

A Prayerful Reflection (Sunday of Epiphany)

Take time to sit quietly and ask Jesus to be present with you in a new way this week. As we prepare to pray, let's remember to praise God for all his goodness in and through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn – CMP 396

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that Thy blood was shed for me,
and that Thou bidd'st me
 come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

A WORD FROM SCRIPTURE – Romans 5:12-19

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people, because all sinned— ¹³ To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Verse 13 *'To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.'* God did not keep an account of sins before the giving of the law, because there was no law to obey or disobey.

Verse 16 *'Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.'* Through Adam came condemnation, the punishment we deserved, but through Christ came **'the free gift'**, that resulted in justification. In other words, the goal of the gift of eternal life is righteous living, the outworking of faith through righteous acts.

Verse 19 *'For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.'* As a result of Adam's sin, people became sinners. By Christ's death many will be made righteous, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the believer is continually becoming more and more righteous.

Prayer – Loving God, we thank you that in your grace and mercy, wisdom and strength, you purposed that Christ would come as the Second Man and Last Adam, to save us all from our sins and to give us His heavenly life, so that He may live His heavenly life through us, in Jesus we pray. **AMEN**

Prayer of Intercession

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, give us the gift of generosity, that we may reveal your love and forgiveness, and live in fellowship and peace with each other as we work for the coming of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **AMEN**

Lord, you are our delight and our joy, we seek to reflect your grace and goodness, make us slow to anger and not too ready to condemn. We pray that your church may be open and welcoming to all in need. We pray for churches that are divided by factions or through animosity. We pray for churches that are working to heal divisions and hurts.

God of love and hope – **give us your peace.**

God of peace, we pray for peace-givers and peace-makers. We pray for all who are seeking to bring reconciliation and hope to communities and peoples. We pray for those involved in conflict, strife or aggression, may they know your love.

God of love and hope – **give us your peace.**

We pray for those who have hardened themselves and feel unloved, all who are suffering from a breakdown in their relationships. May they come to the truth and a knowledge of the love Jesus has for those who are lost and wondering what life is about. Lord, open their eyes and hearts to Christ love in Jesus we pray.

God of love and hope – **give us your peace.**

We pray for our churches in the Circuit, for all who use their gifts in servanthood. We pray for Stewards, Sunday school's, musicians, mid week groups, school assemblies, readers, teachers of the word. Lord, we give thanks for all those who have a servant's heart,.. making Jesus known in our church and community.

Finally,....take time out to pray for those on your hearts, for those close to us, for families, friends or neighbours, for those who are known to us who are going through a difficult time. For those who have lost a loved one. We ask you're blessing upon all who are ill at home or in hospital. Lord, comfort and help those in need we pray.

Pray the LORD'S Prayer

Peace

*Fix your hearts upon God where true joys are to be found.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.*

A prayer of blessing

*Give love to your enemies, do good to those who hate you;
live as true sons and daughters of your heavenly Father.*

AMEN