

# Proper 10



## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, use our lives to touch the world with your love. Stir us, by your Spirit, to be neighbor to those in need, serving them with willing hearts; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Deuteronomy 30:9-14

{9} The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, {10} when you obey the LORD your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. {11} Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. {12} It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" {13} Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" {14} No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

9-10: God will make the people prosperous *when* they obey the commandments and decrees of the Lord, and *because* they turn to the Lord with all their heart and soul. This is a straight-forward presentation of the theology of the Mosaic covenant, as, for example, in Exodus 19:5: "Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples."

10 *when you obey The Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees:* Yahweh has blessed his people and prospered them in order for them to observe his commandments and decrees, and to act toward others as he has acted toward them.

11-14: The commandments and decrees are now viewed as impossible to keep. In fact, the word of the commandment is "in your mouth and in your heart." Jeremiah prophesies a new covenant in which the law will be written in the heart (Jeremiah 31:31). But according to this passage that is already the case.

## Psalms 25:1-10

{1} To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. {2} O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. {3} Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. {4} Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. {5} Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. {6} Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. {7} Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD! {8} Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. {9} He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. {10} All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

2-3. *my enemies...who are wantonly treacherous:* The singer is threatened by enemies. The latter part of the Psalm focuses on the torment the singer feels because of them.

3. *be put to shame*: The singer is unable to maintain his/her own honor, and begs Yahweh to preserve it, while shaming the enemies.

4-7: The singer asks for guidance and mercy from Yahweh.

8-9: Yahweh's goodness is the ground for the singer's hope for guidance.

10. *steadfast love and faithfulness*: These are qualities of Yahweh, and qualities expected of the people who are in covenant with him. Following Yahweh's paths produce such qualities. Yahweh's love is promised to those who keep his covenant and his decrees, a reference to the Sinai covenant.

### Colossians 1:1-14

{1} Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, {2} To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. {3} In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, {4} for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, {5} because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel {6} that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. {7} This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, {8} and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit. {9} For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, {10} so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. {11} May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully {12} giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. {13} He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, {14} in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

"Paul in prison has heard about the dangerous situation in Colossae from Epaphras (1:7b-8), who is himself a Colossian and the founder of the congregation (1:5b-7; 4:12-13). This letter is Paul's response and it is probably to be carried to Colossae by Tychicus and Onesimus who are going to tell the Colossians all about Paul's present circumstances, and bring them his words of encouragement." [1]

3-8: An expanded blessing formula. In verse 3 God is identified as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul uses the word *christ* as a personal name, though without losing the titular significance. Because he "uses *Christos* as a proper name, Paul emphasizes the fact that the Jewish title "Messiah" is inseparable from, and is now tied solely to this Jewish Jesus." [2]

*faith...love*: "...the 'and' between the two expressions 'faith' and 'love' is to be understood as an 'interpretive "and," meaning "and, that is, namely, specifically.' Faith and love designate one and the same thing; here we have a case of heniadys." [3]

12-14: Ernst Käsemann, and George E. Cannon describe these verses as a baptismal confession, possibly of traditional origin that has become attached to the Christ-hymn in verses 15-20. [4]

### Luke 10:25-37

{25} Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" {26} He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" {27} He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." {28} And he said to him, "You

have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." {29} But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" {30} Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. {31} Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. {32} So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. {33} But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. {34} He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. {35} The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' {36} Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" {37} He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

25. *a lawyer*: A "lawyer" was versed in the "law," that is, the Torah, by which all social and religious interactions among Israelites were supposed to be regulated.

27. *"You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbor as yourself*: Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18b. To love with "all your heart...soul...strength...mind" is to love God completely and with every aspect of one's being.

28. *And who is my neighbor?* He said this "to justify himself," that is, to justify the question he first asked, which Jesus has made trivial by his question. The common answer would have described the neighbor in terms of the groups to which the lawyer belonged, family, patronage group, village community, the people of Israel, a specific sect, Pharisee, Sadducee, Essene.

29-37: Jesus' parable describes a situation which would have been almost unthinkable, and then asks who it is who acted as a neighbor, that is, as a close associate to the man who fell among thieves. To answer the lawyer would have had to rephrase the question again, "Who would be my neighbor if I fell among thieves?" Not knowing how his family or others would respond, his answer is given in general terms, "The one who showed him mercy."

30. *robbers*: "Groups of these bandits are most often composed of those displaced or disenfranchised by elites, precipitated by a combination of persecution, debt, heavy taxation, confiscation of lands, and forced shifts in the economy.... Rather than common thieves, they are groups that form for survival and protest against the elites." [5]

31. *a priest...passed by on the other side*: A priest was not permitted to touch the dead body of any except a family member (Ezekiel 44:25); he could not even touch the dead body of his wife (Leviticus 21:4).

32. *a Levite...passed by on the other side*: "Relatively few of them returned from the Babylonian Captivity (see Ezra 2:36-43), but these soon acquired a status entitling them to receive tithes for priestly service (Neh 10:37-38)," [6] and probably restrictions like those that affected the priests.

33. *a Samaritan*: See John 4:9, "Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans." In fact, Samaritans were despised as an heretical, mongrel people.

37. *Go and do likewise*: Jesus' response is to rephrase his earlier response, "do this, and you will live." Both the Samaritan and the half-dead Jewish man were "despised person, who would not have elicited initial sympathy from Jesus' peasant hearers. That sympathy would have gone to the bandits. They were frequently peasants who had lost their land to the elite lenders whom all peasants feared. The surprising twist in the story is thus the compassionate action of one stereotyped as a scurrilous thief" [7] toward one who might well have been a feared and hated money lender. And further, the "lawyer"

was told to imitate the example of a social outcast.

## Reflection

"The priest and the levite were not lacking in their love of God—the dedication of their status attests to that; but their love of neighbor was put to the test and was found wanting, whereas the Samaritan's shone true." [8] Jesus' admonition to "go and do likewise," requires that I put love of neighbor above all competing claims.

I cannot predict who my neighbor will be, nor can I predict when I will have the opportunity to be a neighbor. "...as victims we are 'loved' by the enemy, the heretic, the biologically impure, the immoral, the outcast, the nobody. To the southerner, the Good Samaritan may be the Negro; to the northerner, the southerner; to the American, the Russian; to the Russian, the American; to the John Bircher, the comsymp; to the liberal, the demagogue; to the modern Jew, the Arab; to the Arab, the Jew; to the Baptist, the Catholic; to the Catholic, the Unitarian. The Good Samaritan is precisely the one whom we do not expect to stop beside us on that road, the one by whom we do not want to be picked up in our battered condition, the one by whom we do not want to be loved." [9]

Jesus' understanding of the scope of love is broad and counter-cultural. It has nothing to do with affection, and everything to do with obedience: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Jesus taught this, he lived it: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).

The first lesson assures us that not too hard for us. It is as close as our confession of faith, and our will to obey. The second lesson urges us to live lives worthy of the Lord, and bear fruit pleasing to him.

## Hymns [10]

*With One Voice* (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

163 --E--Come, Holy Ghost,  
423 --E--Lord, Whose Love  
425 --D--O God of Mercy,  
763v --I--Let Justice Flow

318 --P--The Lord Will  
227 --II--How Blest Are  
486 --G--Spirit of God,  
803, 770s/754v, 492, 493

## Prayers of the People [11]

P or A: We pray that you would send us your Spirit, Lord, and respond, "Come, Holy Spirit."

A: For friendships, that we might be to our friends and find in our friends a haven of comfort, reassurance, and source of renewal in our often stressful lives. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For your great and mighty works of creation extolled in the Psalms, that they may speak to us of the rightful place of humility. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the fruit of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, kindness--that it may be evident in our lives, nourishing our own souls and the souls of others with goodness. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the sick, the shut-in, and the dying, that you would give them the light of your hope. We pray especially for \_\_\_\_\_ and all those whom we name in our hearts... .  
Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the courage to accept the challenge of the gospel--to leave all comforts and familiar things to follow the path of Christ. Let us know that you are always there to guide us. Send your Spirit, Lord. Come...

P: We pray in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

### Or [12]

#### *Presider or deacon*

Commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves, let us offer prayers for all peoples in every place.

#### *Deacon or other leader*

For this holy gathering and for those God loves in every place.

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.

For mercy, justice, and peace in the world.

For farmers and a good harvest, for those on vacation, and for safety from violent storms.

For those who travel roads of danger, for the sick, the poor, and the oppressed, and for all in peril and great need.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

For ourselves, our families and companions, and all those we love.

Lifting our voices with all creation, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

#### **To you, O Lord.**

#### *Presider*

God of mercy and kindness, who gave us the great commandment of love, hear the prayers we offer this day and write your word in our mouth and in our heart, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Notes**

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[1] Marcus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1994, p. 125.

[2] Victor Paul Furnish, Colossians, The Epistle," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, vol. 1, p. 1095a.

[3] Barth, *Ibid.*, p. 137. Heniadys is the use of two words connected by a conjunction, instead of subordinating one to the other, to express a single complex idea.

[4] Ernst Käsemann, "A Primitive Christian Baptismal Liturgy, *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964, pp. 149-168; George E. Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983, pp. 12-37.

[5] K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, p. 203.

[6] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV): Introduction,*

*Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985, p. 887.

[7] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 347.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 885.

[9] Robert W. Funk, "How Do You Read? A Sermon on Luke 10:25-37," *Interpretation* 18(1964)57-58.

[10] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rclc0001.txt>

[11] [http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter\\_c.txt](http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter_c.txt)

[12] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>