

1-1-2005

To the Praise of His Glory

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Recommended Citation

Magness, Lee (2005) "To the Praise of His Glory," *Leaven*: Vol. 13: Iss. 3, Article 16.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol13/iss3/16>

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To the praise of his glory

LEE MAGNESS

(This service of readings is drawn entirely from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The text of the King James Version has been slightly modified to suit the liturgical setting. Readings may be rearranged to suit various orders of worship. "P" refers to the individual(s) presiding at each point in the service. "C" could be read by the entire congregation or a readers' choir.)

CONGREGATIONAL GREETING

P Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1.2)

C *Grace to you and peace*

BLESSING TO GOD

P Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has *blessed* us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
just as he has *chosen* us in him before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and blameless before him in love:
he *predestined* us for adoption by Jesus Christ to himself,
according to the good pleasure of his will,

C *to the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he has made us accepted in the beloved;*

P in whom we have *redemption* through his blood,
the *forgiveness* of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
in which he has *abounded* toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
having made known to us the mystery of his will,
according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself:
that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one
all things in Christ, both things in heaven, and things on earth; even in him:
in whom also we have obtained an inheritance,
being *predestined* according to the purpose of him
who works all things after the counsel of his own will:

C *that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ;*

P in whom you also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation: in which also after you believed,
you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,

C *to the praise of his glory.*

(1.3-14)

THANKSGIVING FOR THE BODY

P Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints,
 did not cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
 may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,
 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,
 that you may know what is the hope of his calling,
 and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
 and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe,
 according to the working of his mighty power,
 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,
 and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
 far above all principality and power and might and dominion,
 and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in what is to come:
 and has put all things under his feet,
 and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
 which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all. Amen. (1.15-23)

[The congregation may be invited to voice their thanksgivings to God in and for the body.]

CALL TO CONFESSION OF SINS

P And he has made you alive,

C we who were dead in trespasses and sins;

P Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world,
 according to the prince of the power of the air,
 the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

C among whom also we all lived in times past in the lusts of our flesh,

P fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;
 and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

C even when we were dead in sins,

P has made us alive together with Christ,

C (by grace we are saved;)

P and has raised us up together,
 and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
 that in the ages to come he might show
 the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

C For by grace we are saved through faith;

*P and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
not of works, lest any one should boast.*

*C For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,
which God has foreordained that we should walk in them.* (2.1-10)

[The congregation may be invited to voice their confessions in the light of what God has done for us in Christ.]

CALL TO CONFESSION OF FAITH

*P I therefore, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called,
with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

*C There is one body, and one Spirit,
even as we are called in one hope of our calling;
One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* (4.1-6)

*P But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets;
and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

*C Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
to a perfect humanity,*

P unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (4.7-13)

CALL TO COMMUNION

*P Therefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh,
called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
That at that time you were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers
from the covenants of promise,
having no hope, and without God in the world:
But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off
are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

*C For he is our peace, who has made both one,
and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

*P having abolished in his flesh the enmity,
even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;*

to make in himself of two one new humanity, so making peace;
 and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,
 having slain the enmity thereby:
 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

C For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

P Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,
 but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
 and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
 Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
 in whom all the building fitly framed together grows into an holy temple in the Lord:

C In whom we also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit. (2.11-22)

[The congregation may now conduct the Lord's Supper according to its custom or in some way appropriate to the emphasis on our unity in Christ.]

ADMONITIONS TO THE CONGREGATION

P But speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things,
 who is the head, even Christ:
 from whom the whole body fitly joined together
 and compacted by that which every joint supplies,
 according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,
 makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
 Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
 having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God
 through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
 who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness,
 to work all uncleanness with greediness.
 But ye have not so learned Christ;
 Put off concerning the former way of life the old self,
 which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
 And put on the new self,
 which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
 Put away lying, let every person speak man truth with their neighbor:
 for we are members one of another.
 Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
 neither give place to the devil.
 Let those who stole steal no more: but rather let them labor,
 working with their hands the thing which is good,
 that they may have to give to those in need.
 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,
 but that which is good to the use of edifying,
 that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,
 whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,
 be put away from you, with all malice:
 And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
 even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.
 Be therefore followers of God, as dear children.,
 and live in love. (4.15-5.1)

BENEDICTION

- P For this reason we bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
 that he would grant us, according to the riches of his glory,
 to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner self;
- C that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith;
- P that we, being rooted and grounded in love,
 may be able to comprehend with all saints
 what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
 and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge,
- C *that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.*
- P Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
 according to the power that works in us,
 to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

C *Amen.* (3.14-21)

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