

Closing Prayer – 9/24/2017

Father, I pray for us, that today and in these weeks to come, it would be increasingly clear to us that we are your people. I trust that it is already clear for many; may it become clearer and clearer for us. You are our God. Thus, we needn't fear. No matter what takes place in the world in which we live, we know that your promises will come to fruition because you are the one who is self-existent, the one who is self-determining and the one who is self-sufficient. No one controls you; you are powerful; you have authority over all things; therefore all of your promises will come to pass.

And we are grateful. For even now, in this life, we can rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep with those who are weeping. We rejoice today with Ballinger and Rudman families on the marriage of Dylan and Alyssa. With them we are filled with joy. We thank you for this wonderful glimpse of your goodness to us. And, for all of the blessings that many of us feel on this day; blessings in our families, in our work, in our health, in our walk with you as you form Christ in us. We are grateful.

We weep with those who weep. We grieve with David Miller in the loss of his wife Marjorie. We grieve with Lori Lange and her family in the loss of her dad. We grieve with Mary Harvey and her family in the loss of her mom. And for others who suffer loss in various ways, we grieve. But we grieve, not as those who have no hope, because we do have hope. That hope is reunion with all other believers and also eternity with Christ.

Father, there are those who are suffering in our own country and around the world because of storms of weather and because of storms of war, terror, hatred and racism. We pray that your arm would not be so short but that you could reach down and save, and cause people who are suffering to see their own weakness and need and call upon you. Help us as a nation. Enable all of us, including our leaders, to speak to one another respectfully, without vulgarity, even to those whose actions and views we may disagree - even those who may be our enemies. May we, as followers of Christ, exemplify the admonition of James when he tells us that true religion is that which bridles the tongue. May we be a people whose speech shows not hatred but love, that seeks to produce not division but peace. Help us as your people to model how we are to interact with, speak to, relate to one another.

Father, we are grateful that you have made us to be your people. We are grateful that you are our God. I pray that our identity would be as a people with whom and in whom God dwells. May that fact shape us in every way. That it would shape how we think. That it would shape our emotions. That it would shape what we say. That it would shape what we do.

And all of this to your glory, even as we anticipate that wonderful day when you come and you take your people home.

This, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.