

## **WEDNESDAY NOON ONLINE PRAYER RCF .**

*“Where our conscience sees only indignation and vengeance, how can it fail to tremble and be afraid? Or to shun the God whom it dreads? **Yet faith ought to seek God, not to shun him.***

***Faith is ultimately a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”** John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion,**

So let's cultivate a faith that seeks not shuns Christ today....

***Come Holy Spirit, reveal to our minds and seal upon our hearts the certain knowledge of your, the Son's, and the Father's unquenchable benevolence toward us. Revive us that we might call on your name, and lead us into the Presence of him who is our help.***

***(Take a moment to ask the Spirit to ready***

***you to pray and to lead us in his ways with a spirit of prayer and supplication)***

***“Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord,  
‘I will frown on you no longer,  
for I am faithful,’ declares the Lord,  
‘I will not be angry forever.***

***Only acknowledge your guilt—  
you have rebelled against the Lord your God,  
you have scattered your favors to foreign gods  
under every spreading tree,  
and have not obeyed me,’”  
declares the Lord.***

***“Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your  
husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan  
—and bring you to Zion.” (Jeremiah 3:13-14)***

Heavenly Father, we come with relief today in the name of the One who has earned us your welcome, Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, assist me to return to you again this afternoon.

***Revive me so I may delight in you!***

Lord, I recall that your saint, Martin Luther, said in reflecting on your words that “the kingdom of God is near, therefore repent and believe the good news” that “the Christian life was to be one of repentance.”

***Revive me so I may return to you!***

It is stark to hear you call your people, “faithless’ over and over again, but amazing to think that you would combine those indicting words with repeated invitations to return to folks like us, who have also been faithless.

***Revive me so I may delight in you!***

How can I duly adore You who would call me to return this afternoon, though I have been little-faithed?

***Praise to you my sin-bearing Savior!***

How can I adequately praise the One who has promised not be angry forever when just a glimpse into my heart and life reveals plenty for you to be angry about?

***Praise to you my sin-bearing Savior!***

Thank you Father. Thank you Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you Holy Spirit for the blessedness of holding neither my frailty, rebellion, or faults against me, but against the Lord Jesus Christ in our stead.

Forgive me for so seamlessly living at times to avoid embarrassment rather than to please you or to serve others.

***Wash away my guilt, O Christ.***

Forgive me for giving full vent to my anger, hurt, and bitterness when things have not gone my way, rather than “pouring my heart out to you” as you have invited.

***Wash away my guilt, O Christ.***

Let your loyalty, cleansing, and empowering soak deep into me this morning so I might be a walking advertisement for the Savior who

surrounds the filthy, the unworthy, the cowardly, and selfish who return to Him, with “his favor like a shield.”

***“Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares the Lord, “people will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.” (3:15-17)***

Father, we know that in the coming of our Lord the beginning of this unifying, in-gathering of the nations has begun. But it is not so very apparent.

Fill the church and the nations with an audio-visual experience of your welcome so that neither they nor would would any longer “follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts.”

***(Spend a few minutes praying for folks who are following the stubbornness of their evil hearts, or even for yourself!)***

Fill our church, and all your church in the world with the heart and mind of Christ Jesus so that they can shepherd your people with your fervent attention, tender devotion, and ardent nurture.

Fill our governments, local and national, and the governments of the world with agents of peace who revere you in humility.

***(Ask Christ to help parents in families, leaders in the church, your business, your city, and nation and beyond, to shepherd those entrusted to their care with self-forgetful love and humble wisdom from God)***

Now Father, as I go out into the world, give me confidence in your benevolence toward me, and toward my neighbors.

***Increase my faith!***

Let me find joy in serving you even in the most mundane tasks.

***Increase my joy!***

Let me be courageous to point others to your invitation to return.

***Increase my courage!***

And let me be quick to return to you every time I realize I have strayed.

Employ me today Holy Spirit to bring good news in word and deed, in manner and method, in attitude and heart to everyone I meet as you live through me. In Christ's name I ask. Amen