

## Scripture Resources ... Coronavirus 2020

... these might be helpful to you as reflect on God's promise of comfort, healing and blessing during times of anxiety and stress like we are going through now

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. *(Psalm 23, NRSV)*

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident. One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! “Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation! If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! *(Psalm 27, NRSV)*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. 10 “Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *(Psalm 46, NRSV)*

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation. *(Psalm 91, NRSV)*

Jesus said, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (*John 14: 25-27, NRSV*)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (*Matthew 5: 1-9, NRSV*)

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (*Matthew 11: 28-30, NRSV*)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (*Romans 8: 26-28, NRSV*)

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Romans 8: 31-39, NRSV*)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation. (*2Corinthians 1: 3-7, NRSV*)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. (*Phil 4:4-9, NRSV*)

## Prayer Resources ... Coronavirus 2020

*... these prayers may be helpful as you seek peace and comfort for yourself, those closest to you and all who are affected by this coronavirus pandemic*

Father God, You are the ultimate Healer. We come before You to pray for those infected with this virus. We pray for not only their healing, but for them to be comforted while they heal. Please eradicate every ounce of this virus from their bodies. Please heal every cell in their bodies, every infected part of their being. We pray for no lasting effects in their bodies from this illness. Please heal them inside and out and provide them with the medical care they need, with the medications they need, and with the healing not only physically but spiritually so that they may live life and life abundantly ahead. In Jesus' name, Amen

Living God, in our hour of need we turn again to you, for we have nowhere else to turn. We put our faith in you, because you have proved your faithfulness time and again. We reaffirm our love for you because you have never let us go. We thank you that you are not distant from us but have drawn near, in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He has shared our life, tasted our death and defeated it; He understands our worries and our fears. Help us to respond as your children now. We pray for this pandemic spreading across our world, remembering all who have lost loved ones. and praying for those seriously ill at this time. We uphold those in positions to provide medical advice, protocols and procedures as they respond to this added pressure on their already overstretched services. We pray for doctors and nurses and all in the caring professions, who work to help and support people as best they can. We remember those working behind the scenes. testing samples, confirming results, giving information to patients. We uphold others trying to understand this virus better, working to create an effective remedy. We pray for our Governments as they work with the best medical advice to guide us on how we should respond and what action we should take. We pray that these guidelines might be taken seriously and that all would put them into action. May this crisis bring out the best in us, not the worst. Help us to live by faith and not by fear; to build bridges not barriers, and to resist all who would speak ill of any other group. May we not forget our responsibility to one another, not least to the vulnerable and voiceless in our communities. Help us to find ways of keeping in touch and offering reassurance to those with underlying health issues; for any who feel particularly vulnerable. or in danger at present. As the virus spreads we pray for the disruption it causes to normal life, bringing new fears and anxieties: We pray for those who have been laid off as their work disappears; for financial hardship for individuals and businesses; for the impact on the economy, when austerity has already left its mark. We pray for those whose trips, both for business and pleasure, have been cancelled; and others where events, long anticipated and planned for, have been postponed; for those making contingency planning for home based work or child care or exams. May our inconvenience not blind us to others' loss. We remember those who cannot visit loved ones in locked-down care homes; for the elderly whose social contacts have been severely curtailed; help us to find creative ways of keeping in touch, of assuring them they are not forgotten or ignored. May congregations find new ways of living though this time. May we not forget our faith, but draw strength from it. God of grace and God of mercy, hear our prayers at this time. Strengthen us, by your Spirit, so that: we may carry on our lives as best as we are able, looking out for others, showing love in action, being faithful in prayer, and sharing encouragement, hope and peace; always trusting in you. our Rock and our Redeemer. These prayers we bring to you. in Jesus' name. Amen.

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. Amen

God, we know with no doubt that You are bigger than the threat of anything, especially illnesses. Please comfort those who are living in fear, please free them from the bondage that anxiety creates within. Remind them of the peace which passes all understanding which is your gift to them. Help those who are living in unease to trust You in this time so that in times to come we may rest assured that You will be faithful to be with us until the end of age. In Jesus' name, Amen

God, we pray for those who are caring for the sick. It takes a kind and selfless heart to care for those who are sick. We pray that You would be their source of rest, their source of replenishment when weary, and their source of hope in when things are overwhelming and stressful. We pray blessings upon these caregivers. We also pray for their health that they may not fall ill. Please protect them against the germs of coronavirus and any compromise to their physical, emotional or spiritual health. In Jesus' name, Amen

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness." At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love. Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders. Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace. Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace. Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth. Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace. Jesus Christ, heal us. Amen

Since you, O God, are with us, nothing that has happened, nothing still to come, can rob us of our hope in Christ. Sustain us, we beg you, during this time of uncertainty. Bless all the emergency and medical personnel who are caring for the sick and working to contain the outbreak. Grant swift recovery to those who are affected and comfort to their families and loved ones. Encourage those who are afraid. Bind us now, more than ever, to you and to each other, so that we may triumph by the power of him who loves us, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

God of wisdom, bless medical scientists and researchers around the world with insight and skill, dedication and fortitude, as they combat coronavirus, so that their work yields knowledge and understanding, speedily finding a vaccine, treatments and deterrents to its spread. Source of life, grant public health and government officials the strength to act swiftly and decisively, with compassion and understanding, in service to humankind, fighting this outbreak and the other diseases that still plague the planet, diseases threatening the lives of our brothers and sisters, Nations and communities, Young and old. Rock of Ages, bring an end to disease and suffering, so that all may know your compassion and your grace. Praised are You, God, healer of flesh, maker of wonders. In Jesus name. Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through these anxious times, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Keep watch, dear God, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.