The Darkness of Our Doubts

Lord, when the darkness of our doubts robs us of the light of your promises, when our focus on what we cannot do prevents us from seeing what You can do through us, when our vision becomes clouded with prejudices so that we cannot see that we are being more judgmental than conciliatory, when we say what should not be said and fail to say what needs to be said, when we forget about commitments we have made and leave undone that which we should do, when our faith becomes feeble and our courage fails, when we find it hard to trust and difficult to obey; Lord forgive us.

Give us hope by filling us with the assurance of your love now and forever. Amen.

Lord correct our focus

Lord we are quick to focus on our limitations and forget your ability to overcome all the barriers in our way.

Lord we are quick to focus on anticipated difficulties and forget your ability to support us through troubles that may eventuate.

Lord we are quick to focus on what can’t be done and forget that what is impossible for us is possible for you.

Forgive us our failure of faith and faithfulness.

Sometimes we do dream of doing great things in your name, but acknowledge that even little things often seem too hard for us.

Remember our fragility, that we like the flowers bloom for only a season, and that all too quickly and too often we get battered by the winds of discouragement and disappointment.

Without you there is no hope, there can be no lasting happiness.

We have confidence in you, knowing your love for us never ends and your willingness to forgive us never diminishes.

For your mercy and your grace we praise and thank you in the name of Jesus. Amen.
Equal in Your Sight

Loving God, we praise and thank you
that each of us is equally precious in your sight.
You gave ancient Israel a law, applying to king and peasant alike,
and you commanded compassion for the weak and vulnerable
the widows, the orphans, the refugees.
Loving God, we confess that all too often
we have put our own interests above the need of others
and have not done all we could have done for those in desperate circumstances.
Father, forgive us.

Loving God, we praise and thank you
that each of us is equally precious in your sight.
When you came to us as one of us you fellowshipped with outcasts
healing their infirmities, forgiving their sinfulness,
inviting them to join you in your kingdom.
Loving God, we confess that all too often in many subtle ways
we exclude those who aren’t like us, those we aren’t comfortable around
we disapprove of those we think responsible for their own misfortune
we denounce those whose sins are different from our own.
Jesus, forgive us.

Loving God, we praise and thank you
that each of us is equally precious in your sight.
Through your Spirit inspiring poets and prophets, songwriters and sages
you created scripture that calls us to live in loving harmony.
Loving God, we confess that all too often
we have had a tendency of turning your teaching
into rules by which to burden one another
into rules by which to judge one another
into rules by which to justify our own self-righteousness.
Holy Spirit, forgive us.

Loving God, we praise and thank you
for the unfathomable depth of your love for us.
We thank you for your forgiveness.
In our worship today – through our praising, praying, preaching –
may we, yet again, get an impression of your greatness;
may we, yet again, express our heartfelt gratitude
for your incredible compassion.
Loving God, we praise and thank you
that each of us is equally precious in your sight. Amen.
When we see and don't perceive, hear and don't understand

Loving Father, Son and Spirit
Often we look and see
and yet do not perceive your presence
in nature’s rich abundance all around us
in the small acts of kindness shown to us.
Often we listen and hear
and yet do not understand your message
in the inspiration of poetry spoken
in the beauty of a melody played.

Sometimes we just need to stand still and marvel
at the intricacy of a spider’s web
at the grandeur of the mountains;
Sometimes we just need to be quiet and listen
to the rustle of leaves touched by a breeze
to the rumble of a distant storm;
regularly we need to remind ourselves
that you whisper as well as shout.

Always we need to be aware
that we are surrounded by your glory.
Always we need to understand
that we are engulfed in your love.
Always we need to be full of awe of you,
which leads to faith in you
and is the beginning of wisdom.

Forgive us our inability to recognise your presence.
Forgive us our deafness to your teaching.
Forgive us our reluctance to follow your lead.
Forgive us when you want to send us out
but we refuse to go.

Though we are created in your image,
we need to be transformed into your likeness.
So grant us understanding
of the scriptures that we reflect upon today
far beyond the words that are spoken here today.
Amen.
There can be...

There can be
no answers without questions
no faith without doubt
no hope without crisis
no love without sacrifice
no resurrection without a death.

Lord God
When our curiosity expires
our faith is sorely tested
our hope grows dims
our love is self-serving
and we are no longer living fully
but allow the cares of life to overwhelm us
and the promise of resurrection to forsake us
Forgive us, and restore us.

Lord God
Help us ask the right questions;
and accept that the right answers may be elusive.
Help us to acknowledge our doubts
and allow our faith to thrive in spite of them.

Grant us hope in times of difficulty
and gratitude in times of refreshing.
Help us to love as you love sacrificially
and to graciously accept the loving of others.

Show us how to live as resurrection people
Fully alive every moment you give us
assured of the conquering of death
achieved by the risen Son of God.
Amen.

Using the Gifts Given (based on Galatians 5:22-23)

Lord you don’t have pensioned off Christians.
Wherever we are and whatever our limitations
you have kingdom work yet for us to do,
and you have equipped us with the spiritual gifts we need for this labour.
The greatest of your gifts is love.
We are to love – not just the loveable,
but those whose company we would gladly avoid.
Forgive us when we fail to love.
You have given us the gift. Help us use it.
Help us to love sacrificially as you do.

Lord the second of your gifts is joy.
Joyfulness arises from our relationship with you,
not from our physical wellbeing
nor from the pleasures of congenial companionship.
Our enjoyment of fine food, fun and fellowship
simply makes us happy, and quickly dissipates.
Your joy is everlasting.
We are to be joyful –
not just during the good times, but when difficulties arise.
Such joy expresses our confidence in your steadfast love
and unfathomable grace.
Forgive us when we allow our despondency to overwhelm your joy.
You have given us the gift. Help us use it.
Help us to express your joy.

Lord most precious among your gifts is peace.
Peace is more than simply avoiding conflict.
Peace is the assurance of your presence no matter our circumstances.
Your peace is a state of mind, not the absence of trouble.
Forgive us when we allow the words and actions of others
to rob us of your peace.
Forgive us even more when our words and actions
are the cause of unhappiness for others.
We are to be peaceable, and whenever possible to be peacemakers.
You have given us the gift. Help us use it.
Help us to spread your peace.

Lord among your many other gifts are:
patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness and self-control.
Forgive us when we criticise others
while expecting them to accommodate our eccentricities.
Forgive us when we fail to be as kind as we should be,
when we fail to be as generous as we could be,
when our trust in you is not as great as we would have it be.
Forgive us when our faithfulness wavers and our self-control is weak.
You have given us the gifts. Help us use them.
We ask for your forgiveness, knowing that it is always given.
We seek your empowerment to live on earth
according to the ways of the kingdom of heaven;
in Jesus name we pray. Amen.
You gave us dominion over your creation
(a prayer of confession for Trinity Sunday)

You gave us dominion over your creation
to care for and protect all living things of land and sea.
Instead we have greedily exploited the earth’s resources
damaging and destroying its delicate eco systems. Forgive us.

You made us in your image
to live compassionately in community.
Instead we have fostered a culture of self-interest
afflicting one another for personal gain. Forgive us.

You gave us a holy book
to inspire our faith and instruct us in abundant living.
Instead we have turned its teaching into oppressive rules
with which to judge and condemn those on the margins. Forgive us.

You gave us a gospel and a mission
to take good news to all the world.
Instead we have built buildings to settle down in
and created faith traditions that focused too much upon ourselves. Forgive us.

We acknowledge our weaknesses and are grateful that
your immense strength is constrained by your great compassion
your just judgment is moderated by your gracious mercy
you fierce anger is extinguished by your benevolent empathy.

We acknowledge our limitations and are grateful that
your love for us knows no limits
your generosity towards us is beyond measure
your forgiveness of us is forever assured.

You remember that we are fragile creatures of the earth.
We remember that you are the power that sustains the universe.

The words we use to speak of you – Triune God –
Creator, Redeemer, Comforter
    Parent, Brother, Friend
        Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –
these words don’t begin to penetrate the greatness of your being
nor the enigma of your love for us.

Speak to us today, in the words we read and reflect upon.
May there be more of you and less of us
in our reading and in our reflecting today.
This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.