

In *this* moment

There are special moments in life when, if we are listening for and waiting on the Lord, we may enjoy that grace of God at work in a very helpful way.

It may be that these are times when we slow down and really listen or, through this situation, we can see all of life in a clear gospel lens. It may well be that we are able to learn afresh what is really important. The death of Queen Elizabeth is one of those times. Her life of faith and faithfulness, of duty and dedication, speaks to all of us.

I am aware and respect that we are a Church in both parts of this island. However, in the providence of God, we are all alive at this time to see and sense the lessons of this historic event.

This short devotional is designed to assist your own personal reflections and prayers. My prayer is that it will enable you to express your thoughts and that through it you may hear the Lord speak to your own heart.



Dr John Kirkpatrick
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland



A resource for personal devotion in light of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The following eight points may be helpful to personal, family or corporate devotion as we all reflect and seek God after the death of the Queen on 8 September 2022.

1. Lament

In feeling grief at the loss of the Queen, and perhaps an echo of more personal grief, we turn to express this to God, in trust. Scripture is full of examples of God's people turning to him with the deepest cries of their heart. Sometimes this requires no words but simply a turning to God.

Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

*Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,
my Saviour and my God.*

Psalm 42:11

“But please, please – won't you – can't you give me something that will cure Mother?” Up till then Digory had been looking at the Lion's great front feet and the huge claws on them; now, in his despair he looked up at [Aslan's] face. What he saw surprised him as much as anything in his whole life. For the tawny face was bent down near his own and (wonder of wonders) great shining tears stood in the Lion's eyes. They were such big, bright shining tears compared with Digory's own that for a moment he felt as if the Lion must really be sorrier about his mother than he was himself.

C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*

Psalm 130

A song of ascents

*Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.*

*Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.*

*If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?*

*But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.*

*I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.*

*I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

*Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.*

*He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.*

Prayer

O Lord our God, thank you that you keep track of all our sorrows and collect all our 'tears in your bottle'; you have recorded each one 'in your book'.^{*} Thank you that all the tears I have ever shed from myself or for others cannot begin to compare with the tears you have shed for us.

^{*}Psalm 56:8



Use the QR code to listen to
*Christ our hope in life
and death.*

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2. Thanks

It is also a time to express our gratitude to God for so many things in the life of Queen Elizabeth, including her life of devotion and service, her example and her faith in Jesus.

Take time to thank God for all the many aspects of the life of the Queen that come to mind which so many people have mentioned.

*I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;
before the 'gods' I will sing your praise.
I will bow down towards your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,
for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.
When I called, you answered me;
you greatly emboldened me.
May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,
when they hear what you have decreed.
May they sing of the ways of the Lord,
for the glory of the Lord is great.*

Psalm 138:1-5

Prayer

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing;
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it;
Mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer:
Here by thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood.

Oh, that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing thy sovereign grace.
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless days.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let thy goodness like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.

Here's my heart,
Oh take and seal it
Seal it for thy courts above.

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3. *Understand the times*

As we seek to reflect and understand a time of change, Scripture helps us frame our experience.

1 Chronicles 12:32 speaks of such “men who understood the times” and knew what to do.

King Solomon, when invited by God to ask for whatever he wanted, said *“give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”*

1 Kings 3:9

This is a timely prayer for us, for our governments, and for King Charles III.

*In this
moment*

Prayer

Valley of Vision *The Throne*

O GOD OF MY DELIGHT,

Thy throne of grace

is the pleasure ground of my soul.

Here I obtain mercy in time of need,

here see the smile of thy reconciled face,

here joy pleads the name of Jesus,

here I sharpen the sword of the Spirit,

anoint the shield of faith,

put on the helmet of salvation,

gather manna from thy Word,

am strengthened for each conflict,

nerved for the upward race,

empowered to conquer every foe;

Help me to come to Christ

as the fountain head of descending

blessings,

as a wide open flood-gate of mercy.

I marvel at my insensate folly, that

with such enriching favours within

my reach

I am slow to extend the hand to take them.

Have mercy upon my deadness for thy

Name's sake.

Quicken me, stir me, fill me with holy zeal.

Strengthen me that I may cling to thee

and not let thee go.

May thy Spirit within me draw all blessings

from thy hand.

When I advance not, I backslide.

Let me walk humbly because of good

omitted

and evil done.

Impress on my mind the shortness of time,

the work to be engaged in,

the account to be rendered,

the nearness of eternity,

the fearful sin of despising thy Spirit.

May I never forget that

thy eye always sees,

thy ear always hears,

thy recording hand always writes.

May I never give thee rest until Christ is

the pulse of my heart;

the spokesman of my lips,

the lamp of my feet.

4. Anxiety & assurance

Paul wrote, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*
Philippians 4:6–7

In times of change, we can look around us and feel insecure, or look to Christ who won peace for us. United as we are by faith to him, we will discover the peace that passes human understanding.

*I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.*

*I will glory in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.*

*Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.*

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.*

*Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.*

Psalm 34 1–5

Prayer

Like a River Glorious

Like a river, glorious
Is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious
In its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth
Fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth
Deeper all the way.

*Stayed upon Christ Jesus,
Hearts are fully blest;
Finding, as he promised,
Perfect peace and rest.*

Hidden in the hollow
Of his blessed hand,

Never foe can follow,
Never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry,
Not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry
Touch the spirit there.

Every joy or trial
Falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial
By the Sun of Love.
We may trust him fully
All for us to do;
They who trust him wholly
Find him wholly true.

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5. Unity

In the face of change, we trust in Jesus the King who unifies us through the gospel, as outlined in Ephesians 4:2–3: “*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*”

Her Majesty The Queen was a unifying influence in her family, in her nation and between nations.

This can inspire us to love our neighbour also, so let us reflect on how to follow this example.

“Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.”

Queen Elizabeth II, Christmas message, 2011

Psalm 133

A song of ascents

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together
in unity!*

*It is like precious oil poured on
the head,*

*running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.*

*It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.*

*For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.*

Prayer

How Good How Pleasant to God on High

How good and how pleasant it is,
When we all live in unity;
Refreshing as dew at the dawn;
Like rare anointing oil upon the head.

It's so good, so good,
When we live together;
In peace and harmony.
It's so good, so good
When we live together in his love.

How deep are the rivers that run,
When we are one in Jesus;
And share with the Father and Son;
The blessings of his everlasting life.

It's so good, so good,
When we live together;
In peace and harmony.
It's so good, so good,
When we live together in his love.

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6. *Opportunity*

This is a sad time, but also a new day.

New King. New Government.

Change can be unsettling, but is also a time of opportunity.

“I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try and do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God...”

Queen Elizabeth II, Christmas message, 2002

Let us prayerfully ask God to show us the opportunities that comes with change today.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Lamentations 3:22-26

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Prayer

Valley of Vision *Voyage*

O LORD OF THE OCEANS,

My little boat sails on a restless sea,
Grant that Jesus may sit at the helm and
steer me safely;
allow no adverse currents to divert my
heavenward course,
let not my faith be wrecked amid storms
and shoals;
bring me to harbor with flying pennants,
hull unbreached, cargo unspoiled.

I ask great things,
expect great things,
shall receive great things.

I venture on you wholly, fully,
my wind, sunshine, anchor, defence.

The voyage is long, the waves high,
the storms pitiless,
but my helm is held steady,
Your Word secures safe passage,
Your grace wafts me onward,
my haven is guaranteed.

This day will bring me nearer home,
Grant me holy consistency in every
transaction,
my peace flowing as a running tide,
my righteousness as every chasing wave.

Help me to live circumspectly,
with skill to convert every care into prayer,
Halo my path with gentleness and love,
smooth every asperity of temper;
let me not forget how easy it is to occasion
grief;
may I strive to bind up every wound,
and pour oil on all troubled waters.

May the world this day be happier and
better because I live.

Let my mast before me be the
Saviour's cross,
and every oncoming wave the fountain
in his side.

Help me, protect me in the moving sea
until I reach the shore of
unceasing praise.

7. Personal reflection on commitment

Many, including King Charles, have paid tribute to his mother's life-long service and dedication to her calling as Queen, which she declared publicly when she was only 21 years old.

Let us reflect personally on this example and ask God to show us how we can serve him and others in our lives.

Serve the Lord with all your heart.

1 Samuel 12:20

2 Timothy 4:6–8

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly, that our lives may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through us, and be so in us, that everyone we encounter may feel your presence in our soul. Let them look up and see no longer us, but only you. Stay with us, and then we shall begin to shine as you shine; so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus, will be all from you. None of it will be ours. It will be you shining on others through us. Let us thus praise you in the way you love best, by shining on those around us.

The daily prayer of Teresa of Calcutta



Use the QR code to listen to *Be thou my vision.*

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8. *Gospel hope*

In speaking to the nation in 2012, Queen Elizabeth said: “I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.” But what is that hope? The Apostle Paul repeatedly encouraged his readers to deeply consider and live well in the light of ‘gospel hope’.

And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

1 Corinthians 15: 19

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4: 17–18

“Heaven is not here, it’s there. If we were given all we wanted here, our hearts would settle for this world rather than the next. God is forever luring us up and away from this one, wooing us to himself and his still invisible kingdom, where we will certainly find what we so keenly long for.”

Elizabeth Elliot

“I didn’t think it would end this way,” said Pippin.

Gandalf looked at him curiously. “End? No, the journey doesn’t end here. Death is just another path, one that we all must take. The grey rain-curtain of this world rolls back, and all turns to silver glass, and then you see it.”

“What? Gandalf? See what?”

“White shores, and beyond, a far green country under a swift sunrise.”

“Well, that isn’t so bad.”

“No. No, it isn’t.”

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

Prayer

Lord, It Belongs Not to My Care

Lord, it belongs not to my care
whether I die or live:
to love and serve thee is my share,
and this thy grace must give.

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
than he went through before;
he that into God’s kingdom comes
must enter by this door.

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
thy blessed face to see;
for if thy work on earth be sweet,
what will thy glory be!

Then shall I end my sad complaints
and weary, sinful days,
and join with the triumphant saints
that sing my Saviour’s praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
the eye of faith is dim;
but ‘tis enough that Christ knows all,
and I shall be with him.

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