

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday March 12, 2006

On this day in 515 BC, formerly exiled Jews finally finished rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, heeding the word of the Lord through Haggai: "Is it a time for you to live in your paneled homes while this house lies in ruins?" (Haggai 1:4)

Let us pray.

We joy in You alone, O Living God. By Your grace and goodness, You have called us in our time and our place, to know the joy of worshipping You, the joy that generations before us have known and the joy that billions know this day all across the globe. May we know what a privilege You give us to respond to the call: "Let us go into the House of the Lord." May it be as best we can that we've entered again into "Your gates" – not ours. May it be with true gratitude that we've gained entrance into "Your courts of praise." Help us to be truly "thankful and bless Your name" in Your Spirit and Truth.

On this anniversary of the rebuilding of Your ancient temple, we're sobered by Your words to Your people through Your prophet and we pray in paraphrase: May this be a time for us to get our own priorities straight, that we not be foolishly preoccupied with our "paneled homes," neglecting the weighty matters of Your will.

We thank You that there is no longer any need for the repeated shedding of the blood of bulls and goats for we are under the blood of the Lamb, shed once for all, forevermore.

Thank You for consecrating us to be the temple of Your Holy Spirit – a living temple, not made by hands. You have revealed that we are, both individually and together, Your Temple. Lead us by Your Spirit. Guide us into all the truth we need. Comfort us until we behold the coming of the New Jerusalem, the heavenly City not made by hands, where there is no need for another temple for the Temple of that City is You, Yourself, and The Lamb. Receive our praise today as we look toward the day of eternal praise.

Lord, be with all in earthly power. Give them good sense. Restrain cynicism and the self-serving that hurts so many. And may we, as Your followers, put no ultimate trust in any politician, political party, platform, or posturing promises. But may we do our best to be obedient to You alone, realizing that, You alone, are Power and Love in One Lord.

Hear our prayer in Jesus' name, as we add these words of prayer he taught us, saying:

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.