

AN ANGLICAN LITURGY IN A REFORMED BAPTIST KEY

Part I: The Liturgy of the Word

I. WELCOME

The celebrant welcomes the people, gives brief instructions about the upcoming service of worship, and invites them to stand for the processional.

II. PROCESSIONAL

As the celebrant and the deacon proceed from the rear of the church toward the Lord's Table, the people sing an opening hymn, typically celebrating the greatness and goodness of God, our Creator and Redeemer.

III. THE ACCLAMATION

Celebrant: Blessed be God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

In the season of Lent

Celebrant: Bless the Lord, who has forgiven us all our sins.

People: His lovingkindness endures forever.

From Easter Day until the Eve of Pentecost

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

IV. THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Celebrant: Together, let us pray.

Celebrant and People: **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Fulfill your gracious purpose for your people by purifying the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, so that we may more perfectly love and serve you, and magnify your holy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

V. THE SUMMARY OF THE LAW

Celebrant: Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

People: **Merciful and gracious Father, grant that we may so abide in your Son, walk in his Spirit, and obey his commands, that we will fulfill the righteous requirement of your Law.**

VI. THANKSGIVING TO THE TRIUNE GOD FOR HIS MERCY AND GRACE

Celebrant: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in Christ before the founding of the world.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Celebrant: Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone we have received adoption as sons, and in whom alone we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins, granted in accordance with the riches of his grace.

People: **Thanks be to Christ**

Celebrant: Blessed be the promised Holy Spirit, who has called us to Christ, sealed us in Christ, and is the down-payment of our inheritance in Christ, given with a view to the full redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.

People: **Thanks be to the Holy Spirit**

Celebrant: Blessed be God, the Three-in-One; for by his grace we have been saved, through faith. And this comes not from ourselves: It is the gift of God, and not the fruit of works, so that no one may boast, and that we may be to the praise of the glory of his grace, world without end.

People: **Amen.**

VII. THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

The Gloria or some other song of praise may be sung or said, all standing.

Chorus:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

Chorus

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

Chorus

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

VIII. THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

While the collect of the day may be partially inspired by the dictates of the Church calendar, its primary purpose is to focus the people's attention on the biblical theme that the celebrant has chosen for this Lord's Day, and upon which he will preach.

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Let us pray. (The celebrant now prays the collect of the day)

People: Amen.

IX. THE SCRIPTURE READINGS OF THE DAY

Customarily, there are four Scripture readings on the Lord's Day: one from the Old Testament (OT), one from the Psalms, one from the Acts, the Epistles, or the Revelation, and one from one of the four gospels. The Scripture readings should be chosen with a view to introducing and illuminating the chosen theme of the day, and they will typically include the text on which the celebrant will preach. Since the NT teaches that leadership is male— and for this reason that women should refrain from solo speech in the gatherings of the whole church—only men or mature young men should give the readings (1 Cor. 11:2-3; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:12). Modeling male leadership in the worship service will help the men to assume their leadership roles at home, in the church, and in society, and also will encourage their sisters in the Lord to support them in these vital ministries.

A. First Reading: OT

Reader: A reading from _____.

Reader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

B. Second Reading: A Psalm (or portion thereof)

The Psalm of the day may be read antiphonally, with the reader reading the first line, and the people together reading the second.

C. Third Reading: From the Acts, the Epistles, or the Revelation

Reader: A reading from _____.

Reader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

D. The Gradual Begun (i.e., a portion of a hymn or chorus leading up to the gospel reading of the day)

E. Final Reading: The Holy Gospel

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The Celebrant reads the gospel texts, and then says: “The Gospel of the Lord.”

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

F. The Gradual Concluded (i.e., the rest of the hymn or chorus, sung while the celebrant enters the pulpit and prepares to deliver the sermon).

X. THE HOMILY (SERMON)

While the Lord’s Supper is the proper climax of the worship service, the sermon, in some ways, is its proper center. In the sermon, the celebrant brings the Word of the Lord to the people of the Lord. This word is not simply a text chosen at the personal pleasure of the preacher. Rather, it is a living word that the living Lord grants to the preacher to speak to his people on this particular Sunday. Therefore, at its heart this word is prophetic, but will also involve some teaching, and—as the Spirit may lead—some evangelism as well. / Since it is the theme of the day, this word will influence the selection of scripture texts for the day, and also some of the prayers. / May God bless every preacher who faithfully stands in the counsel of the Lord in order to receive his life-giving word for his beloved and needy children!

XI. THE RECITATION OF THE CREED

The Anglican Church is a confessional church, and therefore enthusiastically embraces the three major ecumenical creeds of the historic Church: the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. On any given Sunday, Anglicans will usually be found reciting the Nicene Creed. On special days, or in special services, they may be found confessing one of the other two.

Celebrant: Together, let us confess our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed:

Celebrant and People:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, visible and invisible.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the uniquely-begotten Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

XII. THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The deacon or other appointed brother leads the congregation in these prayers. The reader pauses after each bidding, giving the people an opportunity to pray silently on this particular matter. He then concludes by saying, "Lord, in your mercy," to which the people reply, "Hear our prayer."

A. Reader: Let us pray for the Church and for the world, saying, "hear our prayer."

Reader: For the peace of the whole world, and for the well-being and unity of the people of God.

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

B. Reader: For N., our Archbishop, and N., our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people of our Diocese and Congregation.

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

- C. Reader: For all those who proclaim the Gospel at home and abroad; and for all who teach and disciple others.

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

- D. Reader: For our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith.

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

- E. Reader: For our nation, for those in authority, and for all in public service (especially . . .)

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

- F. Reader: For all those who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity, (especially . . .)

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

- G. Reader: For all those who have departed this life in the certain hope of the resurrection, (especially . . .), in thanksgiving let us pray.

(Pause)

Reader: Lord, in your mercy:

People: Hear our prayer.

At this point the reader may open the floor to further petitions or prayers of thanksgiving from the people. The women should be asked to pray silently, but the men aloud. This practice will draw out the men and once again encourage male leadership in the family, the church, and society at large (1 Cor. 11:2-3; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:1, 12).

H. **Celebrant:** Heavenly Father, grant these our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, our one and only Mediator and Advocate, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

XIII. THE CONFESSION OF SIN

To my mind, the confession of sin has long remained a weak spot in the Anglican liturgy, and also in other Protestant liturgies. Endeavoring to preserve traditional Catholic forms, these confessions, followed by clerical assurance of forgiveness, are infected with Catholic confusion

about the biblical distinction between justification and sanctification. As a result, they obscure—and may even undermine—the great NT revelation of justification by faith: the one doctrine upon which, according to Martin Luther, the true spiritual Church stands or falls.

What, then, is justification? According to the New Testament, it is a divine judgment that occurs at the God-given moment of a new believer's repentance from sin and faith in Christ. At that time, God imputes (credits) the righteousness of Christ to the new believer in Jesus.

This righteousness is a seamless unit, but is based upon the twofold work of the Redeemer, who satisfied two separate requirements of God's law, resulting in two different blessings to his children.

Thus, through his passive obedience in death—through his freely suffering the penalty for sin, in and on behalf of his people—Christ fulfilled the righteous requirement of the Law which states that the soul that sins, it must die. Accordingly, the newly justified believer receives his first blessing: He is forgiven of all his sins—past, present, and future. Henceforth, his total debt to the Law of God is marked “paid by Christ.”

But there is more. For through his active obedience in life, Christ also fulfilled every other part of God's Law, and so earned the reward of eternal life, not only for himself, but also for his people. Walking perfectly in the Law of Moses, and passing every test the Father set before him, he perfectly loved the LORD his God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself.

Therefore, the newly justified believer—now credited with the merit of Christ's active and passive obedience—is also declared to be perfectly righteous in the sight of God and before his Law. He is clothed with the pure white robe of his Lord's own righteousness, and because of that will also receive the Lord's own reward: eternal life.

*This new standing, based upon divine imputation, is foundational. It opens the door to all of God's other blessings: reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. Thus, through God's initial work of justification the believer in Jesus is declared to **be righteous legally**, while through the Spirit's subsequent work of sanctification he is **becoming righteous inwardly**; slowly but surely, he is progressing towards perfect conformity with the Son of God in his glory.*

Therefore, in the mouths of true believers, petitions for forgiveness of sins, followed by clerical absolutions or assurances, tend strongly to becloud their once-and-for-all justification, raise doubts about their standing before God, misread his attitude (of steadfast love) toward them, and incline them to pursue justification through sanctification, whether by good works or through a misplaced trusts in the saving efficacy of sacraments, as counseled by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. It is a path no Bible Protestant would dare to tread.

Nevertheless, there is indeed a place for the confession of sins. Scripture explicitly invites us to examine ourselves; to confess and forsake our sins as the Spirit of conviction may lead; and to petition the Lord for the mercy, grace, strength, and self-control to put away our sins and receive deliverance from them.

But far from repeatedly asking for the forgiveness of sins, and far from receiving clerical absolution from them, a healthy confession of sin will indeed name, lament, and resolve to forsake particular sins spotlighted by the Holy Spirit, but will also purposely call to mind, focus upon, and joyfully conclude by celebrating our once-and-for-all justification by faith in Christ.

This practice—in which we come both as supplicants for sanctifying grace, and as celebrants of justifying grace—will strengthen our confidence in the finished work of our Holy and Righteous Head, and remind us that we (his Body) are forever seated with him in the heavenly places, and forever standing before a heavenly Father who welcomes us as his beloved children. The confession suggested below reflects this understanding.^{2,3}

Celebrant: Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

A season of silence follows for the private confession of sins

Celebrant: Together, let us pray:

**Most merciful and gracious God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed;
in certain of the things we have done,
and in all of the things we have left undone.**

**We have not yet come to love you with our whole heart;
nor have we come to love our neighbors as ourselves.
While we are truly grateful for our progress in walking in these loves,
we are also truly sorry for the ways in which we have failed to do so.**

**Therefore, even as we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ,
through whom, even now, we have the forgiveness of all our sins,
we also freely confess our sins,
and heartily purpose to forsake them.
We ask you to strengthen us in this great resolve,
and to deliver us from all our besetting sins,
so that more and more we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Celebrant: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in his great mercy has granted forgiveness of sins to all who have sincerely repented and turned in true faith turn to his Son, have mercy upon you, deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XIV. THE COMFORTABLE WORDS

The Celebrant may now say one or more of the following sentences, designed to support, from Scripture itself, the believer's assurance of the forgiveness of his sins.

Celebrant: Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” – Matthew 11:28

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his uniquely-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.” – John 3:16

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes the One who sent me has eternal life: He will never come into judgment, but has crossed over out of death and into life.”
– John 5:24

Therefore, they said to him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”
– John 5:28-29

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and so rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. – Romans 5:1-2

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
--Ephesians 2:4-6

And when you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God brought you to life together with him, having forgiven us of all our trespasses, having blotted out the certificate of debt that stood against us with all its legal demands. Indeed, he has completely taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross; and having stripped the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them all, triumphing over them through it.
– Colossians 2:13-15

XV. THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **And with your spirit.**

The ministers and people now greet one another, passing the peace of the Lord to one another, saying, “Peace be with you” or some such blessing, as the Lord may lead.

Part 2: The Liturgy of the Lord's Table

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

As Part 2 of the service begins, the celebrant spotlights important announcements included in the daily bulletin, instructs the people concerning the offering, fences the Lord's Table, and gives instructions concerning the manner in which this church celebrates Holy Communion.

II. OFFERING

A. Offertory Hymn

During the offertory hymn the celebrant and deacon prepare for the Lord's Supper. Representatives of the congregation may bring the people's offerings of bread and wine to the deacon or celebrant. During this time, the people's monetary gifts and offerings are also collected.

B. Presentation of the People's Gifts and Offerings

The people stand while the offerings are presented. The following may be said.

Celebrant: Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty: for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as Head above all. All things come from you, O Lord,

People: **And from what is your own, we have given to you.**

Or, as an acknowledgment of God's rich provisions, the Doxology may be sung:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

III. THE SURSUM CORDA

The people remain standing. The Celebrant faces them and sings or says:

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues:

Celebrant: It is right, our duty, and our joy, always and in every place to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We do so through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, on the first day of the week, rose victorious over death and the grave, and by his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels, and with the whole company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn in order to proclaim the glory of your name:

IV. THE SANCTUS

Celebrant and People

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. (2x)**

**Men: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. (2x)**

**Women: Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord. (2x)**

V. THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

While it is true that Anglicanism fittingly repudiates the Roman Catholic doctrine of the transubstantiation of the Eucharistic elements, it nevertheless affirms, both in the 39 Articles of Religion and in its Eucharistic prayers, that those who worthily participate in holy communion do in fact partake of, and receive, the actual body and blood of Christ. The thought here seems to be that in eating the physical bread and drinking the wine, the believer, by faith, through a special work of the Holy Spirit, somehow partakes of the body and blood of the glorified Christ who is now in heaven. / I do not find this idea taught in the NT. Rather, as reflected in the scriptural wording of the prayer of consecration suggested below, I find it teaching that those who worthily partake of the communion elements are granted by God to participate afresh in the spiritual fruits of the Lord's obedience unto death, a death that involved the breaking of his body and the pouring out of his blood. In other words, in this ordinance God is granting his children a fresh participation in the benefits of Christ's redemptive work, such that they receive a fresh sense of the forgiveness of their

sins, their justification by faith, and the sweetest fruit of them both: spiritual communion with God, Christ, and the Body of Christ. As our great High Priest said, this is eternal life, that—through our being in him, and him being in us—we may know and commune with the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. For this reason, it is not in vain that the Anglican liturgy so fittingly invites all who believe to come to the great Eucharistic feast (Exodus 24:9-11; John 6, 17; 1 Corinthians 10, 11)!

The People stand or kneel.

Celebrant: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love, you made us for yourself; and when we had sinned against you and become subject to evil, suffering, and death, you, in your mercy and grace, sent your only Son Jesus Christ into the world for our salvation. By the Holy Spirit, and through the Virgin Mary, he became flesh and dwelt among us. In obedience to your will, he stretched out his arms upon the Cross and offered himself once and for all—for all the sins of all his people of all times and places—so that by his suffering and death we might be pardoned and saved. By his death and resurrection he broke the bonds of death, trampling hell and Satan beneath his feet. As our great high priest, he then ascended into heaven, entered into your presence in our behalf, and sat down in glory at your right hand, so that we might come with confidence before the throne of grace, and to this holy feast.

At the following words concerning the bread, the celebrant is to hold it, or lay his hand upon it, and here may break the bread. And at the words concerning the cup, he is to hold, or place a hand upon, the cup and any other vessel containing the wine to be consecrated.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me.”

Likewise, after supper, Jesus took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People

Men:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Women Echo:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We celebrate this memorial, O Father, by presenting to you these emblems of our redemption. Moreover, this cup of blessing, we now bless, so that we may participate afresh in the blood of Christ. Likewise, this bread that we break, we also bless, so that we may participate afresh in the body of Christ, since we who are many are indeed one body, for we all partake of the one loaf,

which is Christ. And Father, we ask that you bless us as well, so that we may worthily receive these holy emblems, and thereby dwell more richly still in your Son, and he in us.

Heavenly Father, as we partake of these elements, we also look to the day when you will place all things in subjection under him, and bring us, together with all your saints, into the joy of your heavenly kingdom, where we shall see our Lord face to face.

All this we ask through your Son, Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

VI. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

VII. THE FRACTION

Celebrant: Alleluia. It is finished! Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed once for all upon the Cross: for all the sins, of all his people, of all times, places, and nations.

People: Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

VIII. THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

Celebrant: Together, let us pray:

**All: We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in the abundance of your mercy and grace**

shown to us in Christ.

**We are not worthy so much as to gather up
the crumbs from beneath your table;**

**but you are the same Lord
whose character is always to love,
show mercy, and grant grace.**

**Grant us, therefore, most gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son, Jesus Christ,
and so to drink his blood,
that our broken bodies may be healed through his perfect body, broken for us,
and that our sin-stained souls may be further cleansed through his precious blood,
poured out for us;
and that deeper and deeper still
we may dwell in him, and he in us,
world without end.
Amen.**

IX. THE MINISTRATION OF COMMUNION

Celebrant: These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance of Christ, who died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Bread and Cup are given to the communicants, with the celebrant saying with these words:

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ—the bread from heaven—broken for you.

The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ—for the Wine of the Covenant—poured out for you.

The following, together with other suitable hymns and choruses, may be sung here, as the celebrant ministers holy communion to the people before the Lord's Table.

Behold the Lamb, behold the Lamb,
Slain from the foundation of the world;
For sinners crucified, holy sacrifice,
Behold the Lamb of God, behold the Lamb.

Etc.

X. THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant: Together, let us pray.

**Heavenly Father,
We thank you for feeding us with the true spiritual food,
purchased by the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us through our participation in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.**

**And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and forever.
Amen.**

XI. THE BLESSING

Celebrant: May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—be upon you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

XII. THE RECESSIONAL

As the celebrant and deacon retire to the back of the church, the people sing a closing hymn or chorus, specially chosen by the worship leader to encourage a joyful celebration of the gospel mysteries in which God's people, by God's glorious grace, have just participated.

XIII. THE DISMISSAL

From the back of the church . . .

Celebrant or Deacon: Let us go forth in the Name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Or:

Celebrant or Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Or:

Celebrant or Deacon: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Or:

Celebrant or Deacon: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Notes

1. This is an Anglican liturgy in a Reformed Baptist key. To read a Reformed Baptist liturgy in an Anglican (and biblically charismatic) key, please see my article titled, *O Day of Rest and Gladness: A Reformed and Biblically Charismatic Liturgy for the Lord's Day*, available here: <https://www.clr4u.org/o-day-of-rest-and-gladness-a-biblically-charismatic-liturgy-for-the-lords-day/>

2. A discussion of all the biblical texts dealing with this subject is beyond the purpose and scope of this piece. However, it is necessary to summarize the essential argument here.

First and foremost, in the post-Pentecost environment, so fulsomely described in the Acts and the Epistles, there is not a single text enjoining believers to ask God for the forgiveness of specific post-baptismal sins. Nor is there a single example of Christians doing so. Surely this is telling. Surely this tells us that the early Church leaders understood the nature and importance of our once-for-all justification, and that they did not want to undermine our confidence in it by commanding serial petitions for forgiveness of sins. One can only thank God for it. For if indeed such a practice were enjoined upon us, who could ever perform it, and who could ever bear up under it (Ps. 130:3; Matt. 23:4, Luke 11:46, Acts 15:20)?

Secondly, it is nevertheless necessary to address two NT texts which, at first glance, might seem to teach and justify this practice.

The first is a familiar portion of the Disciple's Prayer: "And forgive us our debts, as we ourselves [also] have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12).

Note carefully that here the Lord is *not* teaching us to ask God for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. Rather, he is teaching us to ask the Father to forgive us of *all* our sins in the very same way we have forgiven *all* of the sins of those who sin against us. And how exactly would a born-again Christian, with a good understanding of his justification, do that? He would do so mercifully,

graciously, and *completely*, just as God, for Christ's sake, has *completely* forgiven him (Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:10).

But does this mean that when a born-again, justified Christian refuses to forgive a brother or a non-christian for some specific sin, that the Father will somehow withdraw his once-for-all justification? No one familiar with NT teaching on justification could imagine such a thing. However, we can imagine—with no little fear and trembling—that our heavenly Father, good and faithful as he is, would chasten us sorely until we extend to our brothers/neighbors the very same forgiveness he has extended to us. And because the work of sanctification in his children is infallible, we will indeed extend it, whether sooner or later (Matt. 5:21-26; 18:21-25; Heb. 12).

How, then, should we understand the Lord's further commentary, wherein he states, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father also will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt. 14-15)?

Some have suggested this is a special kind of forgiveness; that it is not forensic, but paternal; that the forgiveness envisioned here does not restore right standing before God's law (i.e., our justification), but simply right fellowship, which has temporarily been broken by sin. However, this doctrine of a secondary paternal forgiveness is a speculative *ad hoc* solution for which I find no support in the NT.

Thus, the only possible answer, consistent with NT teaching on the once-for-all nature of justification, is to say that any *professing* disciple who persists to the end in refusing forgiveness to his sinning brothers/neighbors, was not—and will not be—regenerated, justified, and therefore forgiven by the Father whom he claimed to know, but in fact did not. In the sight of the Lord Jesus Christ—who knows all too well the widespread chaos and destruction caused by anger, vengeance, and unforgiveness—the unconditional forgiveness of sins on the part of his children is a very big deal.

The second text, frequently cited in defense of petitioning God for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, is 1 John 1:9. It is vital to read it in context:

Now this is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If, then, we say we have fellowship with him but continue to walk in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son continually cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* If we say we have not sinned, we are making him a liar, and his word is not in us. – 1 John 1:5-10

Taken out of context, the words in italics might indeed seem to teach that until we who are regenerate and justified specifically confess our post-baptismal sins, God will not forgive us our sins—a dreadful prospect that has shut up many a weak conscience in a torturous squirrel-cage of constant confession and self-absolution. No doubt it was by appealing almost exclusively to this text that the early liturgists embedded the practice of confession of sins, petitions for forgiveness, and absolution/assurance in their handiwork. For proof of this, we need only observe many of our own contemporary liturgies, which specifically cite this text as the ground for an assurance that our post-baptismal sins—freshly confessed—are indeed freshly forgiven.

But in biblical interpretation, context is king. And when we look at the context here, it is stunningly clear that the “we” and “us” to which John constantly refers include not only genuine Christians, but all professing Christians. And among those who were *mere* professors were the *proto-agnostics*: “Christian” heretics who claimed that through mystical “knowledge” they alone had received, their spirits were altogether cleansed of sin, so that now they were at liberty to walk in (the darkness of) pride, scorn, sexual immorality, and more.

Thus, a big part of John’s “we” and “us” consists of people who *said* they have fellowship with God, but in fact walked in darkness, lied, did not practice the truth, said they have no sin, were deceiving themselves, did not have the truth in them, made God a liar, and did not have his word in them.

Therefore, in the crucial verse 9 John is most assuredly *not* instructing justified Christians to keep asking God for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. Rather, he is graciously extending salvation—and the terms of salvation—to all who profess to be part of *us*. If such desperately deluded and needy souls will simply confess their sin(s) and trust in the divine Person and redemptive Work of Christ, God will be faithful and righteous to forgive them their sin(s). He will cancel the certificate of debt written against them, and then—as they begin and continue their walk in the light—the blood of Jesus his Son will continually cleanse them of all their sin. Which is to say: Based on the substitutionary death of his Son, God the Father, by the Holy Spirit, will continually sanctify his beloved children, so that they may be holy as he is holy (Acts 2:33; Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:16).

3. For another perspective on 1 John 1:9 and the practice of what the author refers to as *confessionism*, see the helpful article by Jim Elliff, a Reformed Baptist pastor, speaker, writer, and evangelist with an emphasis upon true conversion and a healthy, scripturally informed walk with Christ in the Spirit. <https://www.ccwtoday.org/2026/09/confessionism-the-misuse-of-1-john-19/> [Dean Davis](#) is a retired pastor living in California.