Hi friends, today’s prayer theme is:

**Anchoring our grief and mourning in God!**

*As our weeks roll on, we have heard from more of you about the grief you are experiencing as you mourn the loss of connection with the you love, the loss of life for those who have died and you either were unable to be at their bedside, or unable to celebrate their life at a funeral or memorial. Many of us are grieving life as we know it or as we knew it. So much has changed and shifted.*

*We have stay at home orders, loss of jobs, community gatherings that we cherish. We are dealing with a lot of restricted social movement that comes with some feelings of loss. It is especially compounded when things are happening in your life that you want to show up for. As we obey stay home orders, and restrictive access/guidelines, along with social distancing. This has meant that for some of you, you are unable to visit and see your children, grandkids, ailing parents, grandparents, sick relatives and friends. Birthday celebrations are on hold, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and funerals.*

*Perhaps you have lost someone who has died and you have not been able to properly grieve because of not being able to attend or plan a funeral or a celebration of life either here or in another state. I heard from a parishioner this week whose daughter is dying in another state and he could not be there. So there are deep losses although we know its best to keep each other safe, to not be at each other side, to grieve or to say goodbye or celebrate or say in person I’m here for you or I love you. Or to give a hug or a kiss, it’s really hard. So, the grief or isolation or detachment we are feeling right now is real. And the only thing to do when you are feeling that is to offer it to God, which is what we will do together this morning as we anchor our grief and mourning in God for relief.*

 *You may want to light a candle and get your bible. I have chosen three passages of scripture to guide us in our prayer this morning.*

**The first is:**

*John 14:8 I will not leave you comfortless (orphaned, bereaved) I will come to you.*

**The second is:**

*1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your cares upon God, Because God cares for you.*

**The third is:**

*Mathew 11:28 Come to me; all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*What I love about these passages are that they remind us that it is ok to grieve and when we do, we have a place to take it. That we can anchor our grief in God and receive comfort and assurance that God will hold it, walk with us in it, and transform it with Gods love for us. We can turn to God to give us what we need in moments like this to get through the day and the days ahead. That is exactly what we will do this morning, as we invite God to comfort us as we cast our cares upon God. So, thank you for joining me this morning to pray about the grief and mourning that we hold inside of us.*

*So, for those of you who have joined me via livestream, I invite you to repeat this prayer with me; or you can simply bow your head and let it wash over you. You can do whatever works for you. If you would like a copy of this prayer go to* [*www.spirituschristi.org/prayer*](http://www.spirituschristi.org/prayer)*. Let us pray!*

**Prayer:** *God again this morning as you instructed us to, we come boldly and with confidence before your throne of grace, drawing near to it, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need, and in the time of trouble. These are difficult times and we need your help God in our grief. So God instead of drowning in our sorrows we cast our cares upon you. We need you to sustain us, to comfort us as you comforted Mary and Martha when they grieved the loss of their brother Lazarus. As you comforted the widow of Nain when she grieved the loss of her only son and you gave him back to her. Help us to give you our burdens, to allow you to share this load we are carrying today.*

*You said in your word “ let not our hearts be troubled” but to believe in God, to believe in you Jesus, to trust the place that you prepare for us. As you prepare a place for us in our death, prepare a place for us in our life. A place where we can rest our hearts from this grief we feel. So God we ask that you refresh us when we feel weary! Replenish the depleted places in our hearts. You said if we are tired of carrying heavy loads we could come to you for rest, for comfort, for unconditional love! You said there is something we can learn from you, even in our own grief. Open us, so that we might learn what we need too.*

*We know that we are not alone. We know that you have felt grief when you couldn’t go to see John the Baptist when he was in prison and when he was beheaded. We know that you know what its like to be separated from those you love. Like when John was in prison and you had to send a message to him, instead of being by his side. Isaiah 53:3 tells us that you were despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, so we know that you understand exactly what we are feeling and going through. You understand the struggle of our hearts and it is to you that we turn this morning. You came through that grief and sorrow and you know that we will too.*

*So we ask you to be our prince of peace. To rules our hearts with your spirit and your presence. Be like a shelter from the wind of grief, a refuge from the storm of grief. Be a stream of healing! Be healing waters in a dry land and be a great rock for us when we are weary that we can lean on. God you are our Sheppard so, Sheppard our hearts. Lead us beside the still waters and refresh our souls. Let us hear your voice in the darkness, the loneliness, the isolation, and the places of detachment, reconnecting us to you.*

*Bring your healing presence to all the places that our hearts are hurting, feeling estranged from and disconnected. We invoke the petition of psalms 119:76 that says, “May your unfailing love be our comfort, according to your promise to your servant.” We are your servants God. Just as you saw the early church through times of being a scattered community, a community under fear, threat, attack, and persecution separated from family and friends. See us through too. God you promised to comfort us and have compassion on your afflicted ones. Jesus you reminded us that we are blessed. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. You promised to send us a helper, a comforter. So, we are ready for that visitation. We are ready for a visitation from the comforter, the Holy Spirit of God.*

*Be the God of hope for us, fill us with peace and the joy you have to give, as we put our trust in you. Let us overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul reminded us God as he wrote to the church at Corinth, that you are the father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles so, that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from you. So God this morning we thank you.*

*We say with confidence, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. The psalmist in Palm 3:3 said, “you O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the lifter of my head”. So be that rock to lean on, a fortress, and a deliver. It is you God who upholds us when we fall, and lifts us up when our heads are bowed down. So lift us! Hold us up! In times of mourning Isaiah 61:3 said that you would give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness.*

*So God we thank you for giving us that today. So we say goodbye to drowning in our grief and hello to the confidence that you are comforting us! You are holding us! You are renewing us! You are refreshing us! Offering us the refreshing that only you can give. So we believe that you will do it God and that you have done it. In this very moment and the moments to come, so thank you! In Jesus name we pray and receive your blessing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!*

***Repeat after me:*** *I am not comfortless in my grief. God is with me. I am anchored in God who knows how to not only hold my sorrow, but also transform it. Because of that confidence, I can make it! That is where I will live today!*