**12 Prayers for the Offering**

1.

Jesus, that day when you were teaching the crowds

On the mountainside and night was coming and

They were all getting hungry,

Your disciples said:

“Where on earth could we get enough bread

that everyone could have a bite?”

Then one little boy came forward and offered you his lunch:

Five small loaves and two little fish.

That’s all he had; but you took it

And gave thanks and handed it around—

and everyone ate as much as they wanted, with

Twelve baskets-full left over.

Jesus, we know that that day you showed us that

There are no limits to what you might accomplish through us

For your glory, if we’ll simply offer what we have.

Give us the grace to do that here, and now, in this moment of offering.

Make it like that little boy’s lunch, we pray, for your sake alone.

Amen.

2.

Jesus,

We remember that time you pointed to the birds of the air and the lilies growing in the field, how they don’t labor or work or spin or toil, and yet the Father in Heaven provides for them from his wisdom and love.

And then you told us that we ought not chase after wealth and material possessions like those who don’t know God, but that we should seek his kingdom first, and trust in him to provide these things to us in the same way: according to his wisdom and love.

God, please give us the grace to trust in you like that; and may this act of offering today be a sign to us that we’re starting to get it, what Jesus meant when he said, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Amen.

3.

It seems pretty presumptuous, God,

that we would call what we’re about to do

“An offering,”

when everything we have and are and own

is really yours.

We remember that place where you said it in the Psalms:

“If I were hungry, would ask you for a hand out?

The whole world is mine and everything in it.”

So we realize that we’re not really “offering” you anything here, God.

But we love Jesus.

And we want to be involved in his work in the World.

And so we ask that in this moment of offering you would offer us that:

A heart for you; the guts to follow you where ever you lead;

And a passion for the things you’re passionate about.

And then use this offering—

both the money and the time we’re taking to give it—

For your purposes for us.

We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

4.

God, the ancient Teacher you inspired once

looked at the way things are with people and money,

and he said: “All our toil in life is for the sake of our mouths,

and yet our appetites are never satisfied.”

And we know Lord, that you meant:

If you’re trying to satisfy your longing for life with things like money, stuff, property wealth— you’re sure to come up empty.

God, we want our lives, as your people, to be about so much more than that— we want our lives to count for you. So can you set us free, today from working just for the sake of our own mouths—our appetites—desires—wants— and set us instead on the path of working for you in the world.

Make us your servants today, Lord, because we know you’re the only task-master worth serving.

And then, God, can you make this offering here just one small sign of that life-altering work your doing here in our midst. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

5.

God, you give us all work to do:

From the jobsite to the household

From the classroom to the boardroom

At the office desk, the computer terminal, the workbench,

the countertop, the restaurant, the home, the shop—

Where ever it was that we earned the money

we’re about to give today,

you were with us there.

Even the Adam in perfect paradise had work to do—

he was made to till the ground and take care of it.

And so we acknowledge, God that you’ve given us all our work

And you give us daily, the heart, strength, skill and wisdom to do it.

Thank you for these gifts to us.

As we rest from work today, may this offering of money

Be our way of admitting that all we have and all we do

Is really a gift from you.

And with this offering, God , please receive our prayer

For the wisdom, grace, mercy and faith

To be instruments of your peace

in whatever job you’ve given us to do.

We’re going to need this if we’re going to be

fully-devoted followers of Jesus in this world,

Because it’s in his name and for his sake we pray,

Amen.

6.

Father in heaven,

Thousands of years ago, one of the wise teachers you inspired looked at the global economy—though it wasn’t called that then—but he looked at it and called the whole project “a chasing after the wind.”

He said things like, “whoever loves money never has money enough and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.” He said things like, “The sleep of a poor labourer is sweet, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.” He said things like, “I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth is hoarded, to the harm of its owner, or lost through some misfortune.”

“This, too, is vanity.”

God, thousands of years later we still stand under those all-wise words. And if we’ve been losing sleep over our money, or hoarding money to our own harm, or never satisfied with our income, Lord, I invite your gracious, loving Spirit to convict us of that vanity today.

Set us free from chasing after the wind, and set us, instead, to chasing after the Way of Jesus. With all our heart, soul, mind and strength may we live as his servant-followers and sibling-friends.

It’s in his name and for his sake we pray, amen.

7.

God, we think of the wise King you inspired so long ago,

How he spoke this proverb:

“Better a little with the fear of the Lord / Than great wealth with turmoil.

There’s an edge to that wise saying, Lord,

that hasn’t grown dull in 3000 years:

those words still cut to the heart of the matter today.

“Better a little with the fear of the Lord / Than great wealth with turmoil.”

We confess Lord, that this world is in deep turmoil

because of our endless striving for great wealth.

And we confess Lord, how the idea that we might be content

with what we have, so long as it’s coupled with the fear of the Lord--

the notion that deep reverence and awed respect for you

might be the true and only source of our life and sustenance and happiness-

That suggestion cuts against the grain, Lord.

So as we participate in this offering today,

We’re going to need the wisdom of Solomon, here.

Grant us the Wisdom to put you before all things and over all things

and the wisdom to let go of our tumultuous accumulation.

God, teach us to say these words

with perfect honesty and clear sincerity today:

“Better a little with the fear of the Lord

Than great wealth with turmoil?”

Because it’s in Jesus’ name and for his sake we pray.

Amen.

8.

God, we think about your word, where the ancient writer you inspired challenges us with these words: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

And then he told us specifically what that laying down of our lives would look like. He said: “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him.”

God those are sobering words.

But we want to know the love of God in us. And we want to love each other, not with fine sounding words or empty speech, but like that same writer said: with actions, and with truth.

So God, can you continue to shape us as that kind of a people today: people who show in word and deed together that the love of God really is in us. People who—when they see their brothers or sisters in need—they overflow with your compassion, your mercy, your love?

And as we set aside some of our material possessions today, to help in those concrete moments when we see a brother or sister in need, God, we pray in advance for the people you want to bless with these gifts—because you already know the needs that this money will meet— may it find its place in your good plan to show the world what the love of Jesus looks like, because it's in his name and for his sake we pray.

Amen.

9.

Father in Heaven,

As we prepare our hearts to worship through our tithes and offerings, we remember the story your Son Jesus told us, about a farmer who sowed seed: how some of the seed fell on rocky soil and wouldn’t grow, and some was snatched away by birds, and some was choked out by weeds.

Later Jesus explained that the seed was the message about your love, and the weeds that choked it out were the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desire for other things.

God we’re remembering this story today because we’re about to make an offering of money, and we don’t want the desire for stuff or the deceitfulness of wealth to choke out the message of love that Jesus is speaking over us now. So God, can you do some weeding in us? Uproot anything in us that might try to choke out his message for us today, weed out every false desire and every empty ambition in us, so that his word might bear fruit in us.

We ask this in Jesus’ name and for his sake.

Amen.

10.

God, as we prepare to worship through this act of offering today, we invite your Holy Spirit to remind us that really, we all come to you empty handed.

We have nothing to offer the Creator of the Universe that isn’t yours already. We have nothing to give a perfectly pure God that isn’t somehow muddied up with our human ambition and agendas. Nothing to do for the Lord of the whole Earth that you couldn’t do for yourself.

We’re empty handed.

And yet by your beautiful and mysterious grace, God, you invite us—empty handed though we are—you invite us to be part of your plan to heal and renew and bless this world through the unconquerable love of your Son Jesus Christ.

Thank you for that invitation, God. And as we give back to you now a portion of what is yours to begin with, Lord will you transform this offering into just one of the many ways we say “yes” to your gracious call on our lives?

Purify our motives, transform our agendas, and bring our ambitions into perfect alignment with Jesus, because it’s in his name and for your Glory that we pray. Amen.

11.

Loving God, in Jesus we’ve discovered that you are generous beyond our ability to imagine.

So as we prepare to give back to you a portion of the money that you’ve entrusted into our care, we remember what he taught us.

He said: whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much… and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much… And he said: If we’ve not been faithful in handling worldly wealth, how can we expect God to trust us with true riches?

God, we invite your Spirit now to show us the true riches that you want to entrust into our care: riches like the grace, hope and love that is ours in Jesus Christ; riches like the good news about his immeasurable love for this aching world that is ours to share so generously; riches like the real life-purpose, the meaningful mission in the world, the beautiful destiny as His people that is ours to spend so freely.

O God, help us to see those riches today.

And then God, can you make us faithful in handling this worldly wealth here, today, so that we might learn in a small way what it means to be faithful in handling of the invaluable things of God?

Can you teach us, in this act of offering today, what it means to be trustworthy with the small things like money… so that we will grow more and more trustworthy with the big things… the good news of Jesus and the generous gifts of his Spirit. Make us trustworthy with those things, we pray, in his name, and for his sake. Amen.

12.

God, in your book you tell us not to put our hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put our hope in you, because you richly provide all things for our enjoyment.

And you tell us, too, to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous, and willing to share. You said that in this way, we might take hold of the life that is life indeed.

So we ask, Lord, that you would show us where we’ve been putting our hope in uncertain wealth instead of in you. Show us where we’ve been spiritually poor, despite our material wealth. Teach us how to become truly rich in generosity and good deeds.

O God, make us want, more than anything, to take hold of the life that is life indeed. And then Lord, take this offering today, and transform it into a sign of that desire in us, the passion for heavenly things that you are kindling in us.

We pray in Christ’s name and for his sake. Amen.