



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

Psalm 139:1-24

- ¹ *O Lord, you have searched me and known me!*
- ² *You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.*
- ³ *You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.*
- ⁴ *Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.*
- ⁵ *You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.*
- ⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*
- ⁷ *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?*
- ⁸ *If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!*
- ⁹ *If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,*
- ¹⁰ *even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.*
- ¹¹ *If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"*
- ¹² *even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.*
- ¹³ *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*
- ¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*
- ¹⁷ *How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*
- ¹⁸ *If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.*
- ¹⁹ *Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me!*
- ²⁰ *They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain.*
- ²¹ *Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?*
- ²² *I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.*
- ²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!*
- ²⁴ *And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

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.]

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n to earth come down:
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest:
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be:
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory, 'til in heav'n we take our place,
'Til we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

("Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" words by Charles Wesley music by Rowland H Prichard © 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.*

All-knowing and ever-present God, our eternal heavenly Father. We worship you and praise you for who you are and for all you have done.

You are omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, all knowing, all powerful and ever present. When we use words like that it can make you sound like a theory, like some great untouchable, unreachable distant being. But actually these words make you intimate, present, with us, for us. They mean you know us better than we know ourselves. All of our thoughts and actions are known to you. Before a thought is in our head you know it. Before a word in on our lips you know it.

No matter where we go or what we do, you are there. You never leave us or forsake us. From before our birth, through every second of our lives, to our last breath, you know and see it all. Every breath, every footstep, every heartbeat, every desire is known by you.

This means you know the worst about us, and we are worse than we know. And yet you love us and you seek relationship with us. Like the prodigal returning home to the father, you see us while we are far off and you run to us and embrace us. This is cause for worship.

We are worthy not because of who we are or what is in us or what we have done. We are worthy because you have made us so, fearfully and wonderfully made in your image. We can't prove anything, or earn or gain anything from you. We are worthy because of Jesus and His cross, because of His blood and righteousness and forgiveness.

If we are going to be real with you and real before you, and since we can't run and hide, then we must open ourselves to you. Search us and reveal our ways and thoughts to us. Where we have sinned and done wrong, O Lord, we ask you to forgive us. Where we have left your good undone, we ask you would forgive. Change us, O God, turn us from our ways to seek and follow your ways.

By your Holy Spirit move and work in our hearts to draw us further up and further in to your presence that we might know your power at work in us. Deepen in us a love for you and for each other, for our brothers and sisters in Christ with whom you have joined us in a fellowship of worship. Be glorified in and through us.

With Paul we raise our voices in doxology and praise:

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36)