



# a time for every matter

*meditations for the seasons*

*with original illustrations by*  
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# fore word

*The sun rises, and the sun goes down,  
and hastens to the place where it rises.*

*The wind blows to the south  
and goes around to the north;  
around and around goes the wind,  
and on its circuits the wind returns.*

*All streams run to the sea,  
but the sea is not full;  
to the place where the streams flow,  
there they flow again.*

## ECCLESIASTES 1 : 5 - 8

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" cries the preacher at the beginning of Ecclesiastes. He was looking at the world with all its systems and machinations and designs and he was bothered.

I do the same today. In the midst of my privileged life with trappings of luxury that kings and queens of old could not even fathom, I am prone to dissatisfaction with the very plenty I find myself enchanted by.

That's why I wrote these meditation liturgies. They are a reminder that in the midst of the penumbras of life, God's fingerprints and purposes can be found in every corner of our lives. From the obvious to the obscure, there is no part of this world that isn't overseen and ruled by our good God.

These meditations started out as an approximation of similar liturgies written by Douglas McKelvey in his incredible book "Every Moment Holy." If you have to buy one book this year, let it be his. I cannot suggest it highly enough.

In these pages I hope to point you to the splendor of our God who is far more than we could ever understand. But that doesn't mean we should stop seeking him in all areas of our life. The cycles of this earth, if they terminate upon themselves, are vanity. But those same cycles, if they point us to the Lord, are mighty tools in the hands of the Almighty.

*- Tyler Hansen, Crested Butte, March 2021*

# 01.

a meditation  
for the lonely

Lord, we remember you in our times of loneliness. Some of us are prone feel isolated in a world that surrounds us on all sides and abandoned in a crowd. We are forsaken in a stadium and rejected in the throng. We struggle to connect meaningfully with those from whom we desire companionship. You hold our comings and our goings, you dictate our wakeful and restful and listless hearts.

*In you, we are not alone.*

When we feel the downcast weight of our wandering hearts, remind us of you who entered into our existence and was separated from your father and the perfect union of the trinity in order to dwell among us. And upon entering into mankind, you experienced the full range of humanity's emotion...joy, grief, fulfillment, frustration and yes, loneliness.

*In you, we are not alone.*

When we stagger under the weight of our perceived isolation, let us not turn our eyes inward and let our grief not terminate upon ourselves. Instead, lord, let us turn outwards to serve those surrounding us who may suffer from the very same unhappiness. And in serving them, may we see that we are partaking in the very service you came to perform. For as your people, we are no longer abandoned. As your people, we are made new as sons and daughters of you, the breath of life. Through your service, we are no longer isolated, abandoned, forsaken, or rejected.

*In you, we are not alone.*

**Amen.**

# 02. **a meditation on the god of time**

Lord, you are the God beyond all time. You exist before, during, and after our present. You are here in our days but you are also in our past and in our future. You interact with time in a way we cannot comprehend because you are the author of it...it flows from you and is yours to command.

*We praise you, the God of Time.*

When we are late and anxious for the myriad responsibilities requiring our attention in our limited hours, remind us that you reign supreme over every millisecond of our lives. When we, in our arrogance, dictate our days and futures as we see fit, remind us that your plan is not always our own. Remind us also that we need not fret because you will be with us into however many tomorrows you plan to give us.

*We praise you, the God of Time.*

When we are bound up in the failures and shortcomings of our past and find ourselves haunted by things we have done or things that have been done to us, remind us that your grace has been offered to us for all of our days, not simply the days we have chosen to acknowledge it. And when we question our place in this world you have created, remind us that you are constant and unchanging and time will not weaken or diminish your goodness and faithfulness.

*We praise you, the God of Time.*

**Amen.**





# 03.

a meditation for  
human relationships

*Lord, you are the God of all human relationships.*

From intimate friendships to budding courtships to professional acquaintances to romantic commitments, there are no relationships you do not know and are not sovereign over. And in your sovereignty over all human relationships, you have a deep abiding care.

*Lord, you are the God of all human relationships.*

Today we acknowledge that you call us to be a blessing in our relationships because of that deep care. Where there is injury and discord in relationship, you long for there to be peace and unity. And you call us, as people blessed and defined by your grace, to be bearers of blessing in all our relationships. Yet there are those of us who have suffered mightily at the hands of others. And there are still others of us who have caused great suffering by our own hands.

*Lord, you are the God of all human relationships.*

Today let us act not out of the legacy of harm we have caused or borne. Rather let us act in unity, sympathy, brotherly love, tenderness, and humility so that those around us – our coworkers and children and spouses and neighbors – might be blessed. Where we feel inadequate to the task before us, strengthen us for what we cannot undertake. We entrust to you today all of our relationships. And we know we can trust you, the God of all human relationships.

**Amen.**

# 04. **a meditation on sex**

Lord, you have given us sex for our enjoyment and procreation. Yet, as we do with so many of your good gifts, we often twist it to our own purposes and engage with it incorrectly.

And doing so, though we may not always see it, hurts us and damages our relationship with you. Give us eyes to see sex as a gift that needs to be enjoyed as you designed it. As we enjoy intimacy with our spouse, may that act of pleasure be an act of worship to you.

May we not compartmentalize our sexual life and somehow view it outside our spiritual life. You are the God of everything, our body, our health, our emotions, and yes, our sexuality. Cause us to think of our sexuality in a way that is radically different from how our culture does. Rather than a selfish act of personal fulfillment, help us see it as a corporate act of communion not just with our spouse, but also with you.

May our sexuality point us to you. Where we have failed to pursue our sexuality rightly, forgive us and assure us of the grace you have for us, may we not live in shame or isolation.

Where we are lonely and longing for sexual fulfillment, may we turn to you to find our ultimate satisfaction.

And where our sexuality is a delight that drives us towards you, we thank you and praise you.

**Amen.**

# 05. **a meditation on the weather**

Lord, remind us of your grace and provision as we experience the changing weather throughout our days. You are the God who brings water to our land by the coordinated movement of clouds, winds, and light that are all subject to your voice and command.

*You are Lord of the weather.*

When our valley is dry in your grace you provide snowstorms and rainstorms and cloud cover to demonstrate your tender love towards us, your people.

*You are Lord of the weather.*

In your kindness you deliver us snow that we play on and live by.

*You are Lord of the weather.*

In your majesty you paint the sunset skies in brilliant hues of blue and orange and yellow and red and purple, reminding us that you invented all the colors of this world and still others we cannot see.

*You are Lord of the weather.*

In the spring winds we are reminded of your movement throughout this world to all people. You are not a god who is stagnant and still. You are the God who blows through every element of every life on earth.

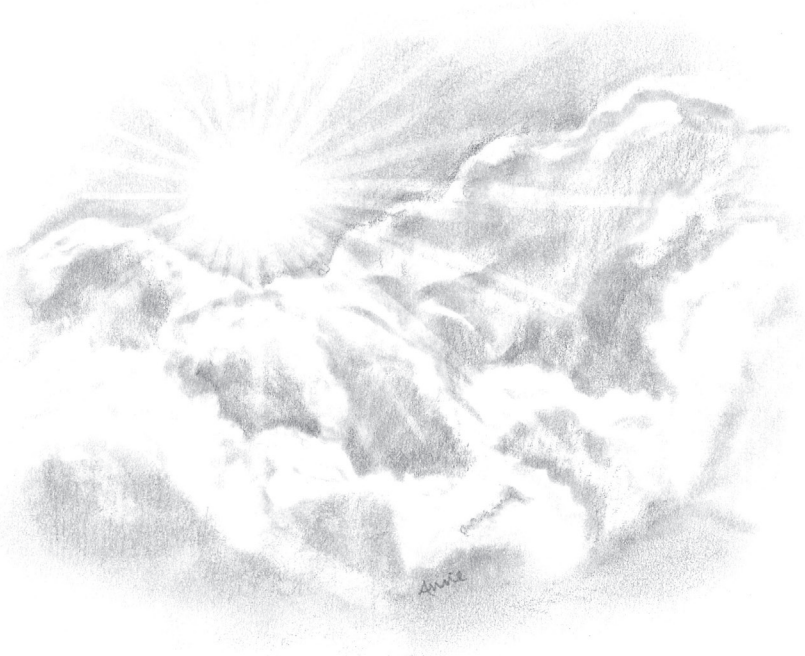
*You are Lord of the weather.*

In the changing seasons, we turn to you for our steadfast hope. Though the leaves may fall and change in their hue, you are the same yesterday, today, tomorrow, and through all time. For you are the only one who is beyond time. You are unchanging and steadfast.

*You are Lord of the weather.*

May we be reminded of you in the changing weather in our lives.

**Amen.**



# 06.

a meditation  
before thanksgiving  
dinner

Father of light and peace and grace, you are good to us beyond our imaginings. Grant us the eyes to see the depths of your favor and your kindness to us.

*Jesus, we are thankful.*

Jesus, in your time among us, you twice blessed meals and created abundance. And so we are grateful for the abundance you have bestowed upon us this day and this year.

*Jesus, we are thankful.*

For gifts of family and friendship we thank you and ask that you would expand our hearts to view all we encounter as you view them.

*Jesus, we are thankful.*

For gifts of food and flavor, we thank you and ask that you would help us taste and delight in your goodness.

*Jesus, we are thankful.*

For gifts of warmth and comfort, we thank you and ask that you would empower us to extend such blessings to those throughout the world who do not have them.

*Jesus, we are thankful.*

For your ultimate gift of love, we thank you and recognize it is a gift we cannot repay. May we live our lives in ever constant response to the love we receive from you.

**Amen.**

# O7. a meditation on governments

You hold all things in your hands, including all systems and organizations and schemes and machinations of man.

*You are the God of all governments and we trust you.*

Today we acknowledge that you hold the government of our fragile nation in your hands and by your will alone is this country sustained, just as all countries throughout the world are.

*You are the God of all governments and we trust you.*

We come before you today asking for your peace and wisdom to flow through our nation's political leaders. Where there is division and strife, would you empower us as the church to sow harmony and unity. Where there is haughtiness and arrogance on the part of our government officials, convict and call to repentance.

*You are the God of all governments and we trust you.*

And for ourselves, oh Lord of all authority, where our political allegiances fall before our allegiance to your kingdom, cause in us the same humility and repentance and wisdom that we long for in our elected leaders.

*You are the God of all governments and we trust you.*

Let us not place our trust in constitutions or political parties or election results, but let us always hope in you and your kingdom.

**Amen.**

# OS.

a meditation  
on powerlessness

Lord, thank you for the security we have in you. We acknowledge that our lives are fundamentally out of our control and yet we still grasp at the frayed edges of our lives and world, clinging to an illusion of power.

*Lord, we recognize that nothing is entirely within our grasp.*

Let that truth never set us spinning out of control but may it always direct us ever onward to you. You are the good shepherd, our guide in the rocky places. And the security we have in you cannot be swayed, however much we may waver in our weaknesses.

*Lord, we recognize that nothing is entirely within our grasp.*

Increase our faith Lord, help us to see and delight in our identity as a chosen, holy race. Help us to never see our identity in light of others. Where we have viewed ourselves as superior we repent.

*Lord, we recognize that nothing is entirely within our grasp.*

We pray for our broad, diverse, beautiful world and ask that you would do the work only you can do, the vital work of drawing the lost and hurting to yourself.

As you do so, we rest in the security you have for us.

**Amen.**

# 09.

a meditation  
on the smelling of  
woodsmoke

Lord, we are reminded of you when we smell the sweet scent of woodsmoke carried on the cold night air. The simple smell is evidence of your grace in someone's life, it is proof that somewhere there is a hearth fire bringing light and warmth to a house in the midst of winter's cold bite. Remind us anew, whenever we smell woodsmoke, that you are the God of grace upon grace upon grace.

*Your kindness is to every generation.*

You have been faithful to us when we were wayward and rebellious. When we turned away from you and towards our own purposes, in your grace you did not forsake us nor leave us. You remained near to us and have always been our true north in the midst of our moods that change just as the winter winds blow in all directions.

*Your kindness is to every generation.*

We live in a world of great darkness and despair. And we, as lost and wandering children, often embrace that very darkness, believing we will be hidden by it. But nothing is unseen by you. And in your grace you offer freely yourself, the life that was the light of all mankind. Your light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

*Your kindness is to every generation.*

As we smell sweet woodsmoke on the crisp night air, we are reminded that somewhere, that scent was borne of light. A light in the darkness. Just as you, lord Jesus, are the ultimate light in the darkness. We receive you this day with glad hearts. And we are reminded of you by the smell of woodsmoke.

**Amen.**





# 10.

a meditation  
on newly fallen  
snow

Lord, we are reminded of you in the newly fallen snow. You are the provider of all good things and we acknowledge your generosity and grace as we receive the snow you have given us. We receive with glad hearts the moisture it contains, moisture that nourishes our bodies and makes possible the very food we eat.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above.*

In the muffling silence it brings we long to be people who would listen to your call. Where we fill our ears with the noise this world has to offer, let us instead practice stillness and quiet so that we might hear your counsel and comfort and rebuke. Let us likewise listen to those you place in front of us so that we might know how to better offer your truth to them.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above.*

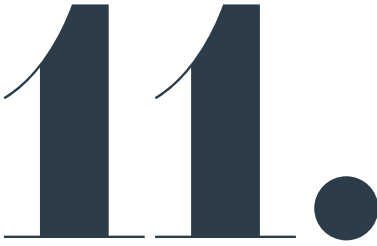
In the toil and labor we undertake to respond to fresh snow, in the shoveling and plowing and the scraping of ice from windshields, we remember the labor you call us to for your kingdom. We toil to redistribute snow so that we might travel to our work and friends and acquaintances, so that we might be productive. Let us likewise redistribute the priorities of our lives so that we might be productive in building and realizing your kingdom.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above.*

In the inconvenience we encounter from accumulated snow, we are reminded that we are not called to convenience and ease in this life. Instead we are called to serve and to suffer just as you, Christ, did for us. We are reminded of you in the newly fallen snow.

**Amen.**





## a meditation on acting in humility

Lord, we desire to be people who walk in humility for the sake of the world. But we often falter and fail in the midst of a world that tells us to exalt ourselves in order to matter. Our thoughts are too often fixed upon ourselves and our desires and needs rather than those of others. We fill our days pursuing comfort and accomplishment and renown and paint ourselves in the light we want others to view us through.

*Forgive us, Lord, and make us humble.*

As we daily carry the burden of the flesh, let us subscribe to your greater and deeper calling, to suffer for the sake of your kingdom and your people. Let us turn away from thoughts of ourselves and the webs we weave for our sake. Instead, we desire to make ourselves second so that others might delight and benefit from our service, and in so doing taste and see that you are good.

*Strengthen us, Lord, and make us humble.*

We recognize that your economy is not of this world, and that your systems stand in contrast to our own. To be more, we must be less. To matter, we must succumb. To influence, we must submit. Let us not look at these truths with disdain or doubt. Instead, let us step into them in faith that your way is better than ours. We look to you, Jesus, as the model of humility and service that we long to emulate.

*Empower us, Lord, and make us humble.*

**Amen.**

# 12.

## a meditation on broken relationships

Lord, at some point in our lives we have all experienced the heartache and loss of a broken relationship. Whether from the wounds we have caused to others or the wounds others have caused to us, we know the conflict and loneliness and despair of a relationship not being as it should.

Jesus you know our pain more than we know it ourselves, because you experienced it more profoundly and meaningfully on the cross, where relationship between Father and Son was broken. It was broken so that we, as mixed up and wayward as we are, might have restored relationship with you.

Where our hearts ache for the pain we have caused to others through intentional or unintentional acts, be the balm for our bleeding hearts.

Where we despair for that which seems beyond reconciliation, remind us of the depths to which you went so that we might be reconciled to you.

Where we are undone from the harm others have caused us, let us turn to you as the great comfort in our lives. For in you, Jesus, we know we have a relationship that cannot be taken away and cannot be diminished. You fix what is broken, you repair what seems beyond mending, and you make right the wrongs of our pasts.

Where we turn to our relationships, as broken as they might be, for fulfillment, let us instead turn to you today.

**Amen.**

# 13.

## a meditation on enjoying a good meal

Lord, we thank you every time we enjoy a delicious meal. The incredible flavors that we delight in are all created by and thought up by you. In the fruits and vegetables and herbs and animals you have created you have made possible a palette of flavors that we could never fully comprehend, flavors that bring joy to our souls.

We thank you for the times we get to enjoy such meals in the company of loved ones, making the delights of our meals even better. And we thank you for the sustenance such delights brings to our bodies and comfort they brings to our souls. We thank you for heavy, filling meals on deep dark winter nights. And we thank you for light, fresh dishes on airy summer evenings.

We recognize that we often pervert food and make the simple act of eating into something it was never intended to be. We can turn food into an idol, into a source of control in our lives, or into selfish pursuits that steer us to destruction.

Lord, on the occasion of any meal we are blessed to receive and partake in, let us delight not solely in the flavors and aromas and textures it contains. Instead, let us delight in You who made such a meal possible and who love us enough to give us a sense of taste and smell and texture that we might take enjoyment from your good gifts.

You are the god of sea salt and pomegranates and sage. You are the god of the sweet, the savory, the bitter, the sour, and the umami. You are kind to us and as we delight in our daily meals, let us delight in you.

**Amen.**

# 121.

## a meditation upon being bothered by current events

Lord, we live in a time where we can hear virtually all the news of the world all the time. And that news is often troubling and painful to hear. From political turmoil to election integrity to racial strife to refugee crises to injustices throughout the globe, the world has more bad news for than we feel we can bear.

But in the gospel, Lord, we are given abiding and transcendent good news. Help us fix our eyes upon the gospel in the midst of the overwhelming tides of the brokenness of our world.

And let us be bearers of the good news of the gospel to a world washed over by messages of despair and chaos.

Let us never forget that in your power and might you hold all the tidings of this planet in your good hands. You are making all things new and all things right. If we could be so bold, we ask that you come again quickly to bring comfort to the downtrodden and hope to the hopeless. Do not let this injustice we see stand for long.

You are the God who brings peace and hope. Help us revel in it and bring more of it to our hurting world.

**Amen.**

# 15.

## a meditation on god's splendor

Lord, we recognize that you hold everything in your hands. From the smallest subatomic particle to galaxies spanning millions of light years.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

You set the stars in their place and know their comings and goings. You design the weather patterns of this world and dictate the movement of the ocean currents.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

You know the deepest parts of our hearts and you still pursue us. You are the God of brain chemistry and neurons flashing and pheromones and the entirety of all physiology, both human and animal.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

Lord, You are the God of the calm and the storm. You are the God of the tides and winds and the snows. You are God of the cold and the heat, the desert and the jungle.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

Your creativity extends beyond our wildest reach, and your artistry is greater than our imagining.



You reign over music and sculpture and dance. You created poetry and painting and the theatre. You rule over science and medicine and mathematics and finance.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

You hold countries, borders, governments, and politics in Your firm grip. You own parliaments and courtrooms and halls of legislature. You rule over town, county, state, national, and global politics and the men and women you put in their positions of power.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

You are the God of laughter and sorrow, of comfort and pain. You are the God of depression and satisfaction and plenty and want. You rule over cancer and its cure. You reign over disease and death and ailments of all sorts just as you grant rest and delight and fulfillment and joy.

*And yet we acknowledge that our thoughts of You are often too few and too small.*

Become bigger in our thoughts, affections, imaginations, and minds. We pray that You would occupy more space in our lives, space that we confess is often filled with trivial matters of our small lives. Instead of thoughts of our own convenience and comfort, may we be convicted to love our neighbors, serve our communities, and bring peace to our world so that much might be made of you.

We choose to trust You today with every aspect of our world and every aspect of our lives. Thank You that You can be trusted with all things.

Help us take our eyes off of ourselves today, Lord, and let us fix our gaze upon you. For you have always been and will always be more.

**Amen.**

# 16.

a meditation  
on the prayer we  
were taught

Lord, you are our good and true father. Where our earthly fathers failed us, and where we fail as earthly parents, you will never falter or fail. Your fatherhood can be trusted. It is consistent and kind and your rebuke is gentle and for our good. You do not care for us out of obligation or resentment, but out of an abundance of generosity and love.

Lord, you abide and reign over the heavens. Your dwelling place is lovely and your home is a delight.

Lord, we hallow your name. We long to make much of your glory and tell your story as it deserves to be told. Your name can move mountains and it can stir the most wayward soul. You are a light in the darkness and a guide to our paths. You are mightier than the greatest storm and stronger than the most steadfast mountain range.

Lord, your kingdom is perfection. Your laws are righteous. No place escapes your dominion. You are our provider, our redeemer, and our rescuer. You call us to be builders of your kingdom. We ask today that you would give us eyes to see what faithful adherence to the work you call us to looks like. We want better things for Elk Avenue, for Mt. Crested Butte, for Gunnison, for the entire world. And you are the best thing. So we ask that you would empower us, as your message bearers, to build a world that is entranced and delighted by you. For you are truly the better kingdom that this world needs.

We wait eagerly for the glory that is to be revealed when a new heaven and a new earth are our reality. But let us never be passive in our waiting, idly anticipating something better. Let us be active in working to build your kingdom here in Crested Butte and everywhere.

Lord, give us this day our daily bread. We know you are a God who delights in providing. You are generous and full of grace to us, your people. Forgive us when we come to you with our minds full of the things we think we need. Forgive us when we come to you seeking only our own comfort and grandiose dreams and the things we want that are far outweighed by our daily needs. Instead, Lord, we ask that you would provide us with enough to recognize and delight in your provision and not so much that we would trust in our perceived abundance.

Lord, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. We confess that we grapple with true forgiveness. We often don't want to forgive those who have deeply wounded us. We feel our hurt is too deep and we are owed. But in your time on earth you came not to be served but to serve. You were the one who was owed everything and yet gave up all so that all might be forgiven. Help us better understand the depth of the forgiveness you purchased for us on the cross. May your incredible act of mercy motivate us to lavishly demonstrate mercy to those in our lives. Help us be a people who forgive.

Lord, temptation surrounds us on all sides. The world in all its feeble glories entices us away from you. Help us deny these temptations today and deliver us from the hands of those who would do wickedness to us, just as we desire not to do wickedness to others.

Yours is the ultimate kingdom. Yours is the power over all things. You deserve all glory. And all of these things are forever and ever. As we pray these things, may we be motivated to act.

News of you and your goodness should not leave us ambivalent or disinterested. Instead Lord, as we consider who you are, let us be a church and a people of action.

We pray to do great things for you, without regard for how such prayers may be answered. We recognize that when we ask to be a people of action, such action will not be on our terms, but on yours. But Lord, we are willing.

**Amen.**

# 17.

## a meditation on the eve of an election

Lord, today on the eve of an election we offer up our country to you. Where we have put our faith and our trust in our elected officials and the policies and legislations of political parties, we ask for your forgiveness.

*You are the God of politics.*

Where we have sought solutions to our hurting world in the rhetoric and identity of particular candidates, we ask your forgiveness. Instead, just as we are told in 1 Peter, may we first see ourselves as part of Your holy nation and may we always put our faith and trust in you over our government.

*You are the God of politics.*

Nevertheless, Lord, we pray for our government, our elected officials, our appointed officials...our judges, bureaucrats, military service members, elected legislative representatives, and countless others in governing roles.

*You are the God of politics.*

We ask you to speak wisdom and humility into their decision making and considerations. Grant us peace in the midst of turmoil, and help us to be bearers of that peace to a nation that needs it. We trust you on this, the eve of an election.

**Amen.**

# 18.

## a meditation on adornments

Lord, today may I adorn my soul only with the gospel and place my trust not in any act of good or accomplishment of merit that I might claim as my own.

*Make me an instrument of the gospel.*

Your infinite goodness extends far beyond the comprehension of my frail mind and my offerings of holiness are as nothing compared to You. You, my God, generously care for me so I rest in the freedom that comes from being cared for, as a child being carried to bed at the close of the day by loving parents.

*Make me an instrument of the gospel.*

Today, rather than indulge my fleeting and temporary desires and lusts and cravings may I instead feast upon your steadfast goodness and choose instead to love you more.

*Make me an instrument of the gospel.*

Throughout today may I build something eternal by building my delight in you. Take all that I am today, my motivations and fears and aspirations and passions and subsume them wholly to You so that there remains no longer any greater treasure than You.

*Make me an instrument of the gospel.*

Any by delighting in You, may I delight in serving and loving those You place in my path today. Make me an instrument of the gospel not for my own sake, but so that at the close of my life I may hear the welcome sound of your judgment upon my life: *well done*.

**Amen.**

# 19.

## a meditation on the god of the mountains

Lord, we delight ourselves in your handiwork and creativity and artistry demonstrated in the mountains surrounding us. In the granite faces of the West Elk Range we are reminded of your steadfast and stalwart character, constant through rain and sleet and snow and sun.

*And we praise you.*

In the vibrant green and flowery meadows at the base of Paradise Divide we are reminded of your grace bringing forth new life in us. We are seeds planted and nourished solely by your abundant goodness given to us from above.

*And we praise you.*

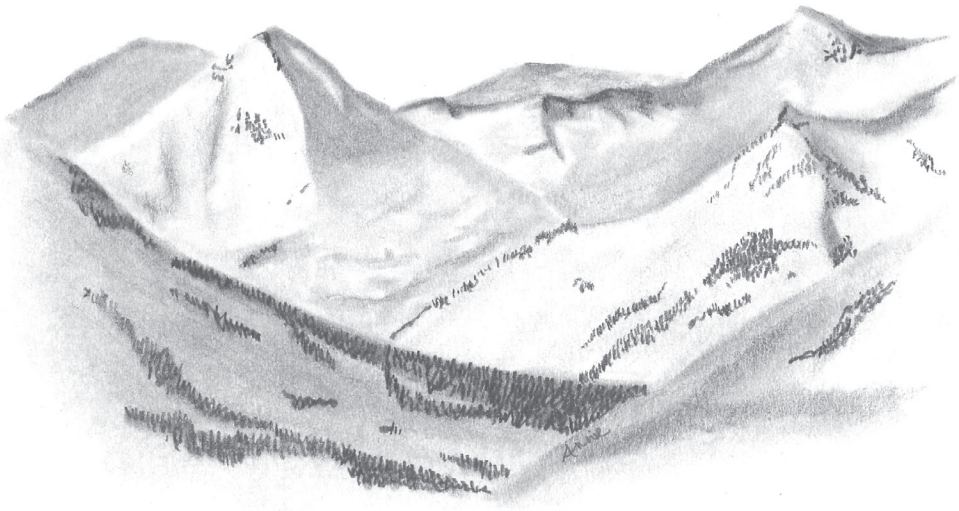
In the multi-hued colors of the sunset cast against Mt. Crested Butte at the close of the day, we are reminded of your faithfulness to people of all colors, all nations, all tribes, and all nationalities. Just as the imposing mountain stands the same to all people, you love all equally and without discrimination, offering freely the gift of life through Christ.

*And we praise you.*

In the tumbling waters poured through crevasses in the spring time shaping the landscape into your design, we are reminded of your work with every sunrise of making us anew. The peaks and the valleys and the streams and the forest declare your splendor.

*And we praise you.*

**Amen.**



# 20.

a meditation  
on freedom

Lord, we are a people all too often bound up in our mistaken notions of freedom and liberty. We chase our own desires and bristle at anything that stands in the way of our own wills. But you call us to a deeper, more meaningful liberty.

*Freedom is found in you, O Christ.*

Help us find our ultimate freedom in submission to you, our good and holy Father. You can be trusted and you are worthy of our deference. When we seek our own wills, grant us eyes to see the bondage that comes from our perceived freedom.

*Freedom is found in you, O Christ.*

Likewise, Lord, help us to see the true and good privilege that comes to us through faithful obedience to your word and your calling. Labor in and through us O Lord, that we might extend and multiply the many expressions of your mercy to ourselves, our community, and this world.

*Freedom is found in you, O Christ.*

We acknowledge that freedom came to us through your bondage and faithful service on the cross. So may we not be bearers of our own will but give up ourselves just as you gave up yourself.

*Freedom is found in you, O Christ.*

**Amen.**



# 21.

## a meditation up on witnessing injustice

Lord, as people called to follow the winding road you have set before us, we are recipients and beholders of incredible blessing. We acknowledge, however, that we are also called to suffering.

*Jesus, you are just.*

Christ, may your forbearance in the face of the cosmic injustice you faced be not just our model but also our motivation. Help us take our eyes off ourselves today and tomorrow and every day. Instead, Lord, let us fix our eyes upon you and in so doing stand up against injustice yet bear it with grace.

*Jesus, you are just.*

May we never accept injustice as right and acceptable and protect us from being those who carry out injustice in an effort to avoid injustice being done to us. Instead Lord, may we always model our actions after you who, as the chief and right judge of man, submitted to unjust and faulty judgment and became a victim so we need no longer be victims ourselves.

*Jesus, you are just.*

Let us suffer with dignity and grace just as you did. And when we face sufferings of many kinds, keep us from despair and misery and let us delight knowing we are following the path of our savior.

**Amen.**

# 22.

## a meditation on seeing a bird in flight

Lord, your creativity and thoughtfulness abounds in the flight of a bird. From the shape and design of their wings to the graceful formation of their feathers, you have authored their every part. And by your design they float on the currents of the air, soaring to the north and south by your command and delight.

*We are reminded of you in the flight of birds.*

As ravens do not reap or gather into barns to store their food they do not despair, for you care and provide for them through your abundant mercies. It is by your care that they do not fall to the ground and, as you have told us, every bird of the mountains is known by you.

*We are reminded of you in the flight of birds.*

In the springtime the birdsong carried on the breeze declares your praises as new life returns to dead ground. In the fall as birds fly south for refuge we are reminded to turn to you in the times of changing seasons in our lives.

*We are reminded of you in the flight of birds.*

O God, let us be reminded of you whenever we see a bird in flight. As we marvel at the beauty of the sparrows, hawks, and eagles, we marvel at your greater beauty. As we delight in their song and their comings and goings, we delight in how you sing your song of salvation over us. As we wonder in the great care you have for them, we wonder even more at the great care you have for us, the people you call by your name.

**Amen.**



# 23.

## a meditation on serving others

Jesus, today may we lay ourselves down for the sake of others just as you did in your time here on earth. You, the God of the heavens and the earth, humbled yourself to the point of death on a cross in service to us.

*And we are blessed.*

While we could never repay such service to us adequately, help us model such humility in every corner of our life today. Instead of seeking our own gain and reward, let us act with unity, brotherly love, tenderness, humility and blessing for the sake of others' gain and reward, just as you did for us.

*And we are blessed.*

In our workplace, in our homes, in our role as citizens, may we become second so others may become first. As the church, let us be defined by our humility and ministrations to a world in need. We remember that you came not wielding justice but bearing justice.

*And we are blessed.*

Where we have been self serving and had our eyes upon ourselves, forgive us and steer us in a new order of seeing our place in this world. You are the God who came to serve, not to be served.

*And we are blessed.*

As your people, help us to serve and not seek to be served. For in becoming less, your kingdom becomes more. And as your kingdom becomes more, we are blessed. Today we are your servants.

**Amen.**

# 24.

## a meditation on violence

Jesus, we acknowledge that our redemption is birthed from suffering and violence. In setting us free from our bondage to sin, you were harmed more profoundly than we could ever understand. Our hope was born in blood and bruise and torn flesh.

*By your wounds we are healed.*

Today, Lord, we ask that you grant us eyes to better understand the great cost you paid on our behalf. And may we live today in response to that great sacrifice. Today when we are alone, with friends, caring for children, serving our spouse; when we are at work or study or recreation or rest; when we are eating, cleaning, reading, traveling - in every part of today help us to better understand that we are healed and cleansed and given hope only by your wounds.

*By your wounds we are healed.*

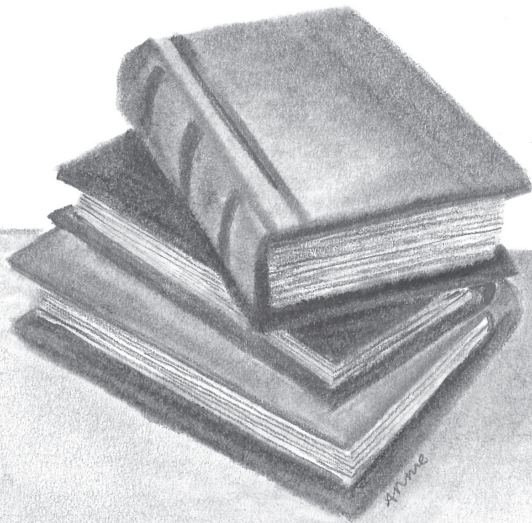
You endured violence so that we might have peace. You became a victim so that we no longer need to be victims. You were outcast so that we could be included.

*By your wounds we are healed.*

We are a savage people, prone to violence in our fits of emotion. Forgive us when by our actions we take up the whip that broke your skin; when by our thoughts we place the crown of thorns upon your head.

Remind us that our salvation was made possible by the violence you suffered. Let that incredible truth move our hearts to action today.

**Amen.**



# 25.

## a meditation on god's word

Lord, thank you for giving us your word. Thank you that it is reliable and can be trusted yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Help us, as easily distracted and swayed as we are, to trust in your word more with every passing day. We ask that You would grant us the discipline we need and so often lack to spend time in your word daily. May we never wield your word as a cudgel over others, but may we use it to point to You and your glorious works. We trust that by abiding in your word we will be better to ourselves and better to others for your glory.

Lord, some of what you have given us through your word can be difficult to understand, especially in our current culture and time in history. We ask that you would grant us a deeper understanding of and adherence to your word and what you call us to as people made new by your sacrifice.

May we never lose confidence in the authority and trustworthiness of your word when we come to those parts we don't understand or wrestle against. Instead, help us grasp more deeply how you reveal yourself and your design through what you have given us. Grant us patience and discernment.

May your word be a light to our path that we may illuminate the paths of others through it. Help us to honor, love, and fear as you call us to. We want to be a people defined not by our own will and ways but by yours, and we cannot do that alone.

**Amen.**

# 26.

a meditation  
on having an impact  
in the world

Lord, we are told that to matter in this world we need to be people with a footprint. We need to be acknowledged and recognized and thought highly of. We need to seek bigger and better things and be praised for them.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

This world tells us that to be important is to seek our own accomplishment. But your economy is entirely different. You call us to a deeper humility than we can imagine, a humility that is Christlike. And Jesus, you came down in frail and broken flesh. You were mocked and scorned and yet you didn't lift your hand in anger or defense. Instead you withstood the taunts and listened to the false accusations without standing up for yourself. And in doing so, you stood up for all of us.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

Your humility changed our world more profoundly than we can understand. Help us today, Lord, to model that same humility to all those we encounter. May we live our lives poured out for our wives, husbands, children, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, strangers, community members, and yes, even our enemies.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

Lord, may our lives be a compelling testimony of the gospel not through our traditions or our efforts to prove...may our lives scream of your goodness and worth and might and glory through the character that you call us to.



Let us not rely on tricks of emotion or manipulation or guilt and shame to point others to you. Instead, let us live lives today that are compelling by the fruit of the spirit they contain.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

We long to be noticed not for our sake and renown but for the cause and beauty of your kingdom. So today we ask that you empower us to be adorned not by external baubles that merely draw temporary affection then fade through the seasons. Instead, just as waters flowing through a slab of rock carve mountains into their shapes, let us be adorned by that which can create lasting and formative impact...the humility, hope, joy, peace, and love that flow from the gospel.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

Let us shape the world into your image by our steadfast content of character and devotion to you, Oh Christ

Let us matter in this world not by the recognition and acknowledgment we receive, but by recognizing and acknowledging you in all our strivings.

*Your ways are not the world's ways.*

Where we seek after fleeting fame and renown, where we mistake our glory for yours, where we delight in the affections of a fickle culture, we repent and we acknowledge that your ways are not the world's ways.

And we desire your ways today.

**Amen.**

# 27.

## a meditation for new year's day

Jesus you are our savior, redeemer, and lord. In the past year, we endured trial, heartache, confusion, frustration, and fear. There have also been moments of hope, delight, satisfaction, and renewal.

For some of us, we have battled anger, depression, loneliness, and sorrow. For others, it has been a year of reconnection and delight. Regardless of our circumstances throughout the year, you have remained steadfast through all of it, for you do not change. You are the same from generation to generation, from nation to nation, from culture to culture, and from year to year.

And as we look to the year to come and the many unknown offerings it holds, help us to cling tightly to you as our anchor in the midst of life's potential gales. We know you illuminate our paths and trim our wayward sails when we venture astray in life's shallows, as we are so prone to do.

With whatever the coming year may hold for us we choose to trust your promise to hold us ever more tightly.

Should the coming year bring new life and relationships, we praise you. Should the coming year hold fractured covenants and broken finances, we praise you.

Regardless of our sight, you have been our provider in the past year. With every second of each of the 365 days you gave us, you provided the breath that filled out lungs. Provide for us again in the coming year, we ask.

You are our hope and stay.

**Amen.**

# 28.

## a meditation on the sunrise

Jesus, with the arrival of the sun this morning we invite you into our day. Illuminate those parts of our soul that neglect you and turn our eyes upon your grandeur. Let us do away with those patterns of our lives that no longer serve us. For there are parts of our lives, if left to themselves, that will be no good to anyone. With the start of this new day, we give you those patterns and parts and we ask you to become more. In becoming larger than those dark corners of our soul, may we find respite and relief from our crowded minds.

For today only, help us pursue intentionality in our actions and reactions, in our relations and our imaginations. Let something meaningful and essential happen as we joyfully receive this new day and new light. We long for your goodness and grace to bloom in us new life for the sake of your kingdom and your people.

Let us rejoice and be glad in this day. We receive your new mercies as we receive this new light. In the winding paths of our day protect us from isolation and waywardness. Instead, illuminate the road before us, that upon reaching the end of today's light, we can have confidence in the paths we have trod.

In our matters of toil and labor let us work with diligence and skill and excellence. Let us do all, from responding to emails to washing the dishes, with an aim to please you our great and good God.

Come find us today and be with us where we are. Let us not carry the weight of yesterday and the burden of tomorrow into these hours. And help us see ourselves for who we truly are today. With this sunrise we offer all of ourselves to you.

**Amen.**

# 29.

## a meditation on obedience

Lord, we acknowledge that you call us to an obedience we often find difficult. There are days we don't want you. It is often that our sinful flesh regularly rebels against your commands and bristles at your approach.

*Make us obedient, we pray.*

Increase our obedience to you today. Make us more like you in our nature and character with every passing second of this day, that we may be a light to this world and be faithful to the calling you have given us.

*Make us obedient, we pray.*

Let us never buy into the lie that our obedience makes us right before you, or changes our worth in your kingdom's calculations. Likewise Lord, when we fail, let us never suffer from the slings and arrows of shame and in so doing be kept from the right and good work you ask of us.

*Make us obedient, we pray.*

Instead Lord, let our finished and secure identity as adopted sons and daughters, as heirs to your surpassing kingdom, be the full depths of motivation we require to live our lives in the Christian character we are meant to fulfill and display.

May our faith not simply be a mental game or intellectual labor. May we be motivated to obedient works through the obedient work already done by you, oh Christ.

**Amen.**



# 30.

a meditation  
on the god who  
listens

Lord, hear me now. Be near and listen to my cry for I am in need. It would be easier to cry out to you if I knew beyond any fragment of doubt that you were with me. But there are times, in the darkness of my soul, that I do not know if you are. And it would be easier to cry out to you if I were of a pure heart. But I often hide not just from you, oh Lord, but also from myself.

*You are the God who listens.*

Your reality does not depend upon my belief or a conquering of my doubts. And your nearness does not depend upon my holiness and acceptance. You are real and near because you simply are.

*You are the God who listens.*

Hear my cry. In the depths of my despair, hear when I can only whimper my plea for comfort. In the heights of my joy, hear when I scream of your power and care. In the monotony of my life when all my days seem to meld into one single recursive loop of obligations and stumbles and fleeting comforts, hear me when I beg for release.

*You are the God who listens.*

I am a quiver of mixed motivations and a mud pie of joy and sorrow and joy and sorrow. You present yourself in all seasons of my heart. You hear my whimper and my scream. You listen to my silence and my groan. As you listen to me, may I likewise listen to you. Today, give me moments of stillness and quiet that I may hear your still, small voice through the discord and hurricane of life.

*You are the God who listens.*

**Amen.**

# 31.

## a meditation on a daily walk

Lord, guide my footfalls on this walk today. I am prone to stumble and fall in this life. I am prone to slackening my pace when pursuing the right thing and quickening my pace when pursuing the wrong. I run when I should be still and I am still when I should run.

*Guide my footfalls today.*

When my legs become weary from the miles they have travelled, and my mind becomes tired with the thoughts that daily consume it, be my strength and support. When my feet ache from the pounding of the ground beneath them and my head becomes light from the air that surrounds it, moor me to your pier and protect me in your harbor so I might not drift away.

*Guide my footfalls today.*

May I be refreshed on my walk today. Where my soul is downtrodden and my eyes downcast tune my heart to sing your praise even if a soft hum is all I can muster with my frail tongue. If I find myself in a glade of the unfamiliar with no one at hand to surround me, I know you are my boon companion and that you walk alongside me as I sojourn here for a season.

*Guide my footfalls today.*

Seek me out today as I embark on this walk. Meet me though I may not desire to be met. Comfort me though I may not desire to be comforted. Embrace me though I may not desire to be embraced. May today's walk be yet another Ebenezer I set to mark your faithfulness and provision for these hours I have been given.

**Amen.**





# 32.

## a meditation before an athletic endeavour

Lord, you have given us our bodies and you know them well. From every sinew and muscle fiber to every tendon and joint, you have wonderfully structured every part of our bodies. You have made us to jump and run and stretch and dance. As we embark on this athletic pursuit, we ask that you would bless it for our benefit and strengthening.

We remember you in the rhythmic beating of our hearts, pumping blood through our bodies so that we might be strengthened. We remember that the life we are given in the flow of blood through our veins is as nothing to the life we are given through the offering of blood poured forth from your veins.

We remember you in the burning of calories and the expenditure of carbohydrates. The energy we are expending comes from the fruits and vegetables and grains you have placed upon this earth for our sustenance. The sweat that pours from our pores is from the pure water you have rained down on our lands that we might have our thirst slaked.

Let our exercise today be an act of worship to you, the God of all things. You are God over running and biking and skiing and hiking and swimming and dancing.

For those of us who are able to, we thank you for the gift of movement and we are reminded that you call us to be a people who move throughout this world to bring your kingdom to every corner.

For those of us whose bodies are now fading or weakened, we offer ourselves to you in our frailty and await the day when our bodies will be made anew in fellowship with you.

**Amen.**

# 33.

## a meditation before using social media

Lord, you are sovereign over technology and the trillions upon trillions of ones and zeros that make up our binary world of technology. Every computer and network and device is yours just as our hearts and emotions and affections are. Today, we ask you to guide our hearts as we engage with social media.

*You are the God of social networking.*

Help us comport ourselves with humility and kindness and gentleness and self-control as we interact with others online today. Let the anonymity of a screen name and avatar not embolden us to behave in a way that demeans or belittles others. Instead, we long to carry the message of the gospel and your love on our every word and keystroke.

*You are the God of social networking.*

Grant us discernment in the content we allow into our lives. Where there is division and falsehood guide us to unity and truth. Help us turn away from that which turns our hearts cold to you and your people. Rather, lead us to communities and relationships that encourage and bolster and educate.

*You are the God of social networking.*

Let us not forsake the profound blessing of incarnational relationship by accepting the poor substitute of social media. Instead, may our social media pursuits push us towards deeper and more intentional relationships with those near us. Help us be a tool for the gospel through our time online today.

**Amen.**



Lord...



**a  
time  
for  
every  
matter**

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