**The Reason for the Season**

**Devotional to Honor Jesus Christ**

****

**Opening Prayer- The Lord’s Prayer (set to music)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L-BFHcDVAk

[**John 13:34**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-13-34/)

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

[**2 Corinthians 5:17**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/2-Corinthians-5-17/)

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

“We testify that when He (Jesus Christ) came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him, the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.

Leprosy may be interpreted as any veil that interveneth between man and the recognition of the Lord, his God. Whoso alloweth himself to be shut out from Him is indeed a leper, who shall not be remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Mighty, the All-Praised. We bear witness that through the power of the Word of God every leper was cleansed, every sickness was healed, every human infirmity was banished. He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.”

**Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 86**

“Jesus Christ was an Educator of humanity. His teachings were altruistic; His bestowal, universal. He taught mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit and not through human agency, for the human power is limited, whereas the divine power is illimitable and infinite. The influence and accomplishment of Christ will attest this.”

**Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 85**

“Therefore, all of you must strive with heart and soul in order that enmity may disappear entirely and that strife and hatred pass away absolutely from the midst of the human world. You must listen to the admonition of this Spirit of Truth. You must follow the example and footprints of Jesus Christ. Read the Gospels. Jesus Christ was mercy itself, was love itself. He even prayed in behalf of His executioners - for those who crucified Him - saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If they knew what they were doing, they would not have done it. Consider how kind Jesus Christ was, that even upon the cross He prayed for His oppressors. We must follow His example.”

**Abdu’l-Baha, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 42**

[**Luke 11:9**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Luke-11-9/)

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

[**Proverbs 3:6**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Proverbs-3-6/)

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

[**Matthew 11:28**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-11-28/)

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

“Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is the Most Great Peace of mankind. Among His principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.”

**Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 11**

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,

for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,

for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,

for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,

for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**Gospel of St.** [**Matthew**](http://biblescripture.net/Matthew.html) **5:3-10**

“All the Prophets have striven to make love manifest in the hearts of men. Jesus Christ sought to create this love in the hearts. He suffered all difficulties and ordeals that perchance the human heart might become the fountain source of love. Therefore, we must strive with all our heart and soul that this love may take possession of us so that all humanity -- whether it be in the East or in the West -- may be connected through the bond of this divine affection; for we are all the waves of one sea; we have come into being through the same bestowal and are recipients from the same center. The lights of earth are all acceptable, but the center of effulgence is the sun, and we must direct our gaze to the sun. God is the Supreme Center. The more we turn toward this Center of Light, the greater will be our capacity.”

**Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 10**

**Song: 1 Cor: 13**

Song by Elika Mahony- Love is Patient <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFyOaZpwxdE>

[**Romans 8:28**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Romans-8-28/)

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

“Think not of your own limitations, dwell only on the welfare of the Kingdom of Glory. Consider the influence of Jesus Christ on His apostles, then think of their effect upon the world. These simple men were enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the glad tidings! So may you all receive Divine assistance! No capacity is limited when led by the Spirit of God! “

**Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, page 166**

[**Psalms 46:10**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-46-10/)

“Be still, and know that I am God...”

“See how many conquering kings there have been, how many statesmen and princes, powerful organizers, all of whom have disappeared, whereas the breezes of Christ are still blowing; His light is still shining; His melody is still resounding; His standard is still waving; His armies are still fighting; His heavenly voice is still sweetly melodious; His clouds are still showering gems; His lightning is still flashing; His reflection is still clear and brilliant; His splendor is still radiating and luminous; and it is the same with those souls who are under His protection and are shining with His light.”

**`Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, pages 152-153**

[**Matthew 5:16**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-5-16/)

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

“Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

**Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 86**

[**Nahum 1:7**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Nahum-1-7/)

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”

[**Joshua 1:9**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-1-9/)

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

**Poem: This Is Faith by Ruhiyyih Khanum**

**Sung and played on the ukulele**

“To walk where there is no path,

To breathe where there is no air,

To see where there is no light-

This is Faith.

To cry out in the silence,

The silence of the night,

And hearing no echo believe

And believe again and again

This is Faith.

To hold pebbles and see jewels

To raise sticks and see forests

To smile with weeping eyes

This is Faith.

To Say: 'God, I believe' when others deny,

'I hear' when there is no answer,

'I see' though naught is seen-

This is Faith.

And the fierce love in the heart,

The savage love that cries Hidden

Thou art yet there!

Veil thy face and mute thy tongue

Yet I see and hear Thee, Love,

Beat me down to the bare earth,

Yet I rise and love Thee, Love!

This is Faith.”

“Thou didst begin thy letter with a blessed phrase, saying: 'I am a Christian.' O would that all were truly Christian! It is easy to be a Christian on the tongue, but hard to be a true one. Today some five hundred million souls are Christian, but the real Christian is very rare: he is that soul from whose comely face there shineth the splendour of Christ, and who showeth forth the perfections of the Kingdom; this is a matter of great moment, for to be a Christian is to embody every excellence there is. I hope that thou, too, shalt become a true Christian. Praise thou God that at last, through the divine teachings, thou hast obtained both sight and insight to the highest degree, and hast become firmly rooted in certitude and faith. It is my hope that others as well will achieve illumined eyes and hearing ears, and attain to everlasting life…”

**Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 30**

**“**The divine Prophets came to establish the unity of the Kingdom in human hearts. All of them proclaimed the glad tidings of the divine bestowals to the world of mankind. All brought the same message of divine love to the world. Jesus Christ gave His life upon the cross for the unity of mankind. Those who believed in Him likewise sacrificed life, honor, possessions, family, everything, that this human world might be released from the hell of discord, enmity and strife. His foundation was the oneness of humanity. Only a few were attracted to Him. They were not the kings and rulers of His time. They were not rich and important people. Some of them were catchers of fish. Most of them were ignorant men, not trained in the knowledge of this world. One of the greatest of them, Peter, could not remember the days of the week. All of them were men of the least consequence in the eyes of the world. But their hearts were pure and attracted by the fires of the Divine Spirit manifested in Christ. With this small army Christ conquered the world of the East and the West. Kings and nations rose against Him. Philosophers and the greatest men of learning assailed and blasphemed His Cause. All were defeated and overcome, their tongues silenced, their lamps extinguished, their hatred quenched; no trace of them now remains. They have become as nonexistent, while His Kingdom is triumphant and eternal.

The brilliant star of His Cause has ascended to the zenith, while night has enveloped and eclipsed His enemies. His name, beloved and adored by a few disciples, now commands the reverence of kings and nations of the world. His power is eternal; His sovereignty will continue forever, while those who opposed Him are sleeping in the dust, their very names unknown, forgotten. The little army of disciples has become a mighty cohort of millions. The Heavenly Host, the Supreme Concourse are His legions; the Word of God is His sword; the power of God is His victory.

Jesus Christ knew this would come to pass and was content to suffer. His abasement was His glorification; His crown of thorns, a heavenly diadem. When they pressed it upon His blessed head and spat in His beautiful face, they laid the foundation of His everlasting Kingdom. He still reigns, while they and their names have become lost and unknown. He is eternal and glorious; they are nonexistent. They sought to destroy Him, but they destroyed themselves and increased the intensity of His flame by the winds of their opposition.

Through His death and teachings we have entered into His Kingdom. His essential teaching was the unity of mankind and the attainment of supreme human virtues through love. He came to establish the Kingdom of peace and everlasting life. Can you find in His words any justification for discord and enmity? The purpose of His life and the glory of His death were to set mankind free from the sins of strife, war and bloodshed. The great nations of the world boast that their laws and civilization are based upon the religion of Christ. Why then do they make war upon each other? The Kingdom of Christ cannot be upheld by destroying and disobeying it. The banners of His armies cannot lead the forces of Satan. Consider the sad picture of Italy carrying war into Tripoli. If you should announce that Italy was a barbarous nation and not Christian, this would be vehemently denied. But would Christ sanction what they are doing in Tripoli? Is this destruction of human life obedience to His laws and teachings? Where does He command it? Where does He consent to it? He was killed by His enemies; He did not kill. He even loved and prayed for those who hung Him on the cross. Therefore, these wars and cruelties, this bloodshed and sorrow are Antichrist, not Christ. These are the forces of death and Satan, not the hosts of the Supreme Concourse of heaven.

No less bitter is the conflict between sects and denominations. Christ was a divine Center of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between the sects? Did Christ command them to love or to hate each other? He loved even His enemies and prayed in the hour of His crucifixion for those who killed Him. Therefore, to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, "I belong to a Christian government." To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be self-sacrificing and obedient, to become quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, to be mirrors reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be fruitful trees in the garden of His planting, to refresh the world by the water of life of His teachings -- in all things to be like Him and filled with the spirit of His love.”

**Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 6**

**Psalm 23:**

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

“If you reflect upon the essential teachings of Jesus, you will realize that they are the light of the world. Nobody can question their truth. They are the very source of life and the cause of happiness to the human race.”

**Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 86**

**Closing Song: Matthew 6:33 Sung Together**

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

**Thank you for coming!**



“As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized… The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Baha’u’llah as the “Spirit of God,” is proclaimed as the One Who “appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost,” and is even extolled as the “Essence of the Spirit.” His mother is described as “that veiled and immortal, that most beauteous, countenance,” and the station of her Son eulogized as a “station which hath been exalted above the imaginings of all that dwell on earth”…The Faith of Baha’u’llah – if we would faithfully appraise it – can never, and in no aspect of its teachings, be at variance, much less conflict, with the purpose animating, or the authority invested in, the Faith of Jesus Christ…”

**-Shoghi Effendi**

The Bible is “the Holy Book of God, of celestial inspiration. It is the Bible of Salvation, the Nobel Gospel. It is the mystery of the Kingdom and its light. It is the Divine Bounty, the sign of guidance of God.”

**Abdu’l-Baha, Abdu’l-Baha in London, p. 18**