

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday July 23, 2006

In his devotional guide for this day, Charles Spurgeon, the world's foremost 19th-century preacher, wrote this: "Be honest with thine own soul, and make sure that thou art a new creature in Christ Jesus."

Let us pray.

Christ Jesus, Lord and Savior:

These words of appeal from a faithful preacher are straightforward, even blunt. But then, You, Yourself, as You preached in Palestine, were straightforward, even blunt. You showed patience but pulled no punches. You spoke the words of truth about what truly matters. And You told us that You, Yourself, are the Truth. And that's what really matters. The truth is that, without You we're dead; in You, we come alive forevermore. So give us the good sense and the grace to take Your words to heart. May we, in all honesty, ask ourselves, as Your servant, Charles, asked us to do: Are we – even we – new creations in Christ Jesus? We may be church members. We may have no criminal records, no outstanding warrants. People may think of us as being fairly nice people and we may approve of ourselves. But are we truly Your people, Your new creations, wholly given over to You. Have we put our obnoxious "me, me, me" to death and come alive in Your grace and peace? Help us to know that with but an earnest look of longing to You, for You, we can die to self and become Your new creations.

And Lord, may we not ask ourselves without asking You to tell us: Are we really Your new creations – new and renewed this morning and every morning? Tell us who we are that we might know for sure that we are Yours – heart, soul, mind and strength. Give us a daily, deep desire to turn to You in the righteousness that is Your own righteousness. Give us the willingness to submit to Your will without reservation. Show us ourselves. Then show us ourselves in You in our place – on the cross at Calvary and on every road of life that leads from there to the Father's House. And may we never fail to be faithful that we might hear, at last, Your final judgment: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Speak to us in this hour. Convict us. Comfort us. May we consecrate ourselves to You.

Give us guidance and grace as we now continue to worship in Your own words, 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.