

George Herbert *The Author's Prayer Before Sermon* (ca. 1626-1633)

O Almighty and ever-living Lord God!
Majesty, and Power, and Brightness and Glory!
How shall *we* dare to appear before your face, we who are contrary to you in
all we call you?
For we are darkness, and weakness, and filthiness, and shame.
Misery and sin fill our days: yet you are our Creator and we your work.
Your hands both made us, and also made us lords of all thy creatures;
giving us one world in ourselves, and another to serve us;
Then you placed us in Paradise, and were proceeding still on in your favours,
until we interrupted your counsels,
disappointed your purposes,
and sold our God, our glorious, our gracious God for an apple.
O write it! O brand it in our foreheads for ever:
for an apple once we lost our God, and still lose him for no more;
for money, for meat, for diet;

But you Lord are patience, and pity, and sweetness, and love; therefore we sons of
men are not consumed.

You have exalted your mercy above all things and you have made our salvation,
not our punishment, to be your glory:
so that then where sin abounded, not death, but grace *superabounded*.

Accordingly, when we had sinned beyond any help in heaven or earth, then you
said, Lo, I come!

Then did the Lord of life, unable himself to die, contrive to do it.
He took flesh, he wept, he died;
For his enemies he died; even for those that derided him then, and still despise him.

Blessed Saviour! Many waters could not quench your love! Nor no pit overwhelm
it. But though the streams of your blood were current through darkness, grave and
hell; yet by these your conflicts, and seemingly hazards, you did rise triumphant,
and therein made us victorious.

Neither does your love yet stay here! For this word of your rich peace and
reconciliation you have committed not to thunder, or angels, but to silly and sinful
men: even to me, pardoning my sins and bidding him go feed the people of your
love.

Blessed be the God of Heaven and Earth! Who only does wondrous things.
Awake therefore, my lute, and my viol! Awake all my powers to glorify you! We
praise you! We bless you. We magnify you forever!

And now, O Lord! In the power of your victories,
and in the ways of your ordinances,
and in the truth of your love,
lo, we stand here,
beseeching you to bless your word, wherever spoken this day throughout the
universal Church.

O make it a word of power and peace,
to convert those who are not yet yours,
and to confirm those that are:
particularly, bless it in this your own kingdom, which you've made a land of light,
a store-house of your treasures and mercies:
O let not our foolish and unworthy hearts rob us of the continuance of this your
sweet love: but pardon our sins and perfect what you've begun.

Ride on Lord! because of the word of truth and meekness and righteousness; and
your right hand shall teach you terrible things. Especially, bless this portion here
assembled together, with your unworthy servant speaking unto them:

Lord Jesu! Teach me, that I may teach them:
sanctify, enable all my powers, that in their full strength they may deliver your
message reverently, readily, faithfully and fruitfully.

O make your word a swift word, passing from the ear to the heart,
from the heart to the life and conversation:
that as the rain returns not empty, so neither may your word, but accomplish that
for which it is given.
O Lord hear, O Lord forgive! O Lord, harken, and do so for your blessed Son's
sake in whose sweet and pleasing words, we say, "Our Father..."

A Prayer After Sermon

Blessed be God! And the Father of all mercy!

Who continues to pour his benefits upon us.

You have elected us, you have called us, you have justified us, sanctified and glorified us.

You were born for us, and you lived and died for us.

You have given us the blessings of this life and of a better.

O Lord! Your blessings hang in clusters, they come trooping upon us!

They break forth like mighty waters on every side.

And now Lord, you have fed us with the bread of life: so man did eat angels' food:

O Lord, bless it: O Lord make it health and strength unto us; still striving and prospering so long within us until our obedience reach the measure of your love, who has done for us as much as may be.

Grant this dear Father, for your Son's sake, our only Saviour:

to whom with you, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one most glorious, incomprehensible God, be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, ever.

Amen.

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