



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden
From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

God's precious and exceedingly great promises in hard times

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Scripture

Encouragement from Paul to not lose heart during challenging times.

II Corinthians 4:1-18

¹ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you.

¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Song

Psalm 59:16 *But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.*

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine:
now hear me while I pray,
take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
be wholly thine.

May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
O may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day,
wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
when death's cold, sullen stream
shall o'er me roll,
blest Savior, then, in love,
fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
a ransomed soul.

("My Faith Looks Up to Thee" words by Ray Palmer, 1830, Public Domain, CCLI# 358926 Streaming License #20317932)

Prayer

***II Chronicles 7:14** If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Holy Father, we live our days with our eyes fixed on what we can see and it is unsettling to our souls, it vexes our spirits, it troubles our minds. Enable us by your Spirit to see the unseen, to lift our eyes above the earth and focus on what is eternal. Enable us to endure earth the way Jesus did, with His eyes fixed on the joy set before Him, with His eyes fixed on the glory to come.

The god of this world is always trying to blind our eyes to the glories of the Gospel so he can seduce us into sin and temptation. Help us by increasing in us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Holy Father, we are not worthy to gather crumbs from under your table, and yet you have given us the richest of treasures in these earthen vessels of ours. You have shown us your salvation, you have poured out your Holy Spirit, you have given us your Word, you have called us into the fellowship of your family, you have given us more than sufficient grace for every day. You have done more than we could ever hope to ask or imagine.

Mindful of all of this we can endure this life's small and momentary trials and afflictions in the knowledge of the eternal weight of glory that is beyond all possible comparison. Help us to endure this life's difficulties from a truly eternal perspective, with godly grace, patient endurance and unspeakable joy. May our hearts soar in the knowledge that "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what you have prepared for those who love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). In the name of Jesus, Amen.