



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

The ability and opportunity to pray to God – to have God hear and answer our prayers – must never be taken for granted. We do not deserve anything good from God, and we cannot do anything good apart from Him (Is.64:6; Rom.3:10-12; Eph.2:1-3; Rom.8:7-8). If it were not for God's sovereign love and saving grace we could not approach Him let alone pray to Him (Is.1:15; 59:2; Prov.15:29).

The following prayer, from the great prayer book "The Valley of Vision: A collection of Puritan Prayers", beautifully expresses the goodness and grace of God which enables us to approach His throne in prayer.

Benign LORD,

I praise thee continually for permission to approach thy throne of grace, and to spread my wants and desires before thee.

I am not worthy of thy blessings and mercies for I am far gone from original righteousness;

My depraved nature reveals itself in disobedience and rebellion;

My early days discovered in me discontent, pride, envy, revenge.

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor the multiplied transgressions of later years, my failure to improve time and talents, my abuse of mercies and means, my wasted sabbaths, my perverted seasons of grace, my long neglect of thy great salvation, my disregard of the Friend of sinners.

While I confess my guilt, help me to feel it deeply, with self-aborrence and self-despair, yet to remember there is hope in thee, and to see the Lamb that takes away sin.

Through him may I return to thee, listen to thee, trust in thee, delight in thy law, obey thee, be upheld by thee.

Preserve my understanding from error, my affections from love of idols, my lips from speaking guile, my conduct from stain of vice, my character from appearance of evil, that I may be harmless, blameless, rebukeless, exemplary, useful, light-giving, prudent, zealous for thy glory and the good of my fellow-men.

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To address God as "Benign LORD" may be a bit unusual and may even seem wrong. But it is a good reminder that God is good, kind, and gentle. This does not declare Him to be weak or harmless. For He is "*a consuming fire*" (Heb.12:29). At the end of the movie "Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," as Aslan (who depicts Christ) walks alone into the sunset, Mr. Tumnus warns Lucy by saying, "He's not a tame lion." To which Lucy agrees, and then correctly states, "No, but he is good." In Romans, we are commanded to "*Note ... the kindness and the severity of God*" (Rom.11:22).

As Christians, we have been given the amazing blessing of coming to God in prayer – to "*confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help*" (Heb.4:16). But we must always be mindful of what an awesome privilege this is. We must never come before God arrogantly, flippantly, selfishly, or hypocritically (Ps.66:18; Prov.28:9; Is.1:15; Jms.4:3; 1Jn.5:14).

Together in and for Christ,

Pastor David

(8/3/26)

Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #31):

Leviticus 22-24; 2 Kings 21-25; Psalm 90-92; Proverbs 14-15; Ezekiel 43-48; John 1-2; 1 Thess. 4-5

Recommended Reading:

"The Valley of Vision: a Collection of Puritan Prayers" edited by Arthur Bennett