

April 22, 2020 ~Praying Hopefully (and Thankfully) for Our Losses ~

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12

Eternal God, you're not surprised by anything or anyone in this world. Before "the beginning" you in The Trinity "were", and we believe you always will be present with us. From the beginning to the end of this world you created, nothing about us, our thoughts, our feelings, our joys, our worries, our regrets, our pride, and our longings are secrets from you. When the direction of this daily prayer changes from gifts we use serving others to our personal longings, we're so thankful that you keep listening to what's in our hearts and minds. You aren't surprised with our humble prayers for all we're missing that brings us joy; your gifts of people and opportunities; taken without warning from us in order to protect us.

Father God, we miss being with the people you've placed in our lives.

~~Some miss our children and grandchildren while others miss parents and grandparents who can't be seen without safe distancing. We cannot gather for birthdays, weddings, funerals, or even a simple visit. In all our imaginings, we never thought family gatherings would be deemed unhealthy and denied.

~~We took for granted the times spent with our church family; the hugs, the handshakes, and the sharing of your peace. We miss the potlucks, the service projects, and gathering as the Body of Christ around the communion table to remember our Savior's sacrifice. We miss Sunday school in our familiar classroom, worship in our sanctuary, and gathering around tables for fellowship, Bible study, and away from church meetings for dinner out or dinners shared in church families' homes.

~~Our neighbors stay at the curb, our friends wave from a car, and the familiar faces at our favorite grocery store, pharmacy, or restaurant are memories in our sheltered minds. Coworkers can't meet over lunch or support each other from their work-at-home desks and tables. Teachers and students only see each other at home in virtual classrooms. Coaches and players can't practice or play their sports. We miss the opportunities to share conversations, laughter, and encouragement.

~~God, you know how much I miss

~~We miss people, Lord. Oh how we miss the people you've placed in our lives!

Heavenly Father, we miss being able to go and do what we want to do, need to do, or enjoy doing. We've been free to choose the timing of errands, appointments, social gatherings, and entertainment for most of our lives.

~~Going to purchase what we need must be planned, timed, and limited to essential purchases. The retail store may not have what we need and the number allowed per customer might be limited. Smiles are hidden by masks, and conversation is minimal. Some considered high risk long to select their own groceries, but know that shopping is best done by others. We miss those last minute, spontaneous errands.

~~Going out to eat is a luxury we miss. We know we went out too many times, but in our busy-ness, we knew we could depend on someone else to prepare and serve our meals. Going to a barber shop, hair salon, or our favorite nail person was never a problem, but now, even if they are opened soon, we'll worry about exposure to infection. We miss going where we always went for the necessities and the luxuries to which we've become accustomed.

~~Going to work, to school, to church, to our friends' homes, and inviting friends to our homes are the familiar trips we're anxious to do again.

~~We miss the freedom to go and do. Oh how we miss the freedom to make our own choices!

Gracious God, we are joyful in our hope that you'll stick it out with us, encourage us, and use other people to help us be patient in our pandemic, protective circumstances. We pray for all who are truly afflicted with suffering the effects of the virus and the grief of losing a family member or friend. Please forgive us for our selfish and personal "afflictions"; this regret about losing our own joyful pleasures. Our eyes have been opened to how much you do for us, Lord; the people you place in our lives, the opportunities we have to work, play, and worship, and the free will choices you allow us.

Eternal God, thank you for listening patiently to the desires of our hearts today. You already knew how much we've been missing these people and opportunities. Thank you for reminding us how important your blessings are to us and our happiness. We admit that we've prioritized many things over you. We also have taken all the credit for the goodness in our lives. Everyone and everything we enjoy is not our own doing, but because of goodness you do, God. Too many times, we've come to you in prayer only asking and not thanking

you for who you are and what you do for us, in us, and with us. We truly are thankful for our renewed awareness. Losing what we'd taken for granted has reminded us of these blessings from you.

You are the source of all blessings and goodness, Gracious God. In the name of Your Son Jesus, our most precious blessing, we acknowledge needing your help to remain joyful in hope for the future, patient in this time of waiting with our real and worldly losses, and we ask that your Holy Spirit would continue prompting us to be faithful in making time to share a prayer meeting with you each day. Amen.