

*In our own strength
we cannot stand:
Prayers of Confession*

Written for communal worship by Silvia Purdie

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General Confession Prayers

Prayer of confession: We get distracted

We give you praise and honour, living God,
and seek to know you, Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit.
We place you in the highest place and worship you;
for you alone are worthy of all honour.

And so we confess to you the ways in which our lives do not honour you.
We get distracted and pulled by so many competing things;
worries and frustrations abound in our world.
In this sacred place we name you again as Lord
and bring to your holy altar all that troubles us.
All that pulls our focus away from you
we confess
and ask your forgiveness.
... silence

People of the living God, I declare
that God's mercy is wider than our sins,
God's power far exceeds our limitations,
and God's love wins out over all that rises against it.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour
you are forgiven.

Come, Holy Spirit, come

Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Burn, holy fire, burn.
Breathe, holy breath of God,
breathe.

Make us your people,
reshape us your family
Take us into all your ways.

Humbly we stand in your presence
knowing only need of you.
All our pride, our plans, our riches
fall in pieces round our feet.

You alone, our heart's desire,
You alone can make us whole,
You alone are worthy of all
honour, glory, thanks and praise.

Jesus stand among us: A Prayer of confession

Jesus stand among us at the meeting of our lives

be the full agreement in the meeting of our eyes.

We confess to you, O God, our division and disunity

as a church, as a nation, as a world.

We confess our sins of pride and narrow mindedness -

open our hearts again to your bigger purpose.

Come, Holy Spirit,

heal and renew.

As to you we gather from so many different lands

Christ the life between us in the joining of our hands.

We confess to you, O God, our part in injustice;

our world is torn by inequality and conflict.

We confess that we enjoy our comfort and freedom -

open our hearts again to those in need.

Come, Holy Spirit,

heal and renew.

I don't know if I can come

I don't know if I can come, into your presence today

Your glory so bright, and my life is so grey

Wherever I look, worries pile all around

I've forgotten what it is to be in open ground

Would you like to come in, into the mess of my mind?

Would you be my guest, help my fears unwind?

Would you shine your love into the corners of my heart?

Would you soften the scars I have had from the start?

God of grace, I need you

Promise, will you come true?

Victory of love come through!

Through the cross of Jesus

God has set us free

to live as though we were alive!

ABSOLUTION words

Words of absolution: We know ourselves forgiven

We know ourselves forgiven, through the cross of Jesus:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy.

We stand in the presence of God, we walk in the light of God:

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy.

We proclaim your grace and kindness in a world in dire need:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy.

Words of absolution: In our own strength

In our own strength we cannot stand

We stand in Jesus Christ

and in his death and his new life

In Christ we are forgiven, and free to each day begin again

restored and renewed

to be people of hope, people of peace

who serve God and one another in genuine love. Amen.

Friends, our God has poured out grace upon grace,

freely, in great abundance,

even on you, even on me,

though we never earned it and don't deserve it.

In Christ we are made new through his blood;

all your sins and mine crumble away.

In Christ we are forgiven, signed with the Spirit,

lavished with gift upon gift,

released into hope to live for praise and for glory.

Amen.

Confessions based on Scripture

Prayer of confession, based on the 10 Commandments, Exodus 20

After God had saved his people from slavery, he had this to say to them, these ten commandments:

"I am Yahweh your God. I brought you out of slavery. Have no other gods except me."

We confess our own slavery to the gods of this world. Free us again, Lord God.

"Do not turn any created thing into an idol. Do not worship what is a creature just like you. Worship me alone, the God of steadfast love for all generations."

We confess our own idol making, our need to control things and people. May we know your love.

"Honour my name and keep it pure."

We confess our mis-use of the name of God, our swearing and our taking you for granted.

"Six days you shall work, and the seventh day you shall rest."

We confess our over-work. Help us to rest, God.

"Honour your father and mother."

We confess the breaks in our families. Make our families strong, Lord.

"Do not murder."

We confess the violence of our world and of our anger. Bring your peace.

"Do not be unfaithful."

We confess our sexual sins and secret shame. Bring your healing.

"Do not steal."

We confess all the sneaky ways we try to get more for ourselves.

"Do not tell lies."

We confess our dodging of the truth. Make us truly honest.

"Don't be jealous of what other people have."

We confess our wanting what is not ours. Make us content.

Be Strong and Courageous:

A Prayer of Confession based on Joshua 1

We are telling the story today of the fall of Jericho and how God gave a great victory to Joshua and his people and enabled them to come into the land that God had promised them. This story shapes our prayer of confession this morning, and we will hear again God's word to Joshua that day.

Dear God, we know what it is to feel frustrated. We know what we want, we can see it, like it's just across the river, but we cannot go in, we cannot step into all that we long for, all that you have for us.
We confess to you our frustration.

**And God says "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid.
Do not worry, for I am with you wherever you go"**

Dear God, we know what it is to feel attacked. We have felt the cruel words of others like the arrows of an enemy shooting at us.
There seems to be so much piled up against us, the problems of our world seem so enormous and insurmountable.
We confess to you our helplessness.

**And God says "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid.
Do not worry, for I am with you wherever you go"**

Dear God, we know what it is to feel afraid. It's not just other people and problems out there that threaten us. We are often our own worst enemy.
We are often anxious, often stressed.
We confess to you our fears.

**And God says "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid.
Do not worry, for I am with you wherever you go"**

Dear God, we know what it is to feel useless. We don't always know what is right, and we don't always do what is right. We need the power of your presence more and more.
We confess to you our failings.

**And God says "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid.
Do not worry, for I am with you wherever you go"**

Dear God, you are with us. You have won the victory for us.
To you be all thanks and praise. Amen.

Still Small Voice: (based on 1 Kings 19:11-13)

Lord of all, we come to worship seeking your presence.

We come to worship seeking your peace.

Life gets busy, life gets loud.

Like Elijah in the cave up the mountain,

we often feel battered by strong winds.

We often feel broken and shaken.

We often feel bruised and burned.

Come, living God.

Still small voice, speak to us.

Like Elijah we look for somewhere to run and hide.

We confess to you that we retreat from the truth,

we hide from the needs of others

when the demands of the world overwhelm us.

We confess to you that we easily jump to blame others

instead of facing our own failures.

Come, living God.

Still small voice, speak to us.

Speak to us, like you did to Elijah;

call us out of our cave, out of our comfort zone,

into the world, into risk and adventure.

Go with us, God of the wind, the earthquake and the fire.

Stay with us, God of the silence.

Come, living God.

Still small voice, speak to us. Amen.

2 Chronicles 7

¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Reflection on James 5

James 5 is a recipe for healthy living and healthy community. James advocates for justice, authenticity, forgiveness and “patient endurance under suffering” (5:10). He calls on the community to care for each other when they are sick and to pray for healing. He upholds the power of prayer, and gives as an example the prayers of Elijah whose prayers brought in a drought and then broke the drought and brought the rain (5:18). The health of the earth is connected to the spiritual and relational health of the people.

Prayer from James 5

Congregational response:

Leader: Loving Lord, we have wandered from your ways.

All: **Forgive us, lead us and empower our prayer.**

God of all, we come in prayer and praise this morning.
We carry our complaints against the world around us
and our complaints against each other.
You are our Judge and our forgiveness.
We remember faithful people who have inspired us.
We ask for patience to endure
and for joy even in our suffering.

Leader: Loving Lord, we have wandered from your ways.

All: **Forgive us, lead us and empower our prayer.**

God of all, we come in prayer and praise this morning.
We carry our concerns for your world
We cry out for justice for the poor
We cry out for rain for the dry places
We cry out for healing for the sick.
For the healing of the earth and the healing of families, we pray.

Leader: Loving Lord, we have wandered from your ways.

All: **Forgive us, lead us and empower our prayer.**

In silence we pray for our own needs
and we bring our own confessions,
May our “Yes” be yes and our “No” be no.
... (2 minutes of silence)

Leader: Loving Lord, we have wandered from your ways.

All: **Forgive us, lead us and empower our prayer.**

Leader: Friends, the Lord is full of mercy and compassion.
You are forgiven. Be at peace. Amen.

Daniel 9:

³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

“Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.

⁷ “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame ...

¹⁷ “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸ Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

Hear the word of God as Daniel heard it from the angel:

I have come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ The moment you began praying, a word was given. I am here to tell you, for you are very precious to God.

Friends, in our Lord Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. You are greatly treasured. Be at peace.

Jeremiah 2

*Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob; Thus says the Lord:
What wrong did your people find in me that they went far from me,
and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?*

We confess to you, living God, that we have moved far from you and gone after worthless things.

Show us what has true value, and form your worth in us.

I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things.

But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination.

We confess to you, living God, that we have not always treasured this land. We take its fruits but we pollute its waters.

Teach us to care for the earth, empower us to work for cleaner air and water.

Has a nation ever changed its gods, even though they are not gods at all?

But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.

We confess to you, living God, that we give our lives for things that do not truly satisfy.

Confront us with your glory, invest us into projects that have lasting profit.

My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me,

the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves,

cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

We confess to you, living God, the cracks in our own lives that leak energy and joy.

Bring us to you, fill us again with your living water, flow through us into a thirsty world.

Amen.

Do Not Judge: Prayer of Confession based on Luke 6

Jesus said, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.”

We confess that we are quick to judge.

We condemn the words and actions of others before we fully understand them.

Jesus, forgive us.

Jesus said, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven”

We confess that we are slow to forgive.

Help us to give others the benefit of the doubt. Release the bitterness we store in our hearts to those who have hurt us.

Jesus, forgive us.

Jesus said, “Give, and it will be given to you.

We confess that we are reluctant to give.

We feel entitled to what we have, and we don’t like to face up to our own privilege.

Jesus, forgive us.

Jesus said, “To hear my words and do not act on them is like building a house without a foundation. When waters burst against it the house will fall.”

We confess that we sometimes lack integrity.

We know your words well, Lord, but often our actions fail to live out your teachings.

Jesus, forgive us.

Jesus said, “The measure you give will be the measure you receive. When you live generously a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.”

This is the Spirit of Jesus, poured out on us.

We don’t deserve it, but God is infinitely generous, always forgiving.

Thank you, Jesus, for your wonderful forgiveness.

Amen.

As our steps falter: Prayer of confession based on Luke 9:23-27

Jesus calls us:

**"If you would follow me, you must deny yourself,
take up your cross and follow me."**

Jesus, we do choose this day to follow you.

**In your steps we wish to walk,
even when those steps lead the way of the cross.**

We confess both our commitment and also our reluctance.

Forgive us, be kind to us, as our steps falter.

Jesus challenges us:

**"Those who want to save their life will lose it,
and those who lose their life for my sake will save it."**

Jesus, we know that our lives are lost but for you.

All we have is yours, all we are is yours.

We confess both our offering and our holding back.

Forgive us, be kind to us, as our steps falter.

Jesus asks us:

"What does it profit you to gain the whole world, but lose yourselves?"

Jesus, we value you above all.

We lay at your feet all our values, goals and plans.

We confess that we try to hold on even as we give ourselves to you.

Forgive us, be kind to us, as our steps falter.

Jesus confronts us:

**"Those who are ashamed of me and of my words,
of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in glory"**

Jesus, we are not ashamed of you or your teaching.

We honour your name – or do we?

We confess both our proclamation and our silence.

Forgive us, be kind to us, as our steps falter.

Jesus promises us:

**"Truly I tell you, some standing here will not taste death
before they see the kingdom of God."**

Jesus, we thank you and praise you, that we have known your Kingdom.

We celebrate your presence alive in our lives,

In the mission of your people throughout the world.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done. Amen.

Romans 12:9-21

Call to Worship:

Hear the word of God to the people of God:

Your love must be real.

Reject what is evil; hold on to what is good.

Support each other in love, and honour others before yourself.

Keep alive your passion; serve God eagerly.

Be joyful in hope, patient in difficulties and faithful in prayer.

Share what you have with those are in need, and open your homes.

Bless those who attack you; bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; grieve with those who grieve.

Live in harmony with one another; be people of peace.

Do not be proud, but be willing to do the humble jobs.¹

Do not pay back wrong for wrong, but overcome evil with good.

Confession

Lord God, we confess to you that our lives do not match our intentions

our words do not express your truth

our actions do not embody your peace.

We confess to you that we struggle with the humble jobs

and would rather pay back wrong with wrong

We struggle to bless those who curse

and we hold back from those in need.

As we come to this service of thanks-giving and communion

we dedicate ourselves again to resist evil

Hold us in what is good.

Work out your purposes in us, as individuals and as a church,

we pray, Amen.

Words of absolution

In our own strength we cannot stand

We stand in Jesus Christ

and in his death and his new life

In Christ we are forgiven, and free to each day begin again

restored and renewed

to be people of hope, people of peace

who serve God and one another in genuine love. Amen.

Break through the walls

(based on Ephesians 2:11-16.

Suitable for children and all-age worship)

Dear God, we like people who look like us,
and are scared of people who look strange.
But Jesus calls all sorts of people together
into his family and into his love.
He cared so much for every person
that he died on the cross for us,
so that nothing could make walls between people.

Dear God we are sorry for not loving people like you do.
Show us how to reach out to people,
even people who are different.
Jesus, make peace between people
in our homes and schools, in our church and in our world.
Amen.

Children of Grace
(Ephesians 1: 3-14)

Friends, as we gather our thoughts into quietness,
we confess our sins to the One who knows us best.
We know ourselves chosen, adopted as children of God.
We dare to believe that you and I are part of a plan
conceived before the foundation of the universe.
But are we living as God's children?
Are we honouring our inheritance?
We know ourselves called, but we're so easily distracted.
We know ourselves loved, but we balk at the cost.
Come, friends, let us confess our sins to the Lord.

(silence)

Friends, our God has poured out grace upon grace,
freely, in great abundance,
even on you, even on me,
though we never earned it and don't deserve it.
In Christ we are made new through his blood;
all your sins and mine crumble away.
In Christ we are forgiven, signed with the Spirit,
lavished with gift upon gift,
released into hope to live for praise and for glory.
Amen.

The poverty of our imagining: Ephesians 3:20-21:

“Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Glorious God, we come in worship this morning well aware of falling short of our glory.

Forgive the poverty of our accomplishing.

Even after all our efforts we still so often feel that we have not done enough.

We confess our trying to you, and ask for your power to be at work within us.

Forgive the poverty of our asking

We come to prayer too rarely, and we ask of you too sparingly.

We confess our praying to you, and ask for your Spirit to pray within us

make us bold as we claim your victory in the world,

fire our courage to pray.

Forgive the poverty of our imagining

The world as it is has invaded our souls.

Our lives are cluttered and mundane.

We confess our dreaming to you, and ask for your dreams of how the world could be; release creativity in us, free our imaginations.

Forgive the poverty of our praise.

All glory be to you, incredible God!

Glory from the church, glory from generation upon generation,

through all time till beyond time,

Amen.

Gifts Unopened (*Ephesians 4:7-15*)

Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift ... So, speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

We confess our sins to the Lord. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, one God with the Father and the Spirit,
thank you for your amazing generosity to us.
You pour out your gifts on your people,
for the building up of your church,
for the redemption of the world.
We confess to you that many of the gifts you have given us
remain unopened.
We are scared to touch them.
We have not unwrapped them.
We're afraid of what the gift may become in us,
and of what you will ask of us.
So we chose to remain as children as children,
vulnerable to pushy teachings and selfish schemes.

Give us again, Lord God, the gifts that we need
to grow up, to become more like Jesus.
Give us the courage to grasp the gifts within us,
to open space for new skills to grow.
Show us how to serve your people as you call us to.
Thank you, generous God, for the gift of new beginnings.
Amen.

Renewed in every way: (*Ephesians 4:22 – 5:2*)

Hear again the call of God:

“Put away your previous way of life, your old self, corrupted and deluded as it was, and be renewed in every aspect of your thinking. Dress in your new self, which is being re-formed into the image of God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

(*Ephesians 4:22-24*)

Let us pray:

Living God, thank you for re-working us to become more like Jesus.

We confess to you that we resist this work in us.

We quite like our old selves. The old clothes were comfy and familiar.

We want your renewing of us, but often it hurts.

We so easily slide back into old habits:

we are reluctant to speak the truth to each other for fear of offending,
or our anger gets the better of us and we lash out.

We so easily convince ourselves that we deserve a little more
(why work hard when you can steal?).

We let cruel words slip out of our mouths, disguised as humour or opinion.

Lord God, we confess that we have each of us grieved the Holy Spirit.

We are truly sorry.

Remake us, Lord, again into your image, for we choose to imitate you,
for your ways are kindness, tenderness, forgiveness.

We choose to live in love as beloved children

forgiven and free, through what Christ has done for us.

Alleluia! Amen.

"To this life God has called us"

Prayer of praise and confession based on 1 Timothy 6

Thank you, living God, that you know us and call us, each by name, each in a unique way

Call us afresh this day

"Strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness."

We confess to you the many ways in which our lives fail to demonstrate righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

Inspire our living this day

"Run your best in the race of faith, and win eternal life for yourself"

We confess to you that at times we stumble, fall, get weary or distracted. Empower us again, we pray, with your energy, your focus, your heart, Lord Jesus.

Enliven our faith this day

"Before God, who gives life to all things; God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords."

This day and every day we give you praise and seek to reflect your glory, in our church, in our homes, in our loving and our serving.

All glory be yours this day. Amen.

Confessions based on Psalms

Psalm 9: The weeds and the wheat

Jesus told a good story (he was good like that!)
about a guy growing wheat but weeds grew too
all mixed up together
and it was hard to tell weeds from wheat
until they grew seeds
and the wheat put up tall full stalks of grain
and the weeds produced nothing.

Our lives are like that
O we'd love to have it all together,
to give thanks to the Lord with our hearts full and whole.
Instead we are at war with ourselves -
we are our own worst enemy!
Freedom only comes as we stand under judgment.

So show me, Judge Jesus -
show me the lies in my head
snare them in their tangled logic.
Show me the hate that lurks under politeness,
pluck me from the mires of death.
Show me the pointless efforts
that end up in ruins, blotted out as if I had never bothered.
Show me the pits of self-obsession
catching my feet in nets of stress.

Sit in judgment, Lord Jesus.
Stand on the side of the vulnerable people
that I all too easily ignore.
Call me again to trust you.
Tell me your name again
and tell me mine.

Psalm 14: All fall short

A conversation with Paul, who quotes Psalm 14 in Romans 3

Fools say to themselves, "There is no God."
"There's no one to hold us accountable. We can do what we like!
Stuff old fashioned morals, we'll do what we like!"
So they rip off the poor, devour human dignity like eating bread.

It's easy to see corruption and perversion in others
If only we were as willing to see it in ourselves.
Paul rips through our self-righteousness:
"No one is right with God, not even one.
All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
You and I and the worst offender are equally in need of saving.

The Lord sees all of us, looking for faith, humility, goodness.
He doesn't find it here.
We can only cry - "Lord, save us from ourselves."
What of boasting? Not a chance! What of keeping the rules? No! Good works?
Definitely not!
One thing and one thing alone sets us right with God,
the sacrifice Jesus made for us, the gift freely given of himself.

O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!
Then Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be overjoyed!

(Romans 3:22-28)

Psalm 18 Part A): In Christ verses 1-6

I love you Lord *
I pour myself out
because
you contain me
safe in you, hidden in you, strong in you

I pour out my pain
because
fear and distress
flood me, batter me, yank at me

I cry myself out
and you hear me
you alone see me
you alone can reach me

I pour myself out
in hope, in confidence, in praise
I love you Lord!

Colossians 2:6 (The Message)

You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now **live** him.
You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him.

(This is the one & only place in the Bible we find these words)*

Psalm 25: Teach me your ways

Walk with me, my friend
let me follow in your footsteps.
We've come a long way already, but I still need you.
My pride says "I don't need help! I can do this on my own!"
but I know I'll be lost in no time without you.
*All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness
for those who walk close with him.*

Psalm 28: Are you listening?

I am calling you, Lord, can you hear?
I am crying out to you, do you care?
I listen for you and stop complaining.
I feel your arms around me, carrying me.
The Lord is my strength and my shield.
Thanks be to God!

Psalm 31: Strength in exhaustion

A burn-out prayer

Lord – where are you?!
I seek refuge in you.
I need you now more than ever.
Lord – can you hear me?!

I am slipping, Lord,
the ground beneath my feet has crumbled away.
My energy has been stolen,
my joy in my work has gone.
I feel trapped as a net closes around me.

Lord – come quickly!
Find me some solid ground
Hide me away in a place of safety
Lord – show me what to do!

I don't know who to trust.
The people around me seem to only
want more and more of me.
Everyone is running after worthless idols.
I hear people whispering about me.
I'm sure that they have only scorn for me
behind my back.
I'm sure they are plotting to get rid of me.

Lord – redeem me!
Buy me back from this worthless place
Lead me out of this wasteland.
Lord – save me!

Psalm 32: The Horse-trainer's Psalm

**Blessed are you who know yourselves forgiven.
Your failures are covered over,
your stains are blotted out.
Blessed are you for the Lord has forgiven you.
You are no longer to blame
you have nothing left to hide!**

But Lord, the pain -
my body wasting away, my groans day and night
you sucked away my strength
as I suffered in silence and shame.

*No, dear one, I suffered to make you whole.
Put away your agonies of accusation.
Turn to me, limp toward me.
I am your safety.
I delight in you, sin and all.
I surround you with glad cries of deliverance!*

*Don't you see – all that pain and aggravation
was your training ground.
I had to break your self deception
the way a young horse is broken in,
patiently, firmly, with the occasional whip.*

Yes, Lord, I trust your discipline.
Your steadfast love surrounds me
more and more as I trust you more.

**All you redeemed, rejoice in the Lord,
shout for joy with hearts unafraid!**

Psalm 38: The Burn-out Psalm

I am utterly spent, everything I had has been poured out
I have nothing left
I am crushed, all my best efforts have been wasted
nothing to show for all that work!
I was flat out but now I am flat on the floor
can't move, can't think
buried under too many pointless tasks

O Lord, all my longing is known to you
all my sighs, all my frustration, all my tears

I am battered and bruised from constant criticism
I can't take a step without being snared in a gin trap
My words get twisted and used against me
My best intentions fall in ruins and are crushed underfoot
No one cares about me!

My heart aches, my strength is gone
my body is wracked with pain
my eyes no longer shine with your passion
my ears can't bear to hear any more need
my mouth is mute, nothing left to say

O Lord, I know it's my own stupid fault
my own sin and pride to try so hard
I confess my failure to you
Nothing left to do except wait for you
Do not leave me, O Lord!
I have nothing now but you
Be close, O Lord.

Psalm 38: All my pain

Sick – I'm sick all over
heavy – my body feels so heavy
crushed – I feel beaten down
weak – I can hardly move, I'm so tired!

**Lord, all my pain is known to you
all my sighs are heard by you.**

My mind goes round and around
with all the things I could have done or should have done
and all the bad things that other people have done to me
My strength fails
everything looks black and sounds black

**Lord, all my pain is known to you
all my sighs are heard by you.**

Don't leave me!
I need you near
I cling to you
O Lord, my salvation.

Psalm 39: A crisis of purpose

What's it all for?
What is life all about?
I sit in silence and ask and ask ...
Why do bad things happen to us?
What's the point? Why bother?
The questions sting and burn.

Hear my prayer, O Lord!
I cry without a sound but you can hear me.
I'll live for a while and then I'll die -
Will my life have mattered at all?
All I know is – you see what I cannot.
You are good and I hope in you.

Psalm 41: Bad friends

I thought I had good friends
but now when I need them most
they have turned against me.
To my face they pretend to be nice
but behind my back they lie about me,
whisper and spread rumours about me.
Even my best friend – we shared so much!
my very best friend – Lord, it hurts so much!
Dear God, be my friend now, hold me up.
Forgive me, for sometimes I'm a bad friend too.
But you are always there, always loving me.
Blessed be God, from everlasting to everlasting.

Confession on Psalm 49: living with dying

In life, few things are certain other than the inevitability of death. As Psalm 49 verse 12 says, humans cannot endure; despite our wealth we die like the beasts of the fields.

Lord of all, we bring you our fears about dying, and our pain at the dying of others.

... silence

When we die we take nothing with us, no splendor of clothes or houses or money (Psalm 49:17)

Gracious God, forgive us our sins of greed, our sins of pride in what we achieve in this life.

We confess that we cling to what we can buy, we treasure what we can hold.

... silence

Teach us to see our lives through your eyes, to value what you value.

Teach us that we matter just for who we are, not for what we have or do.

... silence

"No man can redeem the life of another, or give to God a ransom for others, for no payment could ever be enough" (Ps 49:7-8)

Thank you for our saviour Jesus Christ, do through his own living, dying, and rising again did indeed ransom us from death.

Praise and glory be to you, heavenly Father, for your Son Jesus, for what he did for us.

... silence

"God will ransom my life from the grave. You O Lord will surely draw us to yourself." (Ps 49:15)

May we live each day unafraid of the next. May we trust each day in your eternal mercy. Amen.

Psalm 51: Standing under the shower of Confession

(Apologies for the swearing. Feel free to amend the language if using in worship)

The most lovely of Psalms
but how do we get to verse 1?
What needs to happen in us before we can begin?
because us silly people tend to be much more
comfortable hiding
under umbrellas of self justification.

O crap. things have gone bad.
It's not my fault!
If only he wasn't so arrogant
she needs to sort her shit out
you change, not me!

The last thing we want to do
is recognize our rebellion.
How do we train ourselves to bring
honesty to our God
to peel back the layers of pride?
We quite like our own dirt
do we want to be washed clean?

This Psalm, of all Psalms,
takes the most guts to read
but you can do it!
Like a child shoved under the shower
Take a deep breath and begin –

Have mercy on me, O God ...

Psalm 51: The Washing Psalm
(a Psalm of confession)

Be kind to me, O God
Be gentle with me.
I am clogged up with sin
dirt has dried around my heart
I feel terrible about myself
I am not a good person
I have hurt people
and let you down.

Be kind to me, O God
Be gentle with me.
Reach into your deep store of age-old love.
Get out your scrubbing brush
and wash me clean.
Scrape away my guilt
and scrub me on the inside.
You delight in truth,
so teach me to be wise.
Clear out my lies
and soak me in truth.
Create in me a clean heart
and renew your Spirit within me.
Then I will sing of your freedom
and praise your great kindness
with a fresh voice and a light heart.

Psalm 56: The Worrywort's Psalm

Mercy, my God, mercy!
Worries crowd me.
Anxiety is my enemy!
Stress is my adversary.
All day long they attack and batter me.
All day long they nag and accuse me.
Fear crowds my body, spins my thoughts, twists my words.

But I will trust in you.
My God, your Word I praise.
I cling to you until fear backs off.
I choose to believe you and doubt the voice of anxiety.
I choose to strip away its power over me.
What can mere mortals do to me
when I call for help from the living God?!

Mercy, my God, mercy!
Count my fears, record my weeping.
Collect my tears in your well,
let them flow with living water.
Spirit, flow in praise through pain.

My God, your word I praise,
Your truth I trust.
I will not be afraid.
Because you are extracting me
from the grip of fear.
You are steadying me as I walk free.
So I will walk with you, my God, in the light of life.

Psalm 99: If you shake us
(as a prayer of confession)

O God, how incredible you are!
How ordinary we are.
The earth shakes with your power
and we tremble, afraid
that if you shake us we'd fall apart.
We see your brilliance
and we hide in the dark.
We know how pure you are, pure love,
and we know that we are a mess.
Forgive us, God.
We stuff up.
We forget to live in your light.

*All the prophets told us about Christ,
that all our failing would be forgiven
in his name.
Come, Spirit of God, come.
(Acts 10:42-44)*

Confessions for particular Seasons

Law and Forgiveness & Communion:

Again and again, Jesus told people that their sins were forgiven. Jesus taught that it was not by keeping all the rules that people are put right with God, but a humble and an honest heart. And when he shared his last meal before his death on the cross, Jesus picked up a cup of wine and said to them, "This is the blood of the new covenant, the new community of God. This is poured out for all people to forgive their sins."

As we come for Communion this morning we come to draw closer to God. We come to the table of Jesus Christ confident not in our how good we are, but confident that Jesus has poured out forgiveness on us, far more than any of us deserve. We come in peace.

In this church we shake hands and say "The peace of God be with you." - not for a nice chat, but because we are reminding each other that we are forgiven, that God loves each person so much, that none of us are any more holy or less important than any other person ... and that we need each other, young and old, as we give and receive the blessing of God.
... *'Pass the Peace'*

Prayer of confession for Waitangi Day

To you, loving God, belongs the glory and the praise, here in this land in in all places

Thank you for the gift of this land, Aotearoa New Zealand.

We see your face reflected in the rain and the sun, the mountains and ocean waves, the gardens and the forests. This is our home and we give you thanks for this amazing gift.

Forgive us for taking your beauty for granted. Forgive us as a nation for the ways we have polluted the water and the air and damaged eco systems for our own benefit.

Thank you for the gift of the rich mix of people in our nation. Thank you especially for the treasures of Maori culture, spirituality and language. Thank you for the Treaty of Waitangi, and for people in every generation who uphold principles of justice and respect.

Thank you for our European heritage, and all that our ancestors brought to this land. And thank you for immigrants from every nation, adding to our diversity.

Forgive us for judging people by external things. Forgive us for the battles that are part of our shared history.

God of nations, at thy feet, in the bonds of love we meet
hear our voices we entreat, God defend New Zealand

In your forgiveness may we find a new beginning every year and every day. Holy Spirit, release us from the sins of the past that we may meet each other face to face and together care for this land, this nation, in your name. Amen.

Spring confession (*all age worship*)

Thank you Lord for the Spring, for the colour and life we see around us.
Thank you for every sign of hope. It's easy to get scared and upset by things that happen in the world, but you draw us to celebrate and praise.

Thank you for every bit of beauty in the world. We know all too well that there is also so much that is ugly, even in our own hearts.

We know only too well that so much that is lovely is under threat of destruction. We confess to you that even in what we say and do there is not enough hope, not enough love. Without you we can't do much right.

We confess our sins to you O Lord.

Make us new again. Bring fresh energy, burst your life out in us.

Prayer especially for Lent

I invite you to join in a time of confession, as we seek to become more of who we are called to be in Christ Jesus. Hear the challenge laid down by Paul:

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, everything is made new." (*2 Cor 5:17*)

"We have been buried with Christ, in our baptism, sharing in his death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (*Romans 6:4*)

Let us pray

Here I am, Lord. I am not who I could be.

**We are not who we are called to be
as your people.**

We confess to you the failings of our love.

We live in a broken world, full of broken relationships.

Within our families and communities and churches

we need more compassion, more grace and new beginnings.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you the failings of our strength.

We come to you often tired, often worried, often in pain.

God of all power, renew our minds and our bodies,

so that we may serve others with greater generosity.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you the failings of our faith.

You alone know what shakes us most deeply,

and what crowds out your still small voice.

Most of all, loving God, we need you.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Friends, claim again this morning the truth

that the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross

so that you might live.

Cling not to the past. Grow out of your old habits.

I declare you free to begin again in this day,

free to be a new creation in Christ,

walking in newness of life.

Amen.

Prayer of confession for Easter

With all of creation we shout your praise

with all our hearts we worship you

In your glory, Lord, be with your people

In your mercy, Lord, be with us now

Still our minds to hear your word

Still our souls to rest in you

Show us that death could not contain you

Bring us to the empty tomb

Show us our sins, our temptations, our betrayals

Bring us alive again to your risen life

Come, Lord Jesus, Lord of all

Come, Lord Jesus, Lord of all

Prayer of Confession:

O God our Saviour, surprising God, ever grace-full; for the times when we avoid the searchlight of your desire for us, and for the times when we have run from your calling:

Forgive Us

For our preference for the safe, the familiar and the certain, over the risky, the unknown and mysterious:

Forgive Us

For our failing to believe in the vulnerability of power, and the power of vulnerability:

Forgive Us

For our taking no delight in variety and insisting on sameness and conformity:

Forgive Us

For our fearing of those who are different from ourselves, and our projecting onto them, what we cannot accept within our own depths:

Forgive Us

For our assuming that we are superior to the rest of creation, for abusing and failing to celebrate our relationship with the earth and the web of life:

Forgive Us

For our not noticing your presence in darkness, as in light, in body as in spirit, in feeling as in intellect, in pain as in healing:

Forgive Us

Set us free, we pray, to be whole human beings and to live our lives graciously and without fear:

(Silence)

People of God, Hear the Good News! I tell you with confidence, in the Spirit of Christ: God forgives all of us! We are set free!

Thanks be to God! God makes peace within us: We claim this healing, in faith and hope. Amen

Prayers written by other people

Faith and Worship Confession Prayers:

Lord God, your love for humankind
present in the beginning of all things,
extends throughout history
and touches even my life.

Your love sees failings
and forgives.

Your love feels pain
and wipes away our tears.

Your love knows grief
and comforts the sorrowful.

Your love sees sin
and still loves the sinner.

Forgive us when we fail to live
lives that reflect your love.

Forgive us the many times
when we take for granted
all that you have done for us.

Transform us, through your Spirit,
and empower us to serve you,
this day and all days

Amen

www.faithandworship.com/Opening_prayers_for_Christian_worship.htm#ixzz4dtr1nfsd

"Times"

(The most beautiful and powerful prayer of confession I've come across lately is 'Times' by Tenth Avenue North.

I love its form as a call and response, a conversation between us and God. Just lovely!)

I know I need You
I need to love You
I'd love to see You but it's been so long

I long to feel You
I feel this need for You
I need to hear You
Is that so wrong
Oh oh, ...

Now You pull me near You
When we're close I fear You
Still I'm afraid to tell you all that I've done

Are You done forgiving
Or can You look past my pretending, Lord?
I'm so tired of defending what I've become
What have I become?
Oh oh, ...

I hear You say -

"My love is over
It's underneath
It's inside
It's in between

The times that you doubt me
When you can't feel
The times that you question
'Is this for real ?'

The times you're broken
The times that you mend
The times you hate me
And the times that you bend

**Well my love is over
It's underneath
It's inside
It's in between**

The times that you're healing
And when your heart breaks
The times that you feel like you've fallen from grace

The times you're hurting
The times that you heal
The times you go hungry and are tempted to steal

In times of confusion
In chaos and pain
I'm there in your sorrow under the weight of your shame

I'm there through your heart-ache
I'm there in the storm
My love I will keep you by my power alone

I don't care where you've fallen
or where you have been
I'll never forsake you
My love never ends
It never ends"

n 1577, Sir Francis Drake set out from England with five ships, bound eventually for the Pacific Ocean through the Strait of Magellan on the southern tip of South America. Three years and 36,000 miles later, at the perennial risk of their lives, he and his men had circumnavigated the globe. This prayer motivated his courage:

*Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask you to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love