

When I was a freshman in high school, I personally met Jesus and started doing two things: reading the Bible very diligently and attending all public services including daily early morning prayer service. If I chose a book of Proverbs for a day, I read it from beginning to end, underlining, highlighting, and taking notes. I went to early morning prayer service starting at 5am at that time every day.

When I was a senior in high school, I studied at school until midnight, came home, went to bed at 1 a.m., woke up at 4:30 a.m., and never missed a day of early morning prayer services. It wasn't because my parents told me to, but because I went to services of my own volition. It was so much fun to pray and receive answers. I received answers to countless prayers. Of course, not all prayers were answered in the way I wanted them to be, when I wanted them to be. However, they were always answered. I still pray for you, I pray for our church, one church in Christ, I pray for our community, our country, and the world. Honestly, sometimes I pray out of a sense of duty, but more than that, I pray because I believe in the power of prayer!

The author of Psalm 116 begins with a profound statement: "I love the Lord." This love is rooted in a personal experience of God's care and attentiveness, not out of mere obligation. It is a beautiful reminder that God hears you, no matter your situation. You are not alone in your struggles; the God of the universe listens when you cry out to God. As we reflect on these verses, we will see that Psalm 116 invites us to respond to God's grace with a heart full of love and thanksgiving and a life of faithful trust.

The author is confident in God's faithfulness because in the past, God has heard his cry and responded with mercy and compassion. This teaches us that prayer is not in vain. Of course, even if your prayers are often not answered in the way or time you want, your prayers are still not in vain. We serve Yahweh God who is neither distant nor indifferent, but who bends down to listen to His children. For this reason, the author makes a life-long commitment: "I will call on him as long as I live."

How many times have we doubted that God is listening? But through His Word we are assured that He is the Lord God who is near to the brokenhearted and who hears the prayers of those who seek Him. When you pray, God listens. This should deepen our love for God and strengthen our resolve to trust Him continually.

Fanny Crosby, who lived 94 years blind exemplified many praises and prayers. This is one of the many hymn lyrics she wrote. "I Am Thine, O Lord"
In verse 3. "Oh, the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend,
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend!"
Refrain: Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side."

You see, Fanny definitely had reasons to pray! Fanny likened prayer to approaching the throne of grace. She was singing that she couldn't help but be happy when she prayed. What a beautiful testimony! Crosby, who could not see anything with her physical eyes, was singing that God was friendly

because she always saw the face of God through prayer! I hope we will be able to feel the presence of God in a friendly way, through prayer.

Prayer is a significant part of Christian life, as Jesus referred to the temple as the "house of prayer for all peoples", and he taught his disciples how to pray, and set an example of prayers in every moment of his ministry.

Verse 5 says, "Gracious is the LORD and righteous; our God is merciful." In this verse, the author reflects on the character of God. He declares that God is gracious, righteous, and merciful. These qualities reveal the depth of God's love for us. God is not obligated to save us, but He chooses to because of His grace. God's righteousness ensures that He always does what is right, and God's compassion means that He deeply understand us in our suffering.

When we are brought low by illness, financial difficulties, emotional turmoil, etc., God does not abandon us. Instead, He reaches out and lifts us up. This is the heart of God. He saves the humble and restores the broken.

Finally, the author of Psalm 116 calls upon his soul to rest. In verse 7, "Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you." After experiencing the chaos of distress, there is now peace. The reason for this rest is clear: "the Lord has been good to you." Reflecting on God's goodness and faithfulness brings peace to the soul.

The author tells how God saved him from death, wiped away his tears, and made his steps steady. This reminds us that God is not only our Savior in times of trouble but also the One who sustains us daily. He wipes away our tears and keeps us from stumbling as we walk before Him.

This rest is not just physical but also spiritual—a deep assurance that still God is in control. When we look back on the times God has delivered us, it strengthens our faith and gives us the peace to face tomorrow.

Psalm 116 invites us to respond to God’s grace with hearts full of love, gratitude, and trust. This encourages us to call on the Lord in our times of need, knowing that God hears, saves, and sustains us. As we reflect on our own lives, let us remember the moments when God delivered us from sorrow and trouble. Let those memories stir up love for God in our hearts. And may we, like the author of this psalm, resolve to pray for the rest of our lives, trusting in God’s goodness and faithfulness.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, may we walk before the Lord, confident in His faithfulness, and live each day with a heart of gratitude, knowing that He has delivered us and will continue to sustain us. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.