

Focused on God

I have a love-hate relationship with repetition. As someone diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder, I'm constantly battling repetitive thoughts and the urge to act out repetitive impulses.

Still, I have found repetition to be immeasurably useful in my life of discipleship. One example is the repetitive nature of repentance. We are constantly turning from our sin and self toward God.

Another aspect of repetition I find helpful is the use of short formulaic prayers during meditation. I often employ a prayer popular with the Eastern Orthodox Church called the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Regular repetition of these words helps me to focus my mind during prayer, but it also proves to have an impact on my obedience. When I remind myself of who God is—and who I am in relation to God—I am led to repentance.

Today's text has multiple verses that lend themselves to this sort of prayer. So, I invite you to a time of intimacy with God while you repeat these words. Feel free to repeat them as often as is helpful, either in communal worship or in your private devotion.

"To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul" (Psalm 25:1).

"Do not let me be put to shame" (Psalm 25:2b).

"Teach me your paths" (Psalm 25:4b).

Sung response

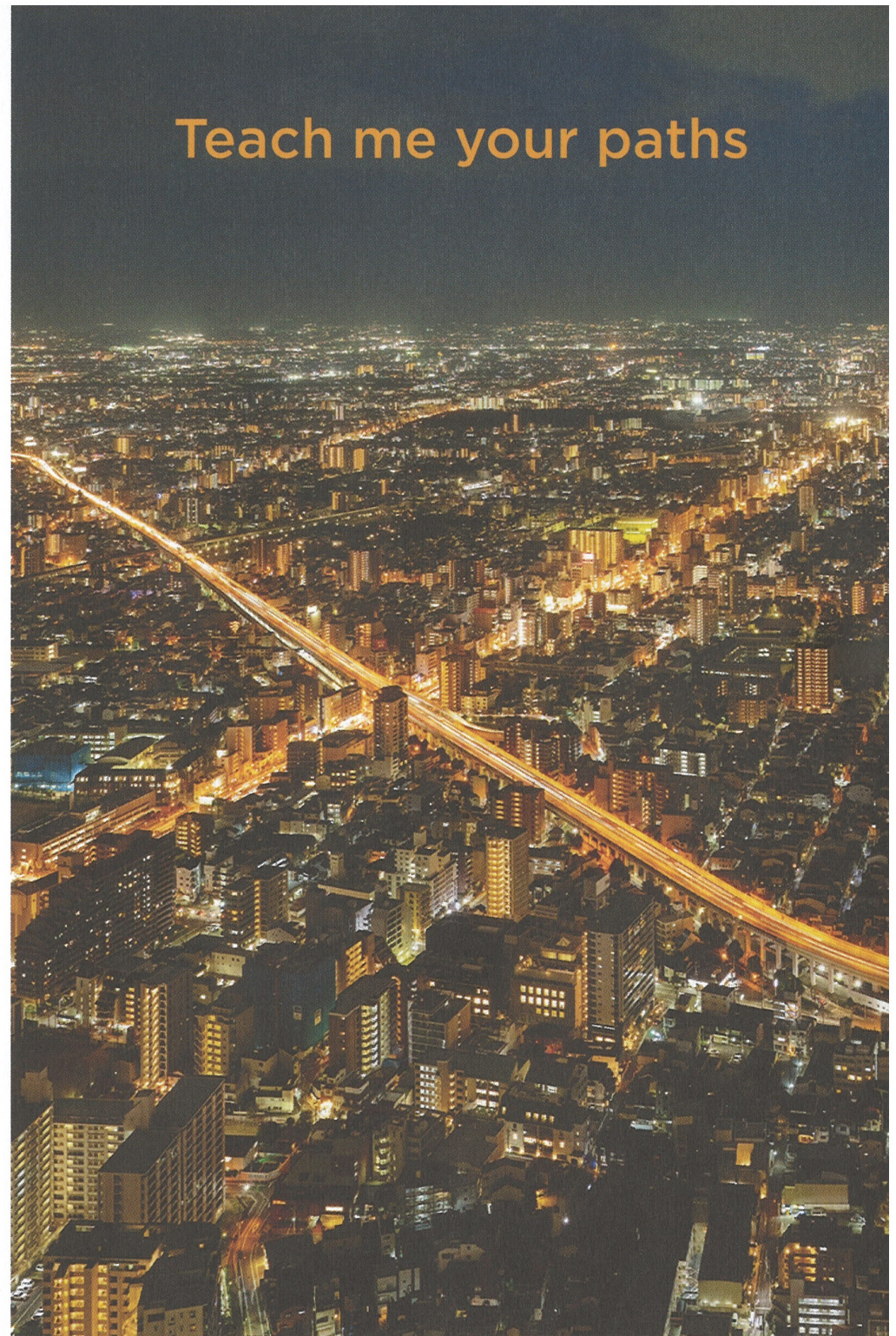
I need thee every hour

No. 555, Hymnal: A Worship Book

—Chibuzo Nimmo Petty
Brook Park, Ohio

Text for today: "Make me to know your ways, O LORD; *teach me your paths*. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD! Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees" (Psalm 25:4-10, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10 (4); 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15.

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Teach me your paths

humble thanks. May the gifts that we bring this day, be a sign of our commitment to share your love and mercy with those in need. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 9:8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

MESSAGE

"Grace Wins"
Pastor Twyla Rowe

*HYMN #327

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

[Verse 1]

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

[Verse 2]

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

[Verse 3]

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" (Livingston)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship  
Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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