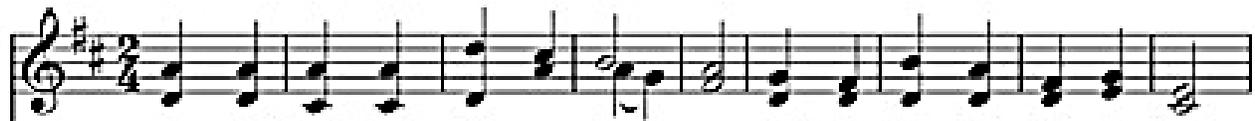


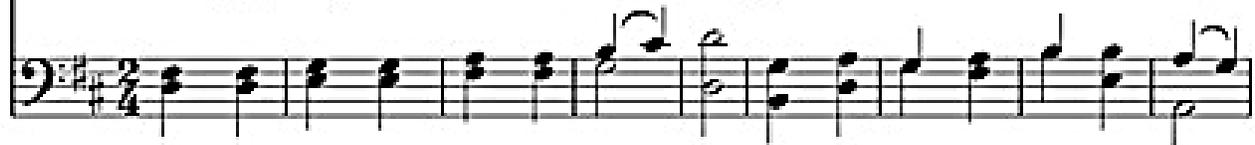


# Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

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1. Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en, to his feet your trib - ute bring;
2. Praise him for his grace and fa - vor to our fa - thers in dis - tress;
3. Fa - ther - like, he tends and spares us; well our fee - ble frame he knows;
4. Frail as sum - mer's flow'r we flour - ish, blows the wind and it is gone;
5. An - gels, help us to a - dore him; you be - hold him face to face;



- ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en, who, like me, his praise should sing?  
 praise him, still the same for - ev - er, slow to chide and swift to bless.  
 • in his hands he gent - ly bears us, res - cues us from all our foes.  
 but while mor - tals rise and per - ish, God en - dures un - chang - ing on.  
 sun and moon, bow down be - fore him, dwell - ers all in time and space.



- Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, praise the ev - er - las - ting King.  
 Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, glo - rious in his faith - ful - ness.  
 • Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, wide - ly as his mer - cy goes.  
 Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, praise the High E - ter - nal One.  
 praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, praise with us the God of grace.



From Psalm 103  
 Henry F. Lyte, 1834; mod.

LAUDA ANIMA 8.7.8.7.8.7.  
 John Goss, 1869

## \*Gathering Prayer

Linda Hescock

**We gather before you, O God, with gratitude for your goodness and faithfulness to us. Because you call to us, we can turn toward you. May we listen carefully in this hour to your truth and find the life you promise. May we turn from distorted thoughts and corrupting ways. May we receive the wisdom and strength to live in righteousness before you and among our community. May all we do bring honor and glory to you. Amen.**

## Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

## Scripture

Isaiah 55:1-9

Linda Hescock

Isaiah 55, written to those living through the Babylonian exile, brings to a close the message of 'second Isaiah' (chapters 40-55). The theme of choice permeates the whole passage. It opens with the invitation to come, repeated 3 times, and follows with references to the poor choices which have left the people empty. The choice given, to repent and return to God, is supported by God's faithful covenant and greater works and wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> Listen, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

<sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Luke 13:1-9

Rosemary Dawson

The theme of this passage is repentance, a subject which is more frequent in Luke than in the other gospels. The previous passage (12: 49-59) contains the image of judgment, which is now followed by a call to repentance and an illustration (a parable) of God's patience. The concerns spoken by the crowd may be framed as 'only bad things happen to bad people'. Jesus firmly rejects such concept not only because it is misguided, but because it deflects attention from the primary issue of living in

penitence and trust before God. Jesus' parable leaves open the possibility for people to be restored and become fruitful in faith.

<sup>1</sup> At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?" <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."  
<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' <sup>8</sup> He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

### **Special Music**

"Wondrous Love" Traditional, arr. Tedd Smith.

### **Sermon**

Fair Warning!  
Luke 13:1-9

Have you ever noticed how often advertisers list warnings about their products even as they are trying to get you to buy their stuff? Warning: this drug may cause... rash, indigestion, dizziness, breathing difficulty, a racing heart. Do not use if you are allergies to this product or its ingredients. Duh! Greg likes to say 'warning – this product may kill you. Good luck.'

In our Scripture today Jesus also seems to be giving his listeners a clear warning. He has been spending the last three years, the entire time of his ministry trying to get people to be fully aware, both of their brokenness and of God's grace. Now he is down to the last few weeks of his life and things, for him, are getting urgent. In the previous chapter he has spoken of hypocrisy, bold confessions, courageous discipleship and faithful service. And he closes his instruction with "How is it that you can understand the conditions on the earth and in the sky, but you can't grasp how to understand the present time? (Luke 12:56).

And sure enough, some in the crowd pipe up "what about the Galileans who Pilate killed while they were worshipping?" I'm not sure if Jesus just shook his head in disbelief, or looked at them with genuine annoyance. Were they asking him about 'why bad things happen to good people'? Were they concerned about corrupt, evil government? Or was their assumption more problematic and more, and less, personal. Were they falling back on the notion 'do right and you will be blessed, do wrong and you will be punished.' The premise is that God is holy and just, and so God rejected the Galilean's worship – to the point of condemning them to death. And with that presumption came another, equally harmful, assumption. "Well, thank God that's not me, no sir! I made my sacrifice and here I am! God and I are fine."

That is the presumption Jesus jumps on. "Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? No indeed! And I tell you that if you do not repent, you will all die as they did." In other words, "If you think for one minute that is how God's works, you are dead wrong." Then Jesus repeats himself, upping the ante... "And what about those 18

people who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were more sinful than everyone else in Jerusalem? No, I tell you. But if you do not repent, you will all die as they did.”

If those words disturb you, they should. They are meant to make you look, not at the world’s problems, or other people’s moral and spiritual condition; rather they are meant for you to take a good hard look at yourself, and not assume everything is fine between you and God. Just remember – this is the crowd who has been listening to Jesus’ instructions for years. In today’s lingo they would say “but I’m a Christian. I was baptized and everything. I even come to church...most Sundays.” Those people, these people, are the one’s Jesus is warning – ‘unless you repent you will all perish as they did.’ Yikes! I don’t want to perish, do you?

But that word ‘repent’ sticks in our craw. Repent of what? We are good moral people, upright citizens and faithful church members. What do we have to repent from? And that is the hard thing, the jarring truth, because so often we want to throttle back that word ‘repent’ so that it applies only to the wretched, poor reprobates.

But repentance is all encompassing and penetrating and personal! Repentance is the call to change, not just your behavior, but also your attitudes, your thoughts, and your heart. The whole of you, from skin to soul is in need of a full turn around. To repent is, at its core, to ‘turn to God’ - for the truth that is your foundation, the wisdom that is your guide, and the embodiment that is your lifestyle.

To repent is all about your relationship with God. It is personal, and it is perpetual. If repentance really is about ‘turning away from self and turning to God’, that is a lifetime process. But it does have its start. That is the urgency Jesus presses on his hearers. And that is the hope he offers them as well. Jesus goes from dire warning to a parable of grace. The story is of a fig tree, an Old Testament image of God’s people. The crisis is that the fig tree is fruitless and unworkable. The owner is ready to cut it down. But the gardener not only pleads for mercy, but willing to go the extra mile nourishing it, nurturing it and attending to it in the hope that it will grow and produce the fruit the owner seeks.

If you haven’t guessed it yet, God is the owner. But then God is also the gardener. It is a story of God’s righteousness and mercy continually in conversation over God’s failing, unrepentant people. Jesus assures us that God’s compassion, grace and care are still there – willing, eager and invested in seeing us ‘bear fruit worthy of repentance.’

But the time is short, the stakes are high, the situation is urgent, the day is now. It’s a fair warning. Will we hear and heed? Amen.

**\*Hymn**

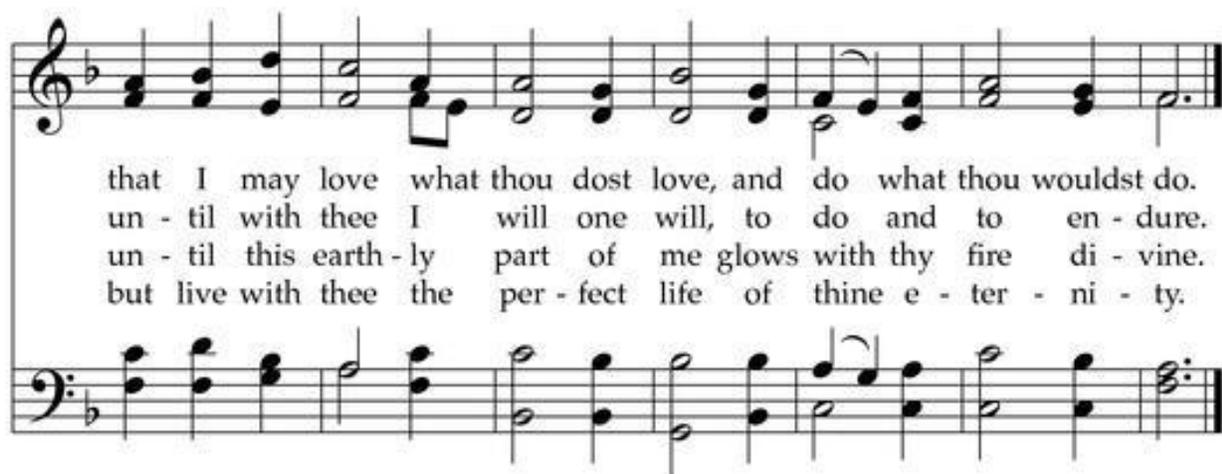
Breath on Me Breath of God

NCH 292

# Breathe on Me, Breath of God 286



1 Breathe on me, Breath of God; fill me with life a - new,  
2 Breathe on me, Breath of God, un - til my heart is pure,  
3 Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am whol - ly thine,  
4 Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I nev - er die,



that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.  
un - til with thee I will one will, to do and to en - dure.  
un - til this earth - ly part of me glows with thy fire di - vine.  
but live with thee the per - fect life of thine e - ter - ni - ty.

In both Hebrew and Greek, the words for "spirit" can equally well be translated as "breath" or "wind," so it is very appropriate to address the Holy Spirit as the "Breath of God." This tune by an English organist has become the customary one in North American hymnals.

TEXT: Edwin Hatch, 1878  
MUSIC: Robert Jackson, 1888

TRENTHAM  
SM

## **Joys and Concerns**

### **Prayers of the People**

Faithful God, we thank you that you for your mercy and patience with us. We thank you for the opportunity to repent and bear fruit. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who came, not to threaten us, but to redeem us and reclaim us. And we thank you for your Spirit, who continues to call us and lead in your holy way. And so we come to you now, with humble hearts and open spirits, that we may find the guidance and strength to follow your will.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. May this be a place where all your words are heard and kept. May this be a place of both justice and grace, where your love finds expression in upright lives and compassionate service. Lead us and empower us as we strive to bear your fruit in this world.

We pray for our leaders. May their hearts be open to hearing your truth and their wills be set on seeking your peace, for the welfare of all the world. We pray as well for all who are struggling today. Grant your healing to the sick, your comfort to the sorrowful, and your aid to the needy. We especially lift up... and we thank you for...

We praise you, Holy God, for the depth of your mercy and grace toward us, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **Choral Response**

Remember Me

## **Offering**

God offers us lives of richness and blessing that we may know life. God also calls us to lives of fruitfulness, in faith and in service. Our offerings are one way to express our thanks and share God's great blessing with others. Let us dedicate our gifts in joy.

All that we present to you, O God, we have received from your hands. We give in order to praise your mercy and goodness, and we give so that those who hunger and thirst may be sustained, and those who long for your grace may hear the good news of your salvation. Use these gifts and our lives to your glory. Amen.

## **Doxology**                    (choose the one that is best for your faith)

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

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God for all that Love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen

## **\* Hymn**                    God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak                    NCH 531

## God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak

*Frances Ridley Havergal, 1872; alt.*

1 God, speak to me, that I may speak in  
 2 O lead me, God, that I may lead some  
 3 O fill me with your full - ness, God, your  
 4 O use me, God, use ev - en me just

liv - ing ech - oes of your tone; as you have sought, so  
 wan - der - ers a - long life's way; O feed me so that  
 ov - er - flow - ing love to know; In glow - ing word and  
 as you will, and when, and where, un - til your bless - ed

let me seek your err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.  
 I may feed your hun - gry ones with - out de - lay.  
 kin - dling thought, your love to tell, your praise to show.  
 face I see, your rest, your joy, your glo - ry share.

*Daughter of the English hymnwriter William H. Havergal, Frances Ridley Havergal was a gifted poet and student of several languages, including Hebrew and Greek. She also composed several hymn tunes. Canonbury was adapted from one of Robert Schumann's piano pieces.*

Tune: CANONBURY L.M.  
 Arr. from Robert Schumann, 1872

**\*Common Commission**

**Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**\* Benediction**

Go now into the world

being confident of this: That God, who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.      Philippians 1: 6 adj.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

**Postlude**

“Moment by Moment,” by Mary Whittle Moody, Arr. by Gail Smith

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music provided by Chris Harris and Lynne Walker