

A Chapel Service of Remembrance:

ON GOD'S MERCY, BLESSINGS AND LOVE

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7/31/2008

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our chapel service of remembrance. We gather here together today to remember those of our loved ones who have gone on to be with GOD in His Kingdom Above. We gather here also to pray for those who are in any way afflicted in body, mind or spirit. We gather here also to share encouragement with one another in His Name. And we gather here to cry out to the mercy, blessings and love of our Eternal Father in Heaven.

Let us come together before The Most High, each in his and her own way, and observe a moment of silence. [Silence] In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. Amen. [The Sign of The Cross]

II. [chant] PSALM 57:1-11– The Mercy of GOD

¹ Be merciful unto me, O GOD, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

² I will cry unto GOD Most High; unto GOD that performeth all things for me.

³ He shall send from Heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. GOD shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

⁵ Be Thou exalted, O GOD, above the heavens; let Thy glory be above all the earth.

⁷ My heart is fixed, O GOD, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

⁹ I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto Thee among the nations.

¹⁰ For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds.

¹¹ Be thou exalted, O GOD, above the heavens: let Thy glory be above all the earth. ¹

III. [reading] MATTHEW 5:3-9 – The Beatitudes – The blessings of GOD

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven.

⁴ Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of GOD.

¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven. ²

¹ 1, KJV, PSALM 57:1-11.

² 1, KJV, MATTHEW 5:1-10.

IV. [poem] Saint Teresa of Avila – The Love of GOD

If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong
As this which binds me unto Thee,
What holds me from Thee, Lord, so long,
What holds Thee, Lord, so long from me?

O soul, what then desirest thou?
Lord, I would see, who thus choose Thee.
What fears can yet assail thee now?
All that I fear is to lose Thee!

Love's whole possession I entreat,
Lord, make my soul Thine own abode,
And I will build a nest so sweet
It may not be too poor for GOD!

O soul in GOD hidden from sin,
What more desires for thee remain,
Save but to love, and love again,
And all on flame with love within,
Love on, and turn to love again? ³

V. HOMILY

Muslims refer to GOD in The Qur'an with The Divine Titles of "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful." ⁴ In The Hebrew, the word ascribed to GOD's character here is CHESED - חֶסֶד - that is, "mercy, goodness, kindness." And while the mercy of men is imperfect and often flawed, the mercy of GOD is perfect and flawless. ⁵ Saint Paul declares in EPHESIANS 2:4-5, "But GOD, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST, [for] by Grace ye are saved." ⁶

So we began with our chant of PSALM 57, a cry of David of Old, when he was oppressed and persecuted by King Saul. In his distress, David's soul cried out to The Most High, "O GOD, Thou art my Refuge and Deliverer! In Thy great mercy, save me, O LORD, for I am Thy humble and broken servant!" Therefore David knows that he may confidently call upon the perfect loving mercy of The LORD. Why? Because The LORD Himself is perfect in all His ways. And so may we.

³ 2, Liturgy of The Hours, Book III, Ordinary Time Weeks 1-17, Appendix IV: Poetry, p 1972, "If, Lord, Thy Love for Me is Strong," a poem by Saint Teresa of Avila, Translated by Arthur Symonds.

⁴ 3, SURAH 1:3, "The Opening" of "The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an, by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a widely respected English translation."

⁵ 4, BDB 3280 and Strong 2617, CHESED - חֶסֶד - I. "mercy, goodness, kindness;" II. "of GOD, [perfect] kindness, lovingkindness in condescend[ing] to the needs of his creatures," especially to man.

⁶ 1, KJV, EPHESIANS 2:4-5.

We next went to The Words of JESUS CHRIST in The Beatitudes, The beautiful blessings of GOD upon those who seek His face, from the midst of darkness and pain, as well as from the midst of light and joy. For the light of GOD's face shines most brightly into our souls when all else has fallen into darkness around us. And it is because of GOD's boundless mercy that we may receive the hope of His blessings upon us, partly in this life, and fully in His Kingdom above.

We last go to a poem of Saint Teresa of Avila, "If Lord Thy love for me is strong." It is because of The Almighty's boundless love that we may be sure of receiving the blessings of His comfort because of His great mercy. His strong arms of peace and comfort are always open to us, always calling to us, to feed our souls with His love. Therefore, even in the midst of pain and loss, we need not despair, but only turn towards the light of His face upon our lives and souls. May it ever be so for us all, both now and forever.

VI. PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED AND THE GRIEVING

O GOD, we come before Thee to lift up the names of these departed loved ones, who now rest in Thy perfect mercy, blessing and love in Thy Kingdom of Heaven Above. O Lord JESUS CHRIST, our Rock and Peace in this life and forever, we pray that these Thy departed servants shall rejoice with Thee in Heaven for all time, and that we also Thy servants here on earth might receive Thy merciful comfort.

O GOD, we also lift up before Thee those who remain here in this world, those who grieve and mourn for the passing of their loved ones. O Lord JESUS CHRIST, our Hope and Strength in this life and forever, we pray that these Thy servants may shed their tears before Thee with the assurance that Thy hand is upon them, that they are never alone without Thee, that every tear they cry today is recorded in Thy Book of Life Above, and that Thou wilt in due time wipe away all their tears with Thine own hand.

VII. A HYMN – O GOD, Our Help in Ages Past!

1. O GOD, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home.
2. Under the shadow of Thy throne,
still may we dwell secure;
sufficient is Thine arm alone,
and our defense is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting, Thou art GOD,
to endless years the same.

4. A thousand ages, in Thy sight,
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night,
before the rising sun.
5. Time, like an ever rolling stream,
bears all who breathe away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.
6. O GOD, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come;
be Thou our guide while life shall last,
and our eternal home.⁷

VIII. A PRAYER PRAYER

Let us pray: "Almighty GOD, Who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in Thy Name Thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen."⁸

IX. BENEDICTION

Let us bow our heads and pray for GOD's blessing, confident in His mercy, held fast in His love:

May The LORD bless us and keep us, now and always. May The LORD make the light of His face to shine down upon us and be gracious to us. And let us say together, "Amen!"

May The LORD uplift us, and all our loved ones, with His mighty outstretched arm. And let us say together, "Amen!"

May The LORD continue to now and forever surround us and fill us with His everlasting love, and give us His peace. And let us say together, "Amen!"⁹

In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. Amen. [The Sign of The Cross]

⁷ 5, "117. O God, Our Help in Ages Past." Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748. Music: Attr. to William Croft; harm. by W.H. Monk. Tune: ST. ANNE, Meter: CM. Retrieved 7/19/2008. <http://www.hymnsite.com/>

⁸ 6, Anglican Book of Common Prayer, "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom," p 21.

⁹ 1, KJV, see NUMBERS 6:24-26.

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