do him untold injury where it hurts him most!



Father, thank You for changing me from the inside out. Empower me by Your Spirit to live in the light of Your forgiveness today.

LOVE WITHOUT MEASURE

Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

JEREMIAH 31:3

I once wrote something about how God loves us and how dear we are to Him. I was not sure I should put it down on paper—but God knows what I meant.

I wrote: “The only eccentricity that I can discover in the heart of God is the fact that a God such as He is should love sinners such as we are!”

On this earth a mother will love the son who has betrayed her and shamed her and is now on his way to a life in prison. That seems to be a natural thing for a mother. But there is nothing natural about this love of God. It is a divine thing. It is forced out by the inward pressure within the heart of the God of all grace. That is why He waits for us, puts up with us, desires to lead us on—He loves us!

My brethren, this should be our greatest encouragement in view of all that we know about ourselves: God loves us without measure, and He is so keenly interested in our spiritual growth and progress that He stands by in faithfulness to teach and instruct and discipline us as His own dear children!



Dear Lord, this morning I'm struck with the thought of how much You have put up with me—because of Your endless love. Lord, help me take another baby step toward spiritual maturity today.

JANUARY 14

THE WONDER OF REDEMPTION

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

COLOSSIANS 2:9

My brethren in the Christian faith, stand with me in defense of this basic doctrine: The living God did not degrade Himself in the Incarnation. When the Word was made flesh, there was no compromise on God's part!

It is plain in the ancient Athanasian Creed that the early church fathers were cautious at this point of doctrine. They would not allow us to believe that God, in the Incarnation, became flesh by a coming down of the Deity into flesh, but rather by the taking of mankind into God. That is the wonder of redemption!

In the past the mythical gods of the nations were not strangers to compromise. But the holy God who is God, our heavenly Father, could never compromise Himself!

He remained ever God, and everything else remained not God. That gulf still existed even after Jesus Christ had become man and dwelt among us. This much, then, we can know about the acts of God—He will never back out of His bargain. This amazing union of man with God is effected unto perpetuity!



Heavenly Father, thank You for making it possible for mankind to become redeemed. Praise to the most high God!

OUR LIFE IS IN CHRIST

Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:14

Certainly not all of the mystery of the Godhead can be known by man—but just as certainly, all that men can know of God in this life is revealed in Jesus Christ!

When the Apostle Paul said with yearning, “That I may know him” (Philippians 3:10), he was not speaking of intellectual knowledge. Paul was speaking of the reality of an experience of knowing God personally and consciously, spirit touching spirit and heart touching heart.

We know that people spend a lot of time talking about a deeper Christian life—but few seem to want to know and love God for Himself.

The precious fact is that God is the deeper life! Jesus Christ Himself is the deeper life, and as I plunge on into the knowledge of the triune God, my heart moves on into the blessedness of His fellowship. This means that there is less of me and more of God—thus my spiritual life deepens and I am strengthened in the knowledge of His will!



Dear Lord, this morning and throughout this day, may there be more and more of You and less and less of me.