

# Devotional—day 15

## "We Beseech Thee"

### EPISCOPAL HYMN #229

#### Litany of Penitence

##### Part I

God the Father, God the son,  
God the Spirit, Three in One,  
Hear us from thy heavenly throne:  
Spare us, holy Trinity.

Father, hear thy children's call;  
Humbly at thy feet we fall,  
Prodigals, confessing all:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Christ, beneath thy cross, we blame  
All our life of sin and shame;  
Penitent we breathe thy Name:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Holy spirit, grieved and tried,  
Oft forgotten and defied,  
Now we mourn our stubborn pride:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Love, that caused us first to be,  
Love, that bled upon the tree,  
Love, that draws us lovingly:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

We thy call have disobeyed,  
Into paths of sin have strayed,  
And repentance have delayed:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Sick, we come to thee for cure,  
Guilty, seek thy mercy sure,  
Evil, long to be made pure:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Blind, we pray that we may see;  
Bound, we pray to be made free;  
Stained, we pray for sanctity:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Thou who hear'st each contrite sigh,  
Bidding sinful souls draw nigh,  
Willing not that one should die:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

##### Part II

By the gracious saving call,  
Spoken tenderly to all  
Who have shared man's guilt and fall:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

By the nature Jesus wore,  
By the stripes and death he bore,  
By his life for evermore:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

By the love that longs to bless,  
Pitying our sores distress,  
Leading us to holiness:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

By the love so calm and strong,  
Patient still to suffer wrong  
And our day of grace prolong:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

By the love that speaks within,  
Calling us to flee from sin,  
And the joy of goodness win:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

By the love that bids thee spare,  
By the heaven thou dost prepare,  
By thy promises to prayer:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

##### Part III

Teach us what thy love has borne,  
That, with loving sorrow torn,  
Truly contrite we may mourn:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Gifts of light and grace bestow;  
Help us to resist the foe,  
Fearing what alone is woe:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Let not sin within us reign;  
May we gladly suffer pain,  
If it purge away our stain:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

May we to all evil die,  
Fleshly longings crucify;  
Fix our hearts and thoughts on high:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Grant us faith to know thee near,  
Hail thy grace, thy judgment fear,  
And through trial persevere:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Grant up hope from earth to rise,  
And to strain with eager eyes  
Towards the promised heavenly prize:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Grant us love, thy love to own,  
Love to live for thee alone,  
And the power of grace make known:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

All our weak endeavors bless,  
As we ever forward press;  
Lead us on to holiness:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

Lead us daily nearer thee  
Till at last thy face we see,  
Crowned with thine own purity:  
We beseech thee, hear us.

- T. B. Pollock, 1871

## *Behind the Music...*

In October 2004, Stephen Schwartz had a chance to perform with Mary Wilson of the Supremes. In preparation for that show he offered the following during a press interview:

"I'm very excited to have a chance to play a song for Mary Wilson to sing, since the Supremes were extremely influential on me as I was developing as a writer. I first heard their "Where Did Our Love Go?" album when I was a freshman in college; my roommate had it, and we pretty well wore it out. I remember becoming so enamored of the Supremes that I made my parents take me to see them perform at the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach when we were on vacation there the following winter. The Motown sound became one of the kinds of music that changed my writing from more theatrically oriented music to more pop, and one can hear Motown influences in many of my songs -- an early one that comes immediately to mind is "We Beseech Thee" from *GODSPELL*, the rhythm of which is clearly influenced by "You Can't Hurry Love". So you can imagine how excited I am to meet Ms. Wilson, let alone to have the privilege of accompanying her."

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### **Thomas Benson Pollock (1836-1896)**

Pollock was educated at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. He studied medicine in London, but decided instead to take Holy Orders. He served at St. Luke's Church, Leeds, and St. Thomas' Church, Stamford Hill, London. Then, for the remainder of his life, he ministered to the poor at St. Alban's Mission in Birmingham.



## "FATHER, HEAR THY CHILDREN'S CALL"

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee" (Ps. 102.1)

A song that asks God to hear the cry of His people is, "Father, Hear Thy Children's Call." The text was written by Thomas Benson Pollock (1836-1896). It was a section of a three-part litany published in his 1870 Metrical Litanies for Special Services and General Use.

The hymn is certainly a good one to sing before prayer. It used to be common for song leaders to choose "prayer songs" for the congregation to sing immediately before prayer in order to put the worshippers in a more prayerful mood. There is nothing in the scriptures which demand this practice, but neither is there any principle in God's word that would make it wrong. In many instances, it can be helpful. In any event, when we go to God in prayer, especially in public worship, one of our purposes is to ask Him, "*Father, Hear Thy Children's Call.*"

### I. Stanza 1 addresses the one **to whom we pray**:

*"Father, hear Thy children's call; Humbly at Thy feet we fall,  
Prodigals, confessing all: We beseech Thee, hear us."*

- A. God is our Father in Heaven to whom we speak in prayer: Matt. 6.9
- B. Falling at God's feet is a symbol of the humility with which we approach Him in prayer: 1 Pet. 5.6-7
- C. Something that needs to be included in our prayers is a confession of sin: 1 Jn. 1.9

### II. Stanza 2 addresses the one **through whom we pray**:

*"Christ, beneath Thy cross we blame All our life of sin and shame;  
Penitent, we breathe Thy name: We beseech Thee, hear us."*

- A. Christ is our Mediator, through Him we come to the Father in prayer: Jn.14.6, 1 Tim. 2.5
- B. It is to Him and His cross that we come, bringing all our life of sin and shame, to find rest: Matt. 11.28-30
- C. However, to be made right with God through Him, He requires repentance: Lk. 13.3, Acts 17.30-31

### III. Stanza 3 mentions reasons **why we need to** come to God in prayer:

*"Sick, we come to Thee for cure; Guilty, seek Thy mercy sure;  
Evil, long to be made pure: We beseech Thee, hear us."*

- A. There is certainly nothing wrong with asking God to heal us when we are sick and grant us health: Jas. 5.13-15
- B. But more importantly, we are guilty of sin and need to ask God's mercy upon us: Acts 8.22
- C. And because we have sinned, we have allowed evil in our hearts and need to ask God to make us pure, as did David: Ps. 51.10

### IV. Stanza 4 mentions **more reasons why** we need to come to God in prayer:

*"Blind, we pray that we may see; Bound, we pray to be made free;  
Stained, we pray for sanctity: We beseech Thee, hear us."*

- A. When we have allowed Satan to blind our eyes, we must go to God that we might see: 2 Cor. 4.3-4
- B. When we are bound by sin of which we are guilty, we must go to God to be made free: Rom. 6.17-18
- C. When we are stained by the evil which we have allowed in our hearts, we must go to God to be sanctified: 1 Thess. 5.23

### V. Stanza 5 mentions the **basis upon which we can go to God in prayer**:

*"By Thy love that bids Thee spare, By the heaven Thou dost prepare,  
By Thy promises to prayer: We beseech Thee, hear us."*

- A. It is God's love that bids us come to Him in prayer: Jn. 3.16
- B. It is because of His desire for us to live with Him in heaven that He has opened up the avenue of prayer: 1 Pet. 1.3-5
- C. It is His exceeding great and precious promise to hear us that gives us the boldness to come to Him in prayer: 2 Pet. 1.4, 1 Jn. 5.14-15

By Wayne S. Walker

The Bible Matters: Hymn Studies (<http://www.whizardries.com/pipermail/biblemat/2005-May/001875.html>)

*1-2 God, listen! Listen to my prayer, listen to the pain in my cries.  
Don't turn your back on me  
just when I need you so desperately.  
Pay attention! This is a cry for help!  
And hurry—this can't wait!  
Psalm 102:1-2 (The Message)*

### **Stanza I:**

**Matthew 6:9** (The Message)

*With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven,  
Reveal who you are*

**1 Peter 5:6-7** (NIV)

**6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**1 John 1:9** (The Message)

**8-10** If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.

### **Stanza II:**

**John 14:6-7** (The Message)

**6-7** Jesus said, "I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You've even seen him!"

**1 Timothy 2:4-7** (The Message)

**4-7** He wants not only us but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we've learned: that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us—Jesus, who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free. Eventually the news is going to get out. This and this only has been my appointed work: getting this news to those who have never heard of God, and explaining how it works by simple faith and plain truth.

**Matthew 11:28-30** (The Message)

**28-30** "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

**Luke 13:3** (NIV)

**3** I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

**Acts 17:30-31** (The Message)

**30-31** "God overlooks it as long as you don't know any better—but that time is past. The unknown is now known, and he's calling for a radical life-change. He has set a day when the entire human race will be judged and everything set right. And he has already appointed the judge, confirming him before everyone by raising him from the dead."

### **Stanza III:**

**James 5:13-15** (The Message)

**Prayer to Be Reckoned With**

**13-15** Are you hurting? Pray. Do you feel great? Sing. Are you sick? Call the church leaders together to pray and anoint you with oil in the name of the Master. Believing-prayer will heal you, and Jesus will put you on your feet. And if you've sinned, you'll be forgiven—healed inside and out.

**Acts 8:22** (NIV)

**22** Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart

### **Psalms 51:7-15** (The Message)

7-15 Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,  
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.  
Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,  
set these once-broken bones to dancing.  
Don't look too close for blemishes,  
give me a clean bill of health.  
God, make a fresh start in me,  
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.  
Don't throw me out with the trash,  
or fail to breathe holiness in me.  
Bring me back from gray exile,  
put a fresh wind in my sails!  
Give me a job teaching rebels your ways  
so the lost can find their way home.  
Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,  
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.  
Unbutton my lips, dear God;  
I'll let loose with your praise.

### **Stanza IV:**

#### **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** (The Message)

3-4 If our Message is obscure to anyone, it's not because we're holding back in any way. No, it's because these other people are looking or going the wrong way and refuse to give it serious attention. All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness. They think he can give them what they want, and that they won't have to bother believing a Truth they can't see. They're stone-blind to the dayspring brightness of the Message that shines with Christ, who gives us the best picture of God we'll ever get.

#### **Romans 6:15-18** (The Message)

##### **What Is True Freedom?**

15-18 So, since we're out from under the old tyranny, does that mean we can live any old way we want? Since we're free in the freedom of God, can we do anything that comes to mind? Hardly. You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it's your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you've let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you've started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom!

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** (The Message)

23-24 May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. The One who called you is completely dependable. If he said it, he'll do it!

### **Stanza V:**

#### **John 3:16-18** (The Message)

16-18 "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.

#### **1 Peter 3-5** (NIV)

##### **Praise to God for a Living Hope**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are

shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

**2 Peter 1:3-4** (The Message)

**3-4** Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! We were also given absolutely terrific promises to pass on to you—your tickets to participation in the life of God after you turned your back on a world corrupted by lust.

**1 John 5:14-15** (NIV)

**14** This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. **15** And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

## *We Beseech Thee...*

Main Entry: **be-seech**

Pronunciation: bi-'sEch

Function: *verb*

Inflected Form(s): **-seeched** or **be-sought** /-'sot/; **-seech-ing**

Etymology: Middle English *besechen*, from *be-* + *sechen* to seek  
*transitive senses*

**1** : to beg for urgently or anxiously

**2** : to request earnestly : **IMPLORE**

*intransitive senses* : to make supplication

**synonym** see **BEG**

- **be-seech-ing-ly** /-'sE-chi[ng]-IE/ *adverb*

## *Time for personal reflection (Day 15):*

Beseech—What does a person in the act of “beseeching” look like? What posture do they take? What look is on their face?

Have I prayed a prayer (or prayers) in which I can say I was truly “beseeching” God for His attention?

How important is humility and repentance in the process of prayer? Are these elements that I regularly include in my prayer time?

Sick, Guilty, Evil, Blind, Bound, Stained—which of these reasons most often sends me to God in prayer?

Study Psalms 51:7-15 (referenced in the Stanza III scriptures). From reading this section of David’s prayer, could he physically be sitting next to me in this room? Could I have written this prayer this morning?