

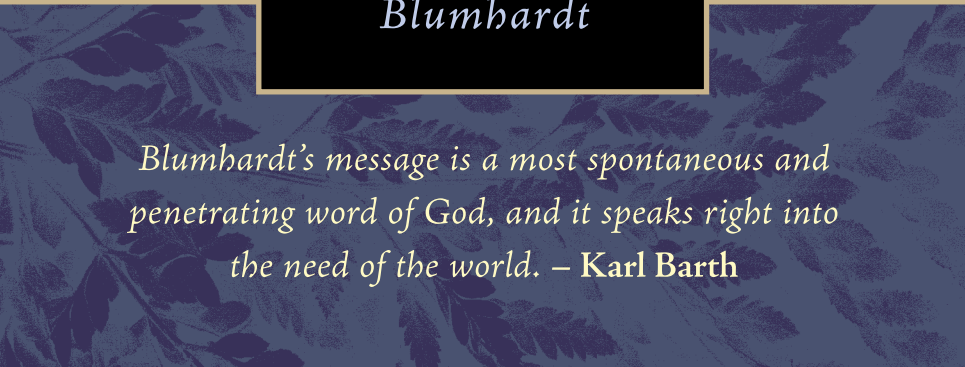


**EVENING
PRAYERS**



*For Every
Day of the
Year*

*Christoph
Friedrich
Blumhardt*



Blumhardt's message is a most spontaneous and penetrating word of God, and it speaks right into the need of the world. – Karl Barth

Evening Prayers

For Every Day of the Year

Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt



PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE

This is a preview. Get entire book here.



You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.

PSALM 65:2

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To the Reader

What is it about these evening prayers that still draws thousands of people around the world to turn to them daily, a century after they were spoken? Their rare simplicity and authority spring from the remarkable life of their author, Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, a pastor and theologian who influenced Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, and Karl Barth. As Barth writes of Blumhardt's approach to prayer: "Our cause, our hope, is served better with prayers than with treatises...If we want to become healthy and strong, we have to start from the beginning and become like children. That is where Blumhardt can be of great service to people everywhere."

This modern spiritual classic, now in a newly revised edition, is introduced below by Eugen Jäckh, a friend of Blumhardt's and the editor of his complete works.



Originally intended only for some of Blumhardt's close friends, this book of prayers was collected after his death in 1919. Taken from evening devotions that Blumhardt held at Bad Boll, in Germany, these prayers were said

without any thought of publication. The fact that they came into being out of real life in this way has endeared them to many who have since used them. The style of the prayers has been changed as little as possible in order to maintain the quality of the spoken word and their essential simplicity.

Those who knew Blumhardt were deeply impressed by the pastoral, even priestly, quality of his personality. His concern went out not only to those whom he knew or who sought his help, but to the whole world. He prayed “without ceasing,” but not with many words. He stood before God, mindful of people and their needs and answerable for them.

People’s concerns were important to him because, for him, they were God’s concerns. It is characteristic of him that when he prayed, the first three requests of the Lord’s Prayer always rose involuntarily to his lips. He lived in them and subordinated everything else to them. “All we ask and long for, all our concerns down to the very smallest, we lay in your hands in the one great request that your name be glorified on earth as it is in heaven.” Blumhardt’s short, concentrated prayers contain everything that we want to bring before God, though he never gets lost in details and trivialities. His whole being, and therefore his praying as well, is ruled completely by the saying: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his

righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). Because of this, we seldom hear him ask for these other things.

Blumhardt’s prayers breathe forth peace in a remarkable way; they have no overwrought emotionalism about them. This peace comes from Blumhardt’s unshakable conviction that God’s kingdom is on the way in spite of stormy and changing times. And so he gives thanks “for giving our hearts hope for your kingdom, the kingdom of God. We thank you that again and again we may draw strength from this hope, find new youthfulness and courage, and discover how powerfully, though hidden, your kingdom is already approaching.” But because his heart trembles within him, like the hearts of all those who are waiting for this coming of God’s kingdom, he asks, “in order that God can speak to us,” for the “quietness we need in order to stand before God and forget all the things that can assail us.”

Just as nearly every letter of Paul begins with thanks, so Blumhardt too in his prayers is always full of praise and thanks. For there is nothing that can lighten our hearts like giving thanks. In giving thanks we are positive; in the face of thanks everything negative and contrary disappears. Blumhardt’s thanksgiving does not lose itself in details and superficialities, but is completely directed towards the most inward and central thing that is given to

us by God – that we are his children. Therefore Blumhardt never tires of giving his simple, childlike thanks that God is our Father and that we may be his children.

But “if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:17). Blumhardt’s prayers flow out of this feeling for the suffering of the whole world. But there is no sighing about them – they are strong and glad and confident of victory in the knowledge of God’s promise, which has been given us. Basically they all point in the same direction – to the prayer that God’s kingdom shall come, that the Savior shall come. If we pray, all sin and need can only strengthen our faith in the certainty of God’s promise that he will complete his work and bring an end to all affliction.

Eugen Jäckh



January

This is a preview. Get entire book here.

I

January

This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 6:9–10

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. May this continue to be our prayer in the new year, and may we find fellowship with one another in what is eternal and holy. Bless us on our way. Bless us on our earthly pilgrimage so that we may remain free from all bondage, able to thank you day and night for all the good you do, even when things look very dark. We praise your name and we pray as the Savior has taught us. Amen.

January

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

EPHESIANS 3:14-17, NRSV

Lord our God, we have gathered in your sight. We thank you that through your words you have given something of your very self to help us be your disciples, your children, who stand firm in faith and trust throughout our lives, whatever our lot may be. Help us in these times, and when days grow difficult and full of grief, hold your people securely in your hand. Help us to be firmly rooted in faith, however dark it is on earth. You can give us strength and courage; we can do nothing in our human strength. But the power of your Spirit can renew us, make us alert, and fill us with lasting joy. For we are your people, your children, and when held in your hand, we can rejoice in spite of all grief. Amen.

January

*The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth:
“Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes! See, his
reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies
him.’”*

ISAIAH 62:11

Lord our God, we thank you that we may go to meet you with open hearts, with jubilant faith, and with this joyful shout, “God’s salvation is coming! Through Jesus Christ day is dawning on earth for all nations.” Stay with us and help us. Send us your Spirit to strengthen us, especially in times of trouble. Let all nations come before you. Let us tell all peoples, “Be comforted. The salvation of our God, who is also your God, is coming. In this salvation we will rejoice together forevermore to the glory of our God.” Amen.

January

He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor." But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God."

ISAIAH 49:3-4

Lord our God, we thank you for the help you have given us over and over again so that we can stand before you, rejoicing in the certainty of faith. We thank you for guiding and leading our lives and for letting us see a goal ahead, a goal to be revealed to all people. Be with us in times of silence when we seem to be alone. Keep us strong and steadfast through temptation and through all the turmoil of life. Help us to remain unshaken, for you walk with us holding us by the hand, and you can lift us above all that does not endure. Amen.

January

The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

MATTHEW 4:16

Dear Father in heaven, be close to us as we seek you in the quiet of our hearts. Grant us the strength of your Spirit, the strength to wait patiently for your help in our lives. Help us to hold to all that is good. Help us to feel, each one of us, that we are your children and that we may rejoice in your fatherly care. May your will be done more and more fully in us and around us. May your will be done so that we may be given ever greater freeing and your light can dawn where there is still darkness. Amen.

January

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

MATTHEW 2:1-2

Lord our God, we thank you that you have come to this earth. Let a light shine out again and again among those who hear your gospel, also among those with sincere hearts, whether or not they are Christians. May they come to know your light and receive salvation in Jesus Christ. May your light shine for us and may you appear to us ever more clearly. Remember all who call to you. Remember your people. May your people gather and become a light in your name, serving you wherever they go. Amen.

January

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ISAIAH

60:1-3

Dear Father in heaven, accept us as your children, whose lives are under your protection and who turn to you for strength. In the midst of all the struggles and temptations in this world keep us certain of your love and goodness. Grant that we may help your name to be honored on earth and your salvation to spread over all the world. May we help that the hope you have given us brings light and strength for our own lives and for all whom you love in Jesus Christ. Amen.

January

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

LUKE 17:5-6

Father in heaven, we thank you for the many ways you strengthen us and reveal your life to us. We thank you for all your protection, also for your protection of our faith and hope. Grant that your Spirit may penetrate us more and more, enabling us to be your witnesses in this evil and unhappy world. May your Spirit give us hope for this life and for the life to come. Amen.

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

I CORINTHIANS 15:57-58

Lord our God, we thank you that we are allowed to live in your love. We thank you for your promise that all the suffering on earth shall come to an end. Hear us when we turn to you with all we have on our hearts. We are weak, but you are strong. May we hope and trust in your strength. May our life, with all its practical concerns, remain in your hands until the day when you will act in might and the whole world will know the forgiveness of sins and will praise and thank you evermore. Amen.

January

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. ISAIAH

40:1-2

Lord our God, how great is your love, and how great is your help! May each one of us feel sheltered in your hand, knowing that our faults and shortcomings no longer matter. We can go straight toward the goal you have set, for you will help us through the forgiveness of sins and through all the good you can put into our hearts. And so we ask you to be with us. May we be faithful, believing firmly in your great mercy, so that your name may be glorified among us. May each heart be given the comfort of knowing that everything will yet turn to the good, to the glory of your name. Amen.

II

January

*The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be
afraid?*

PSALM 27:1

Our dear Father, we ask you to come to us from heaven and surround us with your goodness and mercy, with your light and life. We are weak, poor, and lost just when we need to stand firm and hold on. But you are faithful. You stay by us and help us. Continue to help and sustain us, we pray. Do not let our lives be lived in vain. May something of eternity be with us in all we have to face in life, so that over and over again we may find courage to start anew. Amen.

January

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

PSALM 55:22

Dear Father in heaven, you let us see and feel your great goodness toward us. Grant us the inner help to be victorious in the Savior, rejoicing to be by his side with faith and loyalty, and with the strength of soul that frees us from all burdens by laying them in your hands. Hear us as together we pray to you. All we ask and long for, all our concerns down to the very smallest, we lay in your hands in the one great request that your name be glorified on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

January

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.

I CORINTHIANS 16:13-14

Dear Father in heaven, give us childlike hearts so that we may understand everything in the right way. Grant us work that bears fruit in spite of our faults and weaknesses, because we want to work with the understanding given by love. Father in heaven, you know that we are faced day and night with many difficulties and setbacks. But you see us, and you will help us so that your name may be honored, your kingdom may come, and your will may be done on earth as in heaven. Amen.

For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:4

Lord our God, we come into your presence and kneel before your throne, asking you with all our hearts for your Spirit, so that our lives may be guided and ruled by you, the one God and Creator of all life. Let your Word come into our hearts. Give your blessing on all we experience in life and on all we ask of you as we stand before you. We are weak and poor. We can achieve nothing, and our hearts are weary. But you can strengthen us. You can make everything come right to reveal your kingdom throughout the world. Then all the people of our time may come to know that your will for the earth is not distress and suffering, but your goodness, your life, and your eternity. Amen.

January

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

ROMANS 8:26, NRSV

Lord God, send your Spirit, we pray, over us and over the whole world. Let your light dawn on earth among humankind. Reveal your power and let your reign begin. May your will be done, O Lord. We kneel before your throne and plead to you. We are weak. Lord, help us. Bless us. Establish your kingdom in the hearts of those who are willing to follow you, who are willing to accept your grace in Jesus Christ. Help us through your strength. Reign over us. Be with us with your Holy Spirit, O Lord God, our Father. Amen.

