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A COVID-19 Prayer Based on Psalm 51

Calvin University professor Chad Engbers prayed this prayer on March 12, 2020 during the daily chapel service. This was one of the last chapel services conducted before the campus closed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

By: Chad Engbers
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Worship Service posted on April 2, 2020

A Prayer based on Psalm 51

Merciful God,

We need you so much. When we look around, we see disease everywhere; when we look within, we see our sin. You desire truth in our inward being, and in this season of Lent, we take an honest look at the smudges on our souls.

Wash us, we pray, and we will be whiter than snow. But as the winter snow melts from the landscape around us, we see the mess lying beneath it: the scrubby grass; the bits of litter; the withered, unraked leaves. Our hearts and souls collect their clutter, too: little grudges, occasional envy, a bad habit or two that we've always meant to clean up.

Create clean hearts in us, God. Renew rights spirits within us. Open our windows and spring clean our souls. Scour them with your grace, and blow the fresh, brisk wind of your Spirit through them. Restore to us the joy of your salvation.

We need you so much.

And we need each other, too. We're grateful for opportunities like this, to gather together to sing and pray, in communion with other Christians. As the coronavirus drives more and more people away from each other, we're reminded that we were made by you for community.

Be close to all of those whom this disease has pushed apart. Be close to those who feel too far from home. Guide Calvin University—faculty, students, and staff—as we try to figure out how to do our work and live our lives under disorienting new circumstances.

The stress of these changes doesn't replace our ordinary burdens—the readings, the lab work, the papers, the midterms… and the fatigue all those things cause. The new challenges pile on top of all those things. God, give us patience and stamina.

And be especially close to those afflicted with the coronavirus. Do not cast them away from your presence. Give them strength and healing. Give them comfort.

Our world belongs to you. Our air belongs to you. The ears we use to hear, the mouths we use to sing, the minds we use to think and feel and pray—all yours. In your great mercy, contain this virus sweeping your good world. Spring clean that world.

And while we're gathered here, we use the breath that you have given us to pray together the prayer that you have taught us:

> Our Father in heaven,
> hallowed be your name.
> Your kingdom come.
> Your will be done,
> on earth as it is in heaven.
>
> Give us this day our daily bread.
> And forgive us our debts,
> as we also have forgiven our debtors.
>
> Lead us not into temptation
> but deliver us from evil.
>
> For yours is the kingdom,
> the power,
> and the glory forever.
>
> AMEN.

Watch the chapel service video.

Comments

Chad Engbers

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