

Midweek Lenten Series: Open My Life, Lord



Open My Heart, Lord

Listening to Paul's teaching, Lydia opened her heart to God and was baptized. Her willing, trusting faith echoes down through the centuries as we witness her "open heart procedure."

Opening Dialogue

Open our hearts, Lord, to behold your laws.

Teach us to walk in your commandments.

Grant us grace to know and understand your will,

for all that we are in body and soul is a gift from you.

Lord, you are the everlasting Truth,

the one who speaks the words of eternal life.

Open our hearts, Lord, to behold your laws.

Teach us to walk in your commandments.

(Based on Thomas à Kempis, 1380–1471, The Imitation of Christ, trans. Richard Whitford, ca. 1530)

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer

Open our hearts, Lord, and fill us with your love. Grant us strength and courage,
remove our hard-heartedness, and turn us always to you. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Reading 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

As we work together with him,^[a] we urge you also not to accept the grace of God
in vain. ²For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting
no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but
as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great
endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots,
labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness,
holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the
weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and
dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are
true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as
punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet
making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to
you. ¹²There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. ¹³In return—I
speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

Psalmody Psalm 28

- ¹ To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, do not refuse to hear me, for if you are silent to me, I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.**
- ² Hear the voice of my supplication, as I cry to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.**
- ³ Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who are workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors, while mischief is in their hearts.**
- ⁴ Repay them according to their work, and according to the evil of their deeds; repay them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward.**
- ⁵ Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, or the work of his hands, he will break them down and build them up no more.**
- ⁶ Blessed be the LORD, for he has heard the sound of my pleadings.**
- ⁷ The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.**
- ⁸ The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.**
- ⁹ O save your people, and bless your heritage; be their shepherd, and carry them forever.**

Reading Acts 16:11-15

¹¹ We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district^[c] of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. ¹³ On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Reflection

Prayers

Lord of all life,
when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,
open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.

When we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,
open our hands to do your work in the world.

When we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,
open our ears, that all will know your love.

When we are hardened against our neighbor,
open our hearts and heal our resentment.

When we are closed to the grace you long to give us,
open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.

Here other prayers may be offered.

God, giver of life, you intend for humans to live together in peace. In this time of grief over gun violence, we pray for your presence among us. That, trusting in your mighty and gentle healing, we may live in hope, we pray:
make us instruments of your peace.

God of resurrection, we remember before you those who have died, in Boulder and Atlanta. We commend them to your eternal love. Grant healing and wholeness to the survivors who are wounded or traumatized, and restore all whose spirits are maimed by such violence. That we may serve as your arms of care to those in distress, we pray: **make us instruments of your peace.**

God of righteousness, you have laid on our elected leaders the responsibility to protect our land. Strengthen their devotion to our common life, and guide legislators to enact policies that address our plague of gun violence. That our government may support our search for domestic harmony, we pray:
make us instruments of your peace.

God of compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and all who offer compassionate aid in situations of tragedy. Keep them safe from harm, and give them courage and sound judgment as they act. That we may join in support of those who risk their lives for others, we pray:
make us instruments of your peace.

God of forgiveness, we ask your mercy on the ones who fired the weapon. With your grace, transform those who from malice or illness inflict violence on others. Console their families. Believing in your power to make all things new, we pray:
make us instruments of your peace.

God of the promise in word and sacrament, we pray for the church. Give us a voice, your voice, to plead for a society marked by justice and sustained by cooperation among diverse peoples. Train us to resist the lure of brute force. That by your Spirit we may become words and signs of your mercy, we pray:
make us instruments of your peace.

God of true might and redemptive mercy, receive our prayers, and grant us to become your instruments of peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.**

Blessing

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross.

The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life ✝ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.