



A MINISTRY OF LOUISA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
A VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH DISCIPLES OF CHRIST CONGREGATION

The Disciple

104 ELM AVENUE
P.O. BOX 1344
LOUISA, VA 23093

MARCH 2022

540-848-6441
LOUISACHRISTIANCHURCH.ORG
LCCPASTORV@GMAIL.COM

Editor's Note: Phil Robertson doesn't apologize for loving Jesus. He is unashamed about his past sins because he glories in the fact that they're covered by Jesus and completely forgiven. Enjoy this message of hope from brother Phil and be encouraged.

Jesus Cancels Guilt and Shame

by Phil Robertson

Thousands of people from all around the globe, young and old, black and white, doctors, lawyers, plumbers, college graduates, and high school drop-outs all alike have walked through our door looking for something. Most of the time they didn't even know what they were looking for, but the one thing the majority of them had in common was the guilt and shame of a lifetime of sin weighing heavily on their hearts and minds. Most of them felt as if they had lost the power to exercise their free will and that their futures were carved in stone because of their pasts, because the consequences of their sin were stacked high on their consciences like cordwood.

The young women, after years of being objectified as sexual property by older males, had begun to show the physical strain of abuse in their faces. They looked older, more haggard than they should have. Some had been pregnant in their teens, others had lost children to child protective services, and others had aborted their unborn children. Many of the men had been victims of sexual and physical abuse and had fallen into drug and alcohol addictions, and now they struggled to achieve healthy relationships with women. Trust me when I tell you, we've seen it all. Searchers! All of them were searching. But for what? They usually didn't know.

And while their behaviors varied, they all looked the same to me. You could almost imagine they had neon signs dangling from their bowed necks: "I am guilty! If you knew only half of what I've done, you wouldn't love me. In fact, you wouldn't even speak to me." In their minds, these signs were perpetually shining as constant reminders of their worthlessness. The inner voice of guilt and shame said, You are a failure! You are trash! You are guilty!

It is a horrible cycle, to be sure. People have always had the tendency to be sinful. But ever since we told God to take a hike, one of the casualties is that we have lost the ability to navigate safely through life. As I've pointed out, the absence of God — even though He's not actually absent but ignored — means we are disconnected from truth and reality. Without someone greater than ourselves to guide our steps, we lose connection with the one reality that actually tells us what our true worth is. When we don't acknowledge that we bear the image of God, how can we find our actual value?



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Perhaps the most devastating casualty of evicting God from our culture is that, without Him, we have no path to redemption. In a godless world, once we've crossed the line, there is no way back. From that point on, we are defined in our minds and in the eyes of society by our sins. We tell ourselves, I am a drug addict! I am a whore! I am an alcoholic! I am a failure at marriage! I am — You get the point. Just fill in the blank with whatever negative image Satan has convinced you is true.

Once he has us defining ourselves by our sin, Satan proceeds to convince us that we are too far gone for God. "How could God love you after what you've done?" "Look at you! You're a mess!" "You are beyond hope."

But God created us with an ability to feel guilt and shame. They are designed to be warnings that we are on the wrong path, that we have wandered away from what will truly fulfill us, from the desire to know, love, and obey God our Father. But Satan? He's pretty good at hijacking what God intended for good and using guilt and shame to our detriment. Instead of guilt and shame warning us to turn around, the Evil One uses these gifts to convince us there is no turning back.

This is, by the way, the power source of cancel culture. Those who delight in canceling others prey upon our fear that our guilt and shame will be exposed in order to gain control over us. This is why God commands us to confess our sins openly.

This has been my practice since I first became a follower of Jesus, and it's worked well for me. Once in a while someone will point out a salty social media headline that says something like "Phil Robertson Has Affair." My response is always the same. I laugh and say, "Well, duh! I already wrote about that in my book. That's old news!" This is one reason neither Satan nor the cancel culture crowd can hold anything over my head: I've already come clean about my past before the entire world. If you are living in fear that someone will really know the true version of yourself, how about you just obey God?

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. — James 5:16,

I am well aware of the inner voice that threatens us with cancellation if we publicly admit our sins, but that voice isn't ours. It only sounds like ours. It is the voice of the Evil One who knows how liberating public confession is. The last thing Satan wants us to do is admit our wrongdoing, because he knows once we come clean before others, he loses his power over us.

The problem is that once guilt and shame are used by the Evil One and by those doing his bidding, shame becomes our master. It takes our breath away and robs us of our rest. It is a heavy burden we carry twenty-four hours of every day. It nags us when we are awake and haunts us in our dreams. It prevents us from seeing that God has already provided a path out of the swamp that has become our lives.

When I think about the power of misguided guilt and shame to control us, I've often wondered why people ever come to Miss Kay and me in the first place. For some reason (I suspect it is a last-ditch stab in the dark) they journey through the planted pine thickets and swampy bayous to our house because they hope to find something, anything that will be a balm for their painful self-inflicted wounds that have begun to fester. By the time they wander into my house, all they can see is their moral rot and decay.

They cannot, they dare not see themselves as image bearers of the Most High God. They want a little hope. Not much. Just enough to get them through the night. So they come with heads bowed low, barely able to even glance in my direction.

Most of them have heard my testimony and figured, Hey, if the Almighty can save a filthy wretch like Phil Robertson, maybe there's hope for me. I'm not proud of my former life, when I lived in open rebellion to the Almighty, but I'm not ashamed to tell the story because it is in the telling that others begin to grasp an important, indisputable fact: our God specializes in restoring beauty to those who have made themselves ugly by sin. These people are right.

If God could save a man like me, just think what He can do with them.



The Grace of God is with you!

Prayer for Lent

The 40 days of Lent are characterized by prayerfulness, repentance, fasting and outward acts of service. This is a collection of 10 prayers that span 1600 years. Each one could be used in your own personal times of devotion. Let their content and focus serve as a springboard for your times with the Lord.

A Prayer from Augustine of Hippo:

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
that I may love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
that I may defend all that is holy.
Guard me, O Holy Spirit,
that I myself may always be holy.
Amen.

A Prayer from John Wesley:

O merciful Father, do not consider
what we have done against you;
but what our blessed Savior has done for us.
Don't consider what we have made of ourselves,
but what He is making of us for you our God.
O that Christ may be "wisdom and righteousness,
sanctification and redemption"
to every one of our souls.
May His precious blood may cleanse us from all our sins,
and your Holy Spirit renew and sanctify our souls.
May He crucify our flesh with its passion and lusts,
and cleanse all our brothers and sisters
in Christ across the earth.
Amen.

A Prayer from Deitrich Bonhoeffer:

I Cannot Do This Alone
O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you;
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness, but with you there is light;
I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am feeble in
heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways,
but you know the way for me....
Restore me to liberty, and enable me to live now
that I may answer before you and before men.
Lord whatever this day may bring,
Your name be praised.
Amen.

Three Prayers from the Anglican can Book of Common Prayer:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit
to be tempted by Satan;
Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many
temptations;
and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us,
let each one find you mighty to save;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy:
Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways,
and bring them again with penitent hearts
and steadfast faith to embrace
and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word,
Jesus Christ your Son;
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Almighty God, you know that we have no power
in ourselves to help ourselves:
Keep us both outwardly in our bodies
and inwardly in our souls,
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may
assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.



A Prayer of Intercession from John Birch (inspired by Psalm 145: 14)

The LORD upholds all those who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down. (Psalm 145:14)
God of love, hear the cry of those who yearn for love;
fractured families, broken homes, neglected, unwanted,
alone –
God of love, *hear our prayer*
God of justice, hear the cry of those
who yearn for justice;
persecuted and oppressed, exploited, ill-treated, broken –
God of justice, *hear our prayer*.
God of peace, hear the cry of those who yearn for peace;
in battle zones and broken states, frightened,
fearful, anxious –
God of peace, *hear our prayer*.
God of healing, hear the cry of those
who yearn for healing;
physical and spiritual hurting, weakened, depressed –
God of healing, *hear our prayer*.
God of mercy, hear the cry of those
who yearn for mercy;
convicted, in need of your Grace, contrite, humble,
bowed down –
God of mercy, *hear our prayer*.
I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as
long as I live. (Psalm 116:1, 2)
May you know the peace of God, the love of God,
The justice of God, the healing and mercy of God
This day and all days
Amen.

A Prayer of Confession from the Worship Sourcebook:

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ
to seek and save the lost.
We confess that we have strayed
from you and turned aside from your way.
We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when
we are stained and great when we are small.
We have failed in love, neglected justice,
and ignored your truth.
Have mercy, O God, and forgive our sin.
Return us to paths of righteousness
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

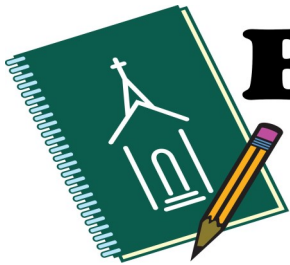


A Prayer from International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL):

Father in Heaven, the light of your truth
bestows sight to the darkness of sinful eyes.
May this season of repentance
bring us the blessing of Your forgiveness
and the gift of Your light.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer for Hope & Solidarity from Annabel Shilson-Thomas

Lord, you set your face towards Jerusalem
and walked alongside those who suffer.
Be our vision that we too may walk the way of the cross
and extend a hand to those we meet.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*
Lord, you stopped to heal the sick, cure the lame
and give sight to the blind.
Be our vision that we too may give time to others
and respond to their needs.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*
Lord, you said, “The first shall be last and the last first.”
Be our vision that we too may work
towards your kingdom
when the exalted will be brought low
and the lowly exalted.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*
Lord, you ate with tax collectors
and sinners and heard their stories.
Be our vision that we too may listen
to the despised and rejected
and value their lives.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*
Lord, you took time to pray and time to be silent.
Be our vision that through our prayers,
fasting and almsgiving
we too may draw closer to you and find your way.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.*
Lord, you entered Jerusalem with peace in your heart.
Be our vision that we too may desire peace where others
desire war,
and may work for justice where injustice reigns.
*Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit
For you are our hope and our salvation.
Amen.*



Board Meeting

March 8, 2022 at 7:30 PM

Look for meeting documents and Zoom info on March 7, 2022.

ASH WEDNESDAY *worship*

Join us on March 2 at 7:00 pm for our Ash Wednesday Service.



Remember to set your clocks one hour ahead on Sunday, March 13

MARCH Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jacob C.	March 1
Sally Mae H.	March 1
Karol L.	March 4
Doug D.	March 11
Maureen D.	March 14
Miranda D.	March 14
Rebekah P.	March 16
Andrew P.	March 16
Becky C.	March 17
Butch D.	March 20
Sarah E.	March 20
John Jerl P.	March 20
Pam H.	March 22
Jim C.	March 24
Luke P.	March 25



ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2

This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on March 2. During worship services that day, pastors in many Christian churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.

Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," Genesis 3:19). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday — and throughout the 40 days of Lent — ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, you know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of your word, so that we may be victorious over the seduction of the Evil One and reach the paschal feast in the joy of the Holy Spirit."

Complete serenity

Many of us have heard the first part of what's called "The Serenity Prayer," attributed to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. But we would do well to learn the rest of it as well:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen."

