

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday October 22, 2006

On this day in 1966, Karl Barth, the 20th century's most important theologian, wrote these four words in a letter: "God makes no mistakes." And in his Church Dogmatics he wrote: "In Christ, we are set at God's side ... where decisions are made in the affairs of government. ... We find ourselves at the very seat of government, at the very heart of the mystery and purpose of all occurrences." Let us pray.

Our Father, God:

In the midst of trouble and tragedy, the dangers and confusion in our world, we're grateful that You, O wise and loving Father and eternally sovereign Lord, are closer at hand than are all the troubles and dangers. Be our vision when we're otherwise too shortsighted to see Your governance in all of life, when our own anxious imaginations run ahead of Your imaginations of amazing grace. May we make no mistake about the truth of our brother's trust: You make no mistakes; Your Heart is at the heart of it all.

We pray for Your felt Presence with all in harms way in war zones – for men and women in uniform and civilians entrapped in the conflicts. We pray for distressed loved ones. May they rest in Your care for every sparrow. We pray for our enemies, too, for You commanded us to love them and to do good to those who despitefully use us. Bring to us all the justice and peace that we seek at our best. May our leaders and theirs be sensitive to the promptings of Your image in whom we're all created and called.

Lord, as we continue to worship You here this morning, may we do so with a holy seriousness, in Your Spirit and Your Truth. May our attention and devotion be worthy of even a fraction of the attention and devotion You've shown us. May our commitment to be faithful to You be more consistent with Your commitment to us – even unto the death of Your Son. May our love for You and for each other better reflect the love with which we have been loved by You at Calvary and throughout all our days. May this hour of prayer and praise and preaching move us beyond petty priorities to the noble priorities and perspective of our Creator and Redeemer – that Your joy and ours might be one.

Lord, have Your way in all of us, that You be glorified and we therein, be gratified. Thank You for hearing our prayers as we add the prayer we were taught to pray, 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.