

Below are 5 prayers submitted by OPC pastors regarding the racial unrest in the US.

Prayer #1 - from Matthew Cotta, pastor of Pasadena OPC, in Pasadena CA.

Merciful Father,

We thank you for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank you Lord that while we were dead in our sins, you sent your Son. We thank you for Jesus Christ who willingly came into this world, a world where your own image-bearers, brothers, murderously strike each other down in fear and hatred. We thank you that Jesus came into this world and willingly endured what He knew He would have to endure.

He willingly endured our brokenness. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He knew, Lord God, as one who experienced it Himself, the hatred of mankind. He was spit upon, mocked, beaten, rejected, betrayed by those who should have loved Him, and finally crucified upon a cross...murdered. To us has been given a Savior who knows our grief, who knows our hardships. He went through all of that, yet not so that He might merely be an example to us who suffer, but so that He might save us.

Lord God, we acknowledge, it was we who rejected and crucified Him. No matter how much we suffer in this world, it is deserved; it is for our own sin. We rebelled against you and chose to walk down a path of sin and destruction. But not Him. He willingly went to the cross as a blameless and pure sacrifice, whose shed blood would cleanse those who were not blameless and pure.

Father we thank you for the Son of God. Our hope is not in politicians or programs. Our hope is not in society fixing itself. Our hope is not in one another. Our hope is in Jesus and in Him alone. Maranatha! We pray that the Spirit who raised Him from the dead would be at work in us so that we would think and speak and act like Him, putting to death the deeds of the flesh, the hatred and animosity and racism and division and pride and foolishness, and to love one another even as He loved us and gave Himself for us.

Father, we thank you that in your providence the events that are unfolding in society today coincide with the doors of your churches opening again for worship. We pray that your churches would be a place of refuge in this fallen world. May your church be a haven of rest for the broken and the needy, the suffering and the persecuted, the marginalized and the discriminated against. May they know the welcome and healing and love of the Gospel of God. May they come, with repentance and in faith in Christ, and find rest for their weak and weary souls. And may, in these gatherings, the new man, the new creation in Christ Jesus be lived, enjoyed, and shone forth as a beacon of light and hope and salvation in this dark, broken, and hopeless world.

Lord hear this our prayer today, for we pray it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Prayer #2 – from Michael Seufert, pastor of Mission Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in St. Paul, MN.

Great God and Father, though the heavens should dissolve, though the earth give way, you remain forever. We give you praise and thanks that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and always. We give you praise and thanks that our hope is unshakable, kept secure in heaven, waiting to be revealed at the perfect time, a time established by your perfect wisdom, which does all things well, which is far above anything we could conceive. We give you praise and thanks for the way you have sustained your people through the wilderness of Sinai, through the wilderness of exile, and through the wilderness of this present evil age, feeding us upon the heavenly manna, the Spiritual food, the Lord Jesus Christ. Guard our hearts, Father, from anchoring our hope in the course of this world, which is passing away with its passions and desires. Guard our hearts, Father, from despair, frustration, anger, bitterness, and hatred, as you reveal to us where we have inordinately set our affections. Drive us again and again and again into the arms of our Lord and Savior, in whom alone is satisfaction and peace.

Grant your ministers a taste of heaven week in and week out, as you call us to commune with you in your Word and by your Spirit, sending us from your holy presence into the congregation with a Word from on high. May it be word which fashions and forms that which remains, the new creation life in which your people participate even now, feeding and sustaining faith in Christ, fueling and enflaming our love for your Holy Self and for our brothers and sisters in Christ and even beyond the household of faith to a lost and dying generation.

Grant your members, O Lord Jesus Christ our head and king, that we may abound in the fruit of righteousness leading unto its end, eternal life. Grant, in these trying times, slowness to speak and quickness to listen. Grant, for your glory heavenly Father, that we grow in our willingness to bear with one another, forgiving one another in love, as you, O great God, have forgiven us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And grant, that your name may be sanctified upon the earth. Grant that the unsettling of that which seemed unshakable might open the eyes of many to see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, who rules and reigns over an incorruptible kingdom, imperishable, unfading, perfect in righteousness and peace. As they look upon your church, may they see a glimpse of heaven. As they look upon your church, may they see an attestation of lives yielded to the only true and worthy King, your Son, our Lord, Jesus, in whose name we stand before you, in whose name we rest secure, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Prayer #3 – from Eric Watkins, pastor of Covenant OPC, in St. Augustine, FL.

Dear heavenly Father, our hearts are heavy with the weight of sin; not simply our own sins but the sins of others. In recent weeks, men who have been appointed by you to protect life have taken it. Our nation watched. Protests have turned to riots. Property has been destroyed and many more lives have been lost. Our nation is on fire. Lord, have mercy.

Our hearts are convicted. We confess, O Lord, that we often do not love our neighbor as ourselves. Our lives are peacefully insulated and at times blissfully unaware of the pain and sufferings that others experience, not only in our churches, but also in our communities. Lord, we confess our sins of commission—we have done things that we ought not to have done. We also confess our sins of omission—we have left undone things that we ought to have done. Lord, have mercy.

We thank you, O God, that what the law requires, the gospel gives. You require of us to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. We know that we have failed at every turn. But we also know that you have given us yourself in the gospel. We thank you that Jesus willingly came down from heaven in submission to the Father to accomplish all your holy will. We thank you for his active and passive obedience to the law. We thank you that in addition to his obedience, he was full of justice, mercy and humility. We thank you that he took our place in his life, death and in his resurrection. And we thank you especially for the resurrection; it is our triumph. Lord, have mercy.

As we have been painfully reminded once again that this world is not our home—that we are just pilgrims passing through—we thank you, O Lord, for the promise of the Holy Spirit. We thank you for the assurance that we have, that because of Christ, heaven is our eternal inheritance. We belong there because we belong to you. Lord, have mercy.

We ask, O Lord, that you would give us a heart like your own. That we would grow in love for the widow, the orphan and the stranger. We pray that you would fill us with great compassion for those who are in pain, suffering and anguish. We pray that you would even help us to look upon those who are actively rebelling against you with the love that only gospel hope can bring. Lord, have mercy.

We pray, Lord, that you would turn hearts to yourself. Turn our hearts first. Help us to love you more. Help us to love one another more. Help us to love the lost more. We pray that you would open blind eyes and deaf ears and soften stony hearts. Cause those who are perishing in unbelief to experience the lasting joy of genuine repentance and faith. Make our enemies our friends. Fill our churches with the unexpected. Use us to be salt and light, so that outsiders might know that the church cares—because God cares. For Jesus' sake, Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer #4 – from Zecharias Weldeyesus, pastor of Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Atlanta GA.

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Almighty Lord, in these troubling and unprecedented days in which we find ourselves, we humbly and confidently acknowledge that our help comes only from You, the God who can form light and create darkness, the One in whose power is the making of well-being and calamities for His own glory and the good of His people. Yes, Lord, although our minds cannot fully grasp the reason why You have allowed first the medical pandemic and now the social pandemic to come up on Your people and the land in which we live, yet we believe that nothing befalls in our individual lives and in a nation's affairs without Your Sovereign decree and will.

Therefore, we beseech You Lord, as we go through these strange times in the history of our world. We ask you to guard our hearts and minds with the peace of your Son, Jesus Christ—that peace which surpasses all knowledge and understanding. In these days of trouble and uncertainty enable us by your grace and Spirit to refrain ourselves from becoming judgmental and uncontentious toward other people, even people from other races. Instead, help us Lord to inquire from you with a contrite spirit if there is any iniquity in our own hearts that has contributed towards the crisis that we are facing. As you have commanded us in Your holy Word, grant to us the ability to humble ourselves under your mighty hand and seek your face and turn from our wicked ways. Yes, Lord, to confess truly and from our hearts that we haven't loved you with all our hearts, soul, mind, strength, and in the same manner we haven't loved one another as we would love ourselves. Your Word tells us that a repentance like that brings both spiritual and physical healing to people and a nation, so help all people in America, but especially the Church, to repent in dust and ashes so that we would become God's instrument of restoration to both the Church and people here in America.

We also pray and intercede on behalf of our nation that through the power of the blood of Jesus Christ our Savior—the blood which brought down the dividing wall of hostility between the Jews and Gentiles to make them one in Christ Jesus—You would be pleased to abolish the dividing wall of racial hostility and conflict that has transpired here in our land following the tragic death of George Floyd, in order to cause people to look to Jesus Christ in whom and through him all people here on earth can be truly reconciled with the holy God and with one another. O heavenly Father, the God of our righteousness and sanctification, sanctify us through the power of Christ's resurrection so that we all—no matter who we are and what our race—may completely and with a great sense of self denial grasp how freely and unconditionally You have loved us and pardoned all our sins through the atoning work of Christ on the cross and accepted us as your own children. May we happily and unconditionally imitate you, the God of love, in accepting all people who have been created in Your image. We ask this for the cause and growth of your righteous kingdom here in the USA and throughout the globe. Amen!

Prayer #5 - James Lim, pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, in Long Beach, CA.

Answer us when we cry. Hear us when we pray, O Lord, our God.

We pray for our nation. We pray for the alienation and animosity we are experiencing because of the enmity of sin in our hearts. We have sinned against you and against heaven and we are not worthy to be called your children. We confess the sin of partiality- be it racial, social, economic, or ethnic- in our hearts, individually, and as a nation and as a people, in what we have done and what we have left undone, with every evil thought, every careless word, and every sinful act. Lord, we lift our eyes to heaven, beating our chest, crying out, "God, be merciful to us, sinners, of whom we are all the foremost". Lord, would you forgive us of our sins and heal our land? Would you pour out your healing balm of grace and reconcile us to yourself and to each other from every tribe and people and language and nation in Christ Jesus? In the midst of animosity and alienation, would you grant to us the reconciling peace that can only come through the healing power of Jesus Christ in the gospel.

We pray for our communities. Would you bring healing, justice, reconciliation, and peace to our neighborhoods and cities? Would you heal the rifts and pour out your grace upon us? Help us to show the love and life of Jesus as we love our neighbors as ourselves; to be like the Good Samaritan; to turn the other cheek; to go the extra mile; to give our tunic and our cloaks; and when they ask, we would be generous. Lord, help us to love as Jesus loved who came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many; to love as he loved and to lay down our lives for the blessing of others; to overcome all the barriers- seen and unseen, known and unknown- that alienate us from those who are different than us.

We pray for the glory of our Your Son and of His gospel to shine forth in our lives and in our churches. Grant that we would welcome the stranger and alien; that we would reach out to the poor and needy. Help us to proclaim freedom to those enslaved in their sins so that the knowledge of the glory of the Son of God would cover the oceans as the waters cover the sea and to take the gospel across our streets as well as across the oceans, to preach it "here" as well as "there". Help us not to waste this opportunity to lift high the cross, to lift high your Son, to lift high the reconciling and redeeming love of Jesus Christ. And would you draw all peoples both far and near unto Him? We pray all this in Jesus' healing name. Amen!