

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

From Failure to Faithfulness  
First Sunday in Lent  
John 21:15-25

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, people of God, let us gather in the presence of the One who calls us by name and meets us with mercy.

**We come with open hearts, seeking the grace that restores us and the love that never fails.**

The Lord is our shepherd and our guide, our refuge and our strength. In every season and circumstance, God is faithful.

**We will lift our voices in praise, trusting in the goodness of the Lord.**

Let us worship the living God, who leads us, feeds us, and calls us to follow.

**We come to worship with gratitude and hope.**

**Thanks be to God.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Holy and gracious God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

we gather before You in awe and thanksgiving.

You are the One who created the heavens and the earth,

the One who sustains all things by Your power,

the One whose mercy is new every morning.

You invite us into Your presence not because we are worthy,

but because Your love is steadfast and Your faithfulness endures forever.

You know our needs even before we speak,

and yet You welcome our prayers and our praises as a loving Father welcomes His children.

So come, O Lord, and meet us in this hour of worship.

Send Your Spirit to open our eyes, that we may behold Your glory;

open our ears, that we may hear Your voice;  
 open our hearts, that we may be renewed in Your grace.  
 We offer this time, this gathering, and our very selves to You,  
 in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Call to Confession**

Friends in Christ, Scripture reminds us that God is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Let us come before the Lord with honesty and hope,  
 trusting in His mercy as we confess our sins together.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Merciful God,  
 we confess that we have wandered from Your ways.  
 We have trusted in our own strength rather than resting in Yours.  
 We have been slow to listen, quick to speak, and slow to love.  
 We have allowed fear to silence our witness,  
 pride to cloud our judgment,  
 and selfishness to shape our choices.  
 Forgive us, O Lord.  
 Restore in us a right spirit.  
 Teach us to walk humbly, to love mercy,  
 and to follow where You lead.  
 Cleanse us by Your grace and renew us by Your Spirit,  
 that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways  
 to the glory of Your holy name.  
 Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news:  
 As high as the heavens are above the earth,  
 so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear Him.  
 As far as the east is from the west,  
 so far has God removed our sins from us.  
 In Jesus Christ, the compassion of God has been made visible—  
 a mercy stronger than our failures,  
 a grace deeper than our sin,  
 a love that restores, renews, and makes us whole.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:  
 in Christ, we are forgiven, we are cleansed, and we are made new.  
 Thanks be to God.

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name  
 Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven  
 Give us this day our daily bread  
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one  
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
 Forever and ever, Amen.**

### Hymn: "Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me"

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
 There is no more for heaven now to give  
 He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom  
 My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
 For my life is wholly bound to his  
 Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!  
 Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
 For by my side, the Saviour He will stay  
 I labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
 For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me  
 Through the deepest valley He will lead  
 Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome!  
 Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
 For He has said that He will bring me home  
 And day by day I know He will renew me  
 Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus  
 All the glory evermore to Him  
 When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:  
 Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Romans 12:1-8**

**12** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

<sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

<sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Anthem (Music Ministry):** “Song of Devotion”

### **Prayer for Illumination**

#### **Scripture**

##### **John 21:15-25**

<sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup> He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch

out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”<sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”<sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”<sup>23</sup> So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”

<sup>24</sup> This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

<sup>25</sup> Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

### Sermon

Jesus and the disciples have just shared a wonderful breakfast together, their bellies are full and their Rabbi is once more with them.

Then Jesus turns his attention to Peter, there is no rush in the moment, there is no dramatic announcement of what is to come. Instead after everyone has had their hunger satisfied, when everyone is content with where they are, Jesus begins the delicate work of restoring Peter.

**“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”**

**“Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”**

**“Feed my lambs.”**

Notice how he starts, He calls Peter by his old name, ‘Simon, Son of John,’ Jesus does this intentionally, this reminds Peter and us who He once was. Simon, the son of John, had not yet met the Messiah, he had not made bold proclamations of faith, he had not failed to stand alongside his Messiah. Jesus seeks to remind Peter of his human frailty; to bring him back to the starting point before his human will and strength had built him up and failed him, to a place where grace alone rebuilds him in a way that his humanity never could.

Jesus starts the process of restoring Peter not by chastising him for his failures, but by leading him into self-examination through a simple, repeated question.

Jesus asks him, **‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’**

Jesus uses the words ‘agape’ for love here. Unlike the world we live in, the Greeks had more than one word for love. The word we use for love in the world today is most closely related to the word Eros which means a sexual type of love. Which is why so many people get the idea of Biblical love wrong in the world today. They do not take the time to understand what the Bible is saying and instead stick their own interpretation of love in its place. However, as you will see in the Scripture today, the different meanings of the word serve a purpose.

The ‘agape’ love that Jesus is speaking of is a love from God that is difficult for the world to understand yet alone live out. Agape love is a love of absolute devotion, it is a love that is committed and willingly sacrifices of self for the one it loves, it is a love that does not consider the cost to self but instead focuses on the good of the one it loves.

Jesus chooses that word with purpose and it cuts deeply into Peter. This is what Peter had used proclaimed when he stated that he would stand beside Jesus even when others fell away and abandoned him. Jesus is working at Peter, showing him how his devotion had been incorrect, that his self-confidence in what he thought he knew, that his self-reliance on his own strength was in fact the root of his failure. Jesus is not asking Peter to rank his level of affection, he is asking Peter if he still believe that his Heart is stronger than the hearts of the other disciples, a claim that collapsed under pressure on the night of Jesus’ arrest.

Jesus’ question cuts into Peter and he responds in humility, **‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’** Peter does not use the word ‘agape’ for his love, instead he uses the word ‘phileo.’ Peter knows that his failure to stand firm in his faith means that ‘agape’ love is beyond what he was capable of, so he responds by offering ‘phileo’ love, a sincere, affectionate form of loyalty, a brotherly love, one that has limitations.

Peter’s days of making bold assertions of his love of God have passed. He understands who he is now, he understands his nature, his pride, his self-reliance, and his self-confidence have been shattered. He is not going to make bold claims he knows are false, instead he is going to be honest with himself and with the one who knows all. He no longer seeks to elevate himself but begins to accept his own fallen nature and trust in the one who saves.

Jesus responds to his statement of love with, **‘Feed my lambs.’** Peter is not placed in a position of authority over others, instead he is placed in a position of service to others. The flock does not belong to Peter; it belongs to Jesus. Peter is given a task, a duty, he is to show his love by tending to the sheep of the shepherd. Shepherding begins with feeding, with the nourishing of the young of the flock, by offering the truth the pure food of the Word of God.

**“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”**

**“Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”**

**“Tend my sheep.”**

Then the second question comes, **‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’** This time the question is more direct, the comparison has been removed. This time Jesus is asking Peter about his heart, ‘Am I first in your heart?’

Peter once again responds with ‘phileo’ not ‘agape.’ Peter has had time to reflect, to discern, to know who he is truthfully, and now as Jesus digs into him with these questions he answers truthfully. He knows that he is capable of ‘phileo’ love, he knows that left to his own strength, left to his own understanding, left to stand on his own faith, he will fail. He knows that his only hope of success rests not on his own faithfulness but on Christ’s knowledge of him.

**‘Tend my sheep,’** Jesus is expanding upon the responsibilities he is given to Peter. He is adding to the command to feed them. Peter is also called to tend the sheep, to guide them, to watch over them with the vigilance of a sheepdog. To correct them when necessary, to provide them with directions when the path becomes unclear or confusing, to protect them from the dangers of the world which may seek to harm them.

Christ is not simply restoring Peter, he is shaping him, he is calling him, to be a man of God, one who is formed and follows the pattern that the shepherd had laid out for him. This is what grace does, it does not just forgive, it changes, it molds, grace comes with responsibility, it changes character, and it calls on the faithful to care not just for the people that they care for, but to care for all the people that belong to the Lord.

**“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”**

**“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”**

**“Feed my sheep.**

Then the third question falls upon the ears of Peter, **Simon, son of John, do you love me?’** The shift in this question is striking in the Greek and completely lost in English. Jesus uses the word ‘philleo’ here. Jesus has brought his question down to the level which Peter claims, he no longer asks him to stand at the level he once claimed to stand.

This is not God lowering the standard, we are all called to love God with ‘agape’ love, to love God first with all our heart, soul, body, and mind. Instead, it is the mercy of God, lowering himself to what Peter feels capable of in the moment. God coming to Peter, meeting him where he is, it is compassion, not concession. Like a wise doctor who changes the dosage of a medicine based on the condition of his patients, or a chef changes the spiciness of his dish

based upon his guests, Jesus calibrates his question to a heart that is still tender, still bruised and still healing from its failure.

John tells us this question hurts Peter. This is not a hurt of irritation, but one of sorrow, one that comes from the memory of the night of Jesus' arrest. That third question, delivered in his own words, strikes a chord in his heart and reminds him of standing beside the fire, reminds him of the way that his fear overruled his courage, how his fervent denial choked out his prideful proclamation of loyalty.

In this third question Jesus is pressing in, he is seeking out that deep wound in Peter's heart, forcing Peter to face the truth, to face the reality of his failure. Yet it is done not to hurt, but to heal, to draw out that last bit of poison that may remain in the wound. The truth is that until we face the truth, until we dig down into the depth of who we are and accept our sinful way, we cannot truly be rebuilt through the power of the Holy Spirit into the disciples that we are meant to be.

Peter answers, '**Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.**' There is no proclamation here, Peter is not boasting, there is no promise of future heroics, no declaration of spiritual resolve. He is essentially saying, 'Lord, I cannot trust my own heart, but You can, I cannot speak of the greatness of my love, but I can desperately cling to the truth that You see what is real with me.' Peter's love of Jesus might be wounded, imperfect and shaky, but it is sincere, and Jesus, the one who looks into the hearts of all who claim to love him, knows that truth.

So, Jesus responds with a third commission, '**Feed my sheep.**' Three questions. Three confessions. Three commissions. A threefold exchange as Jesus Christ removes the thorn of Peter's triple denial through a triple affirmation of love. What guilt and shame had fractured, grace restores. Jesus does this restoration not in private, but in the presence of the other disciples. Not to publicly shame Peter, but to publicly restore him. The one who fell is raised up again, the one who denied is entrusted, the one who wept is commissioned.

Jesus is showing the disciples and the church the most important qualification for ministry. It is not talent, not charisma, not speaking ability or even natural leadership skills, it is none of the things that mankind places value in. The most essential qualification for ministry is a love for Christ. Only one who truly loves the shepherd can be trusted to feed and care for the Shepherd's flock. And so, Jesus, having probed Peter's heart and healed its deepest fracture, now places into Peter's hands the sacred task of feeding, guarding, caring for and guiding the people who are, above all, His.

**John 21:18-19**

**<sup>18</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”<sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”**

Having restored Peter, Jesus reveals the path that lies ahead. He reminds Peter of his past impulsiveness, of his self-reliance, of his self-direction, of his confidence, of his tendency to rush ahead. Peter was bold, rash, driven by his own eagerness rather than by wisdom.

But then Jesus continues, **‘When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not wish to go.’** John adds something for us, **‘This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.’** Peter was crucified under the order of Emperor Nero. Church tradition states that Peter requested to be crucified upside down, believing himself to be unworthy of dying in the same manner as Jesus.

This is not just a grim prophecy; it is a promise of future faithfulness. Peter had once shrunk away from his loyalty and love of God, denying Christ three times to avoid the suffering that Christ is now telling him that he will one day embrace. Jesus is telling Peter that his past failures are not a measure of his future faithfulness. His courage would be renewed, his love strengthened and his devotion steadfast.

Then after all of this Jesus speaks the words that had drawn Peter away from his net’s years earlier, **‘Follow me.’** This is both an invitation and a command, and it now also carries a deeper meaning. Peter is no longer following as a fisherman, he now is a fisher of men, a disciple, one who is willing to sacrifice himself to feed, guard, care for and guide the people of God. This ‘follow me’ is a summons to a life that is shaped by the cross, a life that is not easy, a life that is filled with trial, tribulations and turmoil, a life of persecution, a life lived apart of the world as we follow Christ who walks ahead.

### **John 21:20-23**

**<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”<sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”<sup>23</sup> So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”**

Peter freshly restored and newly commissioned, turns and lays his eyes upon ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved.’ Peter who had just learned of his own death asks Jesus about John, ‘**Lord, what about this man?**’ Even here in this moment Peter’s boldness and rashness return.

Peter looks away from the grace of God and towards John, asking what will happen to John as if to make a comparison.

That is humanity. How often do believers, people restored by the grace of God, begin to look around and question why others are walking different paths, why others suffer differently, why other responsibilities differ, why others carry heavier burdens or lighter burdens. Here just minutes after being restored to ministry, Peter is already slipping into one of the strongest distractions that can derail a ministry, the preoccupation with the calling of another disciple.

Jesus responds with a sharp and direct correction, ‘**If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!**’ Jesus does not give any details as to what John’s future holds. He does not explain how they differ in faith and in futures. Instead, he calls for Peter to return his focus to where it is meant to be, on Jesus and on the path that Jesus has laid out for him. We are all called to serve God differently and we are not called to question that, but only to do as we are called to do.

John also clarifies a rumor that arose in the early church, this idea that Jesus promised that John would not die. This misunderstanding, like many misunderstandings about scripture arose from a partial hearing and incomplete recollection of what it was that Jesus said. Jesus had spoken hypothetically, not prophetically. Jesus was simply stating that each of his disciples had a different path to walk in this world, but all walk under his Lordship. A statement that is just as true today as it was 2000 years ago.

#### **John 21:24-25**

**<sup>24</sup> This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.**

**<sup>25</sup> Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**

John closes with a solemn affirmation, he identifies himself not by name but by the testimony of his witness. John wants the focus to remain on Christ, not on the author of this book. His authority comes not from his position as a disciple, but from the truthfulness of his testimony.

The final line of the book of John is breathtaking, ‘**Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not**

**contain the books that would be written.** This is not an exaggeration. John is acknowledging the infinite nature of Jesus Christ and the redeeming power he has in this world. The Gospel is written, but the realities of Christ's work will continue among His people, generation after generation.

As we stand here on the shore of Galilee with Peter, we are reminded that Christ does not merely save us from our sins, he restores us for his service. He does not merely pull us out of the waters of our failure; he places into our hands the work of His kingdom. That same grace that gives us forgiveness is a grace that commissions us to service. The Savior who meets us in our lowest moments is the same Savior who calls us to live lives of faithfulness, perseverance and obedience.

Peter's story is the story of every believer who stumbles under the weight of their own weaknesses. It is the story of each of us who have denied Christ in subtle ways, through silence when we should have spoken, through compromise when we should have stood firm, through distraction when we should have been watching and praying. It is the story of every heart that has felt unworthy, every disciple who has wondered if their failures have disqualified them from Christ's call.

And yet, what do we see?

We see a Savior who prepares a fire, cooks breakfast, who invites the fallen to sit with him. We see a Shepherd that restores his sheep not harshly but with questions that lead to healing. We see a Lord that entrusts His church not to people who are flawless, but to people who are forgiven.

Peter is living proof that the grace of God is not fragile. God does not cast us away because of our failings, instead he works in us to heal. He builds His church out of broken people. He remembers our failures and sins long enough to redeem us. He does not ignore our wounds and weaknesses; he transforms them into strengths that serve His purposes.

And then after we have been reborn, restored, He says 'Follow me.'

The call has not changed. The same words he spoke to Peter, he speaks to every one of us. It is not a call to an easy life. It is not a call to worldly success.

It is a call to daily bearing of our cross, a call to steadfast obedience, to loving God first in all we think, all we say and all we do, as we walk the path that Christ Himself walked.

For Peter that path led to his crucifixion. For John it led to many years of patient witness.

For disciples throughout the ages, it has led to many different things, and for each of us it will take a shape that reflects God's wisdom and His plan for us, not our preferences.

The command is simple; 'You – Follow me.'

Not

Not 'Follow Me when it is convenient.'

Not 'Follow Me when you feel strong.'

Not 'Follow Me once you understand everything.'

But simply, faithfully, obediently:

**Follow Me.**

Follow Me in the ordinary routines of life.

Follow Me in times of uncertainty and waiting.

Follow Me when the path is clear and when it is shadowed.

Follow Me when obedience costs you something.

Follow Me when others take a different path.

Follow Me even when My will for them is not My will for you.

Follow Me when you feel weak, and I will be your strength.

Follow Me when you fall, and I will restore you.

Follow Me when you do not know where the path leads, for I know—and I walk ahead of you.

So, take heart. The same Jesus who restored Peter, restores you. The same Jesus who called Peter, calls you. The same Jesus who walked ahead of Peter, walks ahead of you. And the same Jesus who promised Peter that his death would glorify God, has promised that each of His disciples; however humble their calling may be, will glorify God in their life.

Brothers and sisters, whether your path resembles Peter's or John's, whether Christ leads you through suffering or through endurance, through bold action or quiet faithfulness, through sacrifice or steadfast witness, your calling is the same.

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Place your hand in His.

Listen for His voice.

And follow Him as you walk as the Salt and Light of His word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Gracious and merciful Father,  
We thank You for the Savior who meets us on the shore of our failure,  
who prepares a meal for the weary,  
who speaks gently to wounded hearts,  
and who restores what sin and fear have broken.  
Lord Jesus Christ, You know us completely.  
You know our bold promises and our quiet denials.  
You know where we have loved You faithfully  
and where we have fallen short.  
Yet You do not turn away from us.  
You draw near.  
You ask us not for perfection, but for truth.  
And by Your grace, You call us still.  
Forgive us, Lord, for trusting in our own strength.  
Forgive us for comparing our path to the path of others.  
Forgive us for looking away from You  
when You have already set our feet upon the road You have chosen.  
Restore us where we are weak.  
Humble us where we are proud.  
Heal the wounds that still ache within us.  
And by Your Spirit, shape us into faithful servants  
who love You not in word only,  
but in obedience, perseverance, and service.  
Teach us to feed Your sheep with Your Word.  
Teach us to tend Your flock with patience and care.  
Teach us to follow You even when the road is costly,  
even when the future is unclear,  
even when obedience requires sacrifice.  
Fix our eyes upon You, Lord Jesus,  
the Author and Perfecter of our faith.  
Give us hearts that listen,  
hands that serve,  
and feet that follow wherever You lead.  
And when we stumble, remind us again  
that Your grace is not exhausted,  
Your mercy is not fragile,  
and Your call has not changed.

We place ourselves in Your hands,  
trusting not in our faithfulness,  
but in Yours.

Hear us now, for we pray in the strong and saving name of Jesus Christ,  
our Shepherd, our Redeemer, and our King. **Amen.**

### **Invitation to Offering**

### **Offering Prayer**

### **Closing Hymn: "Jesus, All for Jesus"**

All I am and have,  
and ever hope to be  
Jesus all for Jesus  
All I am and have,  
and ever hope to be.

All of my ambitions  
hopes and plans  
I surrender these  
into your hands.  
All of my ambitions  
hopes and plans  
I surrender these  
into your hands.

For it's only in your will  
that I am free  
For it's only in your will  
that I am free.

Jesus all for Jesus  
All I am and have,  
and ever hope to be  
Jesus all for Jesus  
All I am and have,  
and ever hope to be.

**Pastoral Prayer**

Gracious and eternal God,  
we thank You for gathering us in Your presence today,  
for speaking to us through Your Word,  
and for reminding us that Your mercy is deeper than our failures  
and Your love stronger than our doubts.  
You are the One who guides us when the path is uncertain,  
who strengthens us when we are weary,  
and who restores us when we have fallen short.

Lord, we lift before You the needs of Your people:  
those who are burdened with worry,  
those who struggle with illness or pain,  
those grieving losses that weigh heavily on the heart,  
and those facing decisions that require wisdom beyond their own.  
Be their refuge and their strength.  
Surround them with the peace that surpasses understanding  
and the hope that does not disappoint.

We pray for our families, our community,  
and for all who serve in places of leadership and responsibility.  
Grant compassion where there is conflict,  
courage where there is fear,  
and justice where there is injustice.  
Make us instruments of Your peace  
and witnesses of Your grace in the places You have planted us.

Lord, renew Your Spirit within us  
so that we may follow You faithfully in the coming week—  
with hearts open to Your leading,  
with hands ready to serve,  
and with lives that reflect Your goodness.  
Let our words be gracious,  
our actions be loving,  
and our steps be guided by Your truth.

Strengthen us to walk humbly with You,  
to love our neighbors generously,  
and to seek Your kingdom in all that we do.  
Keep us faithful, O Lord,

until the day we see You face to face  
and join with all Your people in the joy of Your eternal presence.

We ask all this in the name of our Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Benediction**

May the peace of God,  
which surpasses all understanding,  
guard your hearts and your minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And may the blessing of God Almighty—  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—  
be upon you,  
remain with you,  
and guide you  
this day and forevermore.

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

**Amen.**