

Midweek Lenten Series: Open My Life, Lord

Feb. 24, 2021



Week of Lent 1: Open My Eyes, Lord

Paul saw the light of Christ shining around him on the road to Damascus. As individuals and communities, what do we have difficulty seeing? How does our perspective change when we view the world through the eyes of Christ?

Opening Dialogue

We look but do not see. **Lord, open our eyes.**

We stumble at noon as in the twilight. **Lord, open our eyes.**

God turns our darkness into light. **Lord, open our eyes.**

We are not forsaken: look up and see! **Lord, open our eyes.**

(Based on Isaiah 59:10; 42:16-18)

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer

Open our eyes, Lord, to perceive your desire for the world. Remove those things that block our vision and widen our gaze to encompass all you would have us see. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Reading

Week 1: Isaiah 42:5-9

- ⁵ Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
- ⁶ I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,^[a]
a light to the nations,
- ⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
- ⁸ I am the LORD, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
- ⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Psalmody

Week 1: Psalm 119:17-24

- ¹⁷ Deal bountifully with your servant,
so that I may live and observe your word.
- ¹⁸ Open my eyes, so that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.
- ¹⁹ I live as an alien in the land;
do not hide your commandments from me.
- ²⁰ My soul is consumed with longing
for your ordinances at all times.
- ²¹ You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from your commandments;
- ²² take away from me their scorn and contempt,
for I have kept your decrees.
- ²³ Even though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant will meditate on your statutes.
- ²⁴ Your decrees are my delight,
they are my counselors.

Reading

Week 1: Acts 26:4-18

⁴“All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, ⁷a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! ⁸Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

⁹“Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. ¹¹By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

¹²“With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. ¹⁴When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

Reflection

Prayers

Lord of all life, when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,

open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.

When we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,

open our hands to do your work in the world.

When we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,

open our ears, that all will know your love.

When we are hardened against our neighbor,

open our hearts and heal our resentment.

When we are closed to the grace you long to give us,

open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.

Here other prayers may be offered.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross.

The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life ✝ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.