

BRINGING GOD'S COMFORT AND PEACE IN TRAGEDY



LCMS DISASTER RESPONSE

GOING THROUGH THE BROKENNESS OF THIS WORLD

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ASPECTS of our all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving God that we as humans will never understand. We should not assume that God doesn't care, and we should not demand that God explain His actions to us. Rather, we should trust in His love even if we don't understand what is happening to us or around us. It is because of God's love for you that He is at work redeeming you and saving you from yourself. This love is evident in God sending His Son to die on the cross to pay for your sin, so that one day you will be rescued from this world of tragedy and live in the perfection of heaven.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

In the chaos of tragedy and loss it is comforting to hear God's enduring words found in Scripture. As Scripture is read, re-read and memorized, it will bring you God's peace and comfort.

PSALMODY

The Lord Is My Shepherd

"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 paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will 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
forever" (Psalm 23).

God Is Our Refuge and Strength

“God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*
“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 her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
“Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*” (Psalm 46).

God Is My Strength

“My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my
portion forever” (Ps. 73:26).

OLD TESTAMENT READING

The Lord is With You

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the
LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

“Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were engraved in the rock forever!
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!” (Job 19:23–27).

Remembering the Lord's Compassion

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”
“The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.
It is good for a man that he bear
the yoke in his youth” (Lam. 3:22–27).

EPISTLE

Nothing Separates Us From God

“For I am sure 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” (Rom. 8:38–39).

God's Grace Is Sufficient

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my
power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast
all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of
Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

God Chose Us in Christ

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before
the foundation of the world, that we should be holy
and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for
adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according
to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace,
with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we
have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our
trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he
lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight” (Eph. 1:3–8).

Trials Test the Faith

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be
born again to a living hope through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is
imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for
you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith
for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In

this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:3–7).

HOLY GOSPEL

I Will Give You Rest

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28–30).

Jesus Is the Light of the World

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

I Give Them Eternal Life, and They Will Never Perish

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:27–29).

Peace of God

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

HYMNS OF COMFORT

Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won

Jesus lives! The vict’ry’s won!
Death no longer can appall me;
Jesus lives! Death’s reign is done!
From the grave will Christ recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence. (stanza 1)

Jesus lives! I know full well
Nothing me from Him shall sever.
Neither death nor pow’rs of hell
Part me now from Christ forever.
God will be my sure defense;
This shall be my confidence. (stanza 4)

Jesus lives! And now is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath
When I pass its gloomy portal
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
Jesus is my confidence! (stanza 5) *LSB 490*

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living head. (stanza 1)

He lives to silence all my fears;
He lives to wipe away my tears;
He lives to calm my troubled heart;
He lives all blessings to impart. (stanza 5)

He lives, all glory to His name!
He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
I know that my Redeemer lives! (stanza 8) *LSB 461*

Abide with Me

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me. (stanza 1)

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death’s sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me! (stanza 5)

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav’n’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me. (stanza 6) *LSB 878*

BLESSINGS

The Lord be with you as you walk through this valley and continue in the protection and comfort of His rod and staff.

The Lord give you peace as you rest in Him. Dwell in the safety of our Lord and wake up renewed by your Savior.

The Lord bless us (you) and keep us (you). The Lord make His face to shine on us (you) and be gracious to us (you). The Lord look upon us (you) with favor and give us (you) peace.

PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, forgive us when we turn from You and rebel against Your Word and will. Have mercy on us for the sake of Jesus our Savior, Who lifted the weight of sin and guilt from us and carried that terrible burden in His own body to the cross. When our attention becomes fixed only on the troubles we see before us, turn our hearts to the glory that is unseen, the glory won for us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Comfort us now in our afflictions. Amen.

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, reign in our hearts with the peace that only You can give. Fill our hearts with the joy and confidence of knowing that You are watching over us day and night. When *(name)* cannot sleep, turn *(his/her)* thoughts toward prayer and the promises of Your Word. Bring to *(his/her)* restless thoughts the certainty of Your love and mercy. When *(name)* does sleep, grant *(him/her)* quiet, healing rest. Keep *(name)* safe in your care so that *(he/she)* might sleep in heavenly peace. Amen.

Heavenly Father, when *(names)* are trapped in anxiety and fears for the future, comfort them and strengthen their faith through the hope and peace found in Your Holy Word. Turn their attention to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, where they see evidence of Your care for all of creation. Through Christ our Savior You have delivered us from sin and death and have brought us safely into His eternal kingdom. You know our needs and You will provide for them, now and for eternity. Hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, in Your death and resurrection You have conquered, and in You, we too are conquerors. When we are threatened and frightened of the disasters that we must face, strengthen and encourage us with Your Word. We trust the grip of Your hand and know that nothing can separate us from Your love. Amen.

Lord Jesus, for us You suffered the desolation of the cross. Be present with us when we are alone and afraid, in an actual place of desolation or in a lonely place within ourselves. Nourish and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Hear our prayers and comfort us, so that we in turn might share Your comfort and hope with others in need. Amen.

THE COMFORT OF GOD'S LOVE

God often allows amazing things to come out of tragic situations (see Gen. 50:15–21). Job was eventually blessed after his time of tragedy (Job 42:10). However, there is no promise that you will always directly see or understand the good that comes out of particular trials and tribulations. In times of tragedy, it is important to trust in God's nature, that He is a loving and caring heavenly Father who is watching over you. In times of tragedy, we see God's mercy in action. God's mercy revealed to humanity is most clearly seen in the person of Jesus Christ, Who reminds us that we are reconciled to our heavenly Father and that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38–39).

What do I do when I feel like my life is falling apart?

1. Prayer is always good when you feel overwhelmed by the world.
2. Attend the Divine Service to receive the ongoing forgiveness of sins and be reminded that Christ is bodily present with you in a special way.
3. Consider talking to a pastor to get wise Christian advice when you are overwhelmed.
4. Consider talking to a pastor for private Confession and Absolution (see 1 John 1:9).
5. Use your suffering as a reminder that you live in a broken world and that Christ promises to be with you.
6. Place your hope in Christ and the Resurrection and not in this world or in sinful people who may disappoint you.

A Simple Order of Prayer:

- I. Invocation
- II. Hymn may be spoken or sung
- III. Scripture reading
- IV. Meditation on God's Word
- V. Apostles' Creed may be confessed
- VI. Prayer (Lord's Prayer and/or other prayers)
- VII. Concluding prayer and/or blessing



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