

Prayer Texts for the Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer 2008

The Presence of Jesus Christ in Our World

It appears that there is little place for God in our world. Outside of the church life follows laws of its own; economic and political aims determine the course of society. In the minds of most people, religion is pushed into a small corner – that is how things appear to be in our continent. Therefore, during this Prayer Week, let us make the presence of Jesus more tangible and powerful in the lives of believers, led by His promise:

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:20)

Sunday, 6 January 2008

Jesus – the center of our whole being

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” (John 14:6; 15:4, 5, 9, 10)

Further reading: John 3:35-36

Many things push out the Saviour to the periphery of our thinking and activities. However, we need Jesus as: 1) The only road that leads to a meaningful and satisfying end, 2) The truth that gives freedom and which can guide our actions, and 3) The life that overflows with joy and significance. Have we truly grasped and experienced Jesus as the only focus in our life?

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for revealing Himself as a Father and Gardener, for allowing us to know Him through Christ and His Word
- We thank God for taking care of His Church, for purifying and empowering it for His glory
- We pray for spiritual revival among individual believers and churches
- We pray for spiritual revival especially among Christian leaders

Monday, 7 January

Jesus – the rock in the crises of our lives

“On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?” (Mark 4:35-41)

There are times of crisis in the life of everyone: problems with our job, health, family or other sorrows which turn our lives into a storm. We feel as if we are sailing in the dark, drifting on the waves within our small ship. Do we trust Jesus in such times and do we truly believe that He is with us through all circumstances?

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for His protection and loving care amidst the difficult periods in our lives. He is both sovereign over all and compassionate
- We pray for those experiencing crisis of any kind: spiritual, emotional, social, ethnic, political, material etc.
- We pray especially for those experiencing problems in their family situation

Tuesday, 8 January

Jesus – the light of the world

“The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:9-13)

Further reading: John 8:12; Isaiah 42:6-7

The Creator of the Universe is the only true source of light. In the life of the individual, as well as in the lives of nations there is too much darkness. Where do we seek for true light? What do we do in order that the values of Christ's teaching might illuminate our world? The church has a great mission – to point to the source of light – Jesus.

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for taking the initiative in searching every human being out and not waiting for us to get become interested in Him
- We thank God for sending His Holy Spirit in the lives of believers to make them a witness of light within their society
- We pray for European Christians to get a better understanding of their mission in this world
- We pray for a mission not only from the West to the rest... but from everywhere to everybody everywhere

Wednesday, 9 January

Jesus and young people

“And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:16-26)

Further reading: 1 John 2:13, 14

For that intelligent young man, wealth was a great hindrance toward reaching the truth about the Kingdom of God. For others it may be pleasures or unfulfilled dreams and ambitions. Could that young person accept the truth about the Kingdom? In Jesus we have the true answer to all that we are still lacking and striving for. What is keeping us away? What do we need to leave behind in order to accept Jesus as fully Lord in our life?

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for the young people that are in our families and churches
- We thank God for His love and care for them, for being able to keep them from falling and conforming them to the image of His Son
- We pray for the young people in our churches, for God to grant them wisdom and strength to live for His glory within their contemporary culture
- We pray for the young people who are still non-believers, that God will reveal Himself to them and lead them to Himself
- We pray for the young people whose lives are being destroyed by sin, that they will find forgiveness and a new life in Christ
- We pray especially for drug addicts, victims of aids and violence and/or abuse and those who are involved in terrorism

Thursday, 10 January

Jesus and children

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:1-6)

Children are often victims of aggression in this world, so it should not be a surprise when they themselves become aggressive towards the world. What have we failed to do for those children who are orphans, beggars or objects of humiliation and exploitation?

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for the children in our families and churches
- We thank God for those women and men taking care of children on this planet and ask for his blessing on their ministries
- We pray for the children in our nations to have a chance to hear the message of hope – the good news of Christ
- We pray for every child on our continent to find understanding, loving, and wise adults
- We pray for the churches to exercise special wisdom in caring for the children among and around us and teaching them in the way of truth

Friday, 11 January

Jesus and the needs of the people

“The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.” (Mark 6:30-44)

Further reading: Deuteronomy 10:17-19

The social mission of the church is part of the gospel. The various social ministries of the church are part of the commission of the Savior to all believers. Those include ministries to orphans, widows, those who are lonely, elderly, immigrants, prisoners, disabled, and others.

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for His interest in the whole person and a salvation that includes every aspect of our being
- We thank God for the material blessing that we have in many parts of Europe
- We pray for those who are poor, sick, foreigners, immigrants and for those who have suffered as a result of natural disasters
- We pray for those who are being persecuted around the globe
- We pray for Christians and churches in their responsibility towards those in need

Saturday, 12 January

Jesus and the great commission

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep... And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.” (John 21:15-17, 19b)

Further reading: Matthew 9:36-38; Romans 12:1-2

After the crisis of denial, Jesus gave his apostle, Peter, another chance. In the quiet voice of the Saviour there was no condemnation, but a lot of tenderness, “Do you love me more than these?” Then followed the commission: “Feed my sheep.”

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for entrusting us with this Great Commission
- We thank God for ensuring that we do not fail
- We pray for every believer in Europe to understand their own part in this commission
- We pray for revitalization and a new strength of all European believers to obey Jesus' commission

Sunday, 13 January

Jesus and the future of our world

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

Further reading: Matthew 28:18-20, John 10:28, Matthew 25:1-5

Who does the future of our world depend on: politicians, business leaders, or God? Jesus is present in our world, and He is given all power – on earth and in heaven. He is the first and the last. This is relevant not only for the nations and the world, but it is also relevant for the future of every individual. The future of the world depends on God and believers are called to be His ambassadors within their society. Heaven is a place prepared for prepared people.

Suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer

- We thank God for holding even the future under His control, not only globally, but also individually
- We pray for the church to stand its ground amidst material prosperity
- We pray for individual believers to stand up amidst a period of spiritual apathy and a tendency toward falling asleep

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