



PRAYER MEETING

August 23



The Fruit of the Spirit: **Belong**

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Leader

Our God, we belong to you. You have purchased us with the priceless gift of Jesus' death. You have guaranteed us eternal life with the astounding reality of Jesus' resurrection. You have brought us into your kingdom and into your loving grace and given us a heritage as your sons and daughters. We belong to you.

How great is this truth! How wonder-filled is the security of being yours forever.

We praise and thank you, Our Father. We praise and thank you, Jesus. We praise and thank you, Holy Spirit.

We are assured that we **belong** to you.

Amen

Call to Worship

Galatians 5: 13-14, 16-24

New International Reader's Version

My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshipping statues of gods and worshipping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties.

It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom. But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore.

Music

Quiet your hearts and minds as you listen to today's music. Open to God and listen to what the Holy Spirit might say to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSIVjjY8Ou8>

Remind Me Who I Am, Jason Gray

When I lose my way and I forget my name
Remind me who I am.

In the mirror all I see is who I don't want to be.
Remind me who I am.

In the loneliest places
when I can't remember what grace is
Tell me, once again who I am to You.
Tell me, lest I forget who I am to You,
that I belong to You.

When my heart is like a stone
and I'm running far from home
Remind me who I am, when I can't receive
Your love, afraid I'll never be enough,
Remind me who I am

If I'm Your beloved, can You help me believe it?
Tell me, once again who I am to you,
Tell me, lest I forget who I am to you,
that I belong to You.

Praise

This day, we praise You, O God for your attributes and your works. We praise you that, because of your great love, you have redeemed us through the finished work of Jesus, and we **belong** to you.

Congregational Psalm/ Passages from Psalms

Leader and People Together

Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed ones. Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Ps 28:6-9

I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life. Save me, for I am yours.

Ps 119:93-94

When you, God, went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,
the earth shook, the heavens poured down
rain before God, the God of Israel.

Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who
daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God
who saves; Sing to God, you kingdoms of the
earth, sing praise to the Lord, Proclaim the
power of God, whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.

You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and
strength to his people. *Ps 68:7-8, 19-20, 32, 34-35*

He brought his people out like a flock; he
led them like sheep through the wilderness.
He guided them safely, so they were
unafraid. *Ps 78: 52,53*

You, LORD, showed favor to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.

Restore us again, God our Savior. Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, LORD, and grant us your salvation. I will listen to what God the LORD says; he promises peace to his people

Ps 85: 6-8

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. *Ps 95: 6-7*

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. *Ps 100:1-3*

Reading about the Word of the Day

“What matters supremely... is not the fact that I know God, but the larger fact that He knows me. “Know”... is a sovereign-grace word, pointing to God’s initiative in loving, choosing, redeeming, calling, and preserving.

I am graven on the palm of His hands. I am never out of His mind... and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters.

This is momentous knowledge. There is unspeakable comfort in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of me in love, and watching over me for my good.

There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion Him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me.

There is... great cause for humility in the thought that He sees all the twisted things about me that my fellow-men do not see, and that He sees even more corruption in me than that which I see in myself. [Yet] for some unfathomable reason, He wants me as His friend, and desires to be my friend, and has given His Son to die for me in order to realize this purpose.

...To those who are Christ's, the holy God is a loving Father; they belong to His family; they may approach Him without fear, and always be sure of His Fatherly concern and care. This is the heart of the New Testament message.”

J. I. Packer, Knowing God

Scripture Reading

For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading again to fear [of God's judgment], but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons [the Spirit producing sonship] by which we [joyfully] cry, "Abba! Father!"

The Spirit Himself testifies and confirms together with our spirit [assuring us] that we [believers] are children of God.

Romans 8:14-16 Amplified Bible

See what an incredible quality of love the Father has shown to us, that we would [be permitted to] be named and called and counted the children of God! And so we are!

1 John 3:1 Amplified Bible

Reflect

Scripture Reading repeated

For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading again to fear [of God's judgment], but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons [the Spirit producing sonship] by which we [joyfully] cry, "Abba! Father!"

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Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Pray for your needs. Pray thanks. Confess sin. Ask for help. Pray for others, for direction, for guidance, for God's glory.

Response

Responsive Reading

Leader and people

Leader: You are God's chosen people. You have been chosen in keeping with what God the Father had planned. It is the Spirit's work to make you pure and holy. God chose you so that you might obey Jesus Christ. God wanted you to be in a covenant relationship with him. He established this relationship by the blood of Christ.

based on 1 Pet 1-2 NIRV

People: We are chosen by God and are precious to Him.

1 Pet 2:4

Leader: You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. In Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female. You belong to Christ.

Gal 3: 26-29 NCV

People: To all who accept Jesus Christ and believe in him he gave the right to become children of God. They do not become his children in any human way—by any human parents or human desire. They are born of God.

based on John 1: 12-13 NCV

Together: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

People: We are chosen by God and are precious to Him. *1 Pet 2:4*

Leader: My beloved speaks and says to me:
“Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

People: The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

Leader: We belong to our beloved, and his desire is for us. *based on Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 7:10*

People: Jesus said, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. *Jn 15:19*

Leader: We are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. *Rom 1:6*

People: The bride belongs to the bridegroom. All who attend the bridegroom wait and listen for him, and are filled with joy when they hear the bridegroom's voice. *based on Jn 3:29*

Leader: I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”

Rev 19:1, 7-8

People: Has not the one God made us? We belong to him in body and spirit. *Malichi 2:14*

Leader: This is what the LORD says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Some will say, ‘I belong to the LORD;’ still others will write on their hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ Some will say, ‘I belong to the LORD.’ *Is 44:5*

Together: We are chosen by God and are precious to Him. *1 Pet 2:4*

Prayer for the World

Leader: Lord, we pray for God's loving-kindness to be the foundation of our hope

People: We pray for God's mercy in stopping the spread of this virus;

Leader: We pray for God's healing of those who are sick throughout the world

People: We pray for God's strength for medical personnel serving tirelessly

Leader: We pray for God's insight to be given to researchers seeking solutions

People: We pray for God's wisdom to guide and direct civic leaders, health officials, and world leaders

Leader: We pray for God's peace to guard us from fear or anxiety

People: We pray for God's provision for those whose livelihoods and income have been affected by this crisis

Leader: We pray for God's creativity to make us agents of love and compassion, that all believers would display the character of Christ

People: We pray for racial reconciliation, justice, compassionate civil dialog, understanding, and true unity

Together: Lord, we pray for healing for our nation, that Your righteousness and truth and justice would be known, and that the Holy Spirit would draw people everywhere to the saving power of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader

There is no greater assurance, Father God, than that you have forgiven our sin and that we belong to you. We cannot be taken from you. You will not let us go. In your perfect love, you want us, you chose us, you keep us.

How can we begin to thank you for such truth? How can we really understand this? Grow in us a love that responds like a child to a wonderful Father. Grow in us a love like a bride for the bridegroom. Help us to know, with no shadow of doubt, that we belong to you and that you call us “Beloved.” Encourage us to live in the freedom and wonder of that truth.

We thank you for hearing the cry of this need. We praise you for calling us to yourself. May others who do not yet know your love, hear and respond to your loving call, that you may be perfectly glorified in all you do.

In the name of the Beloved One, Jesus,
Amen.

Closing Prayer

Leader

Arise, my soul, arise!
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears.
Before the throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on His hands.

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son.
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

To God I'm reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry.

Charles Wesley - Arise, My Soul, Arise