

You may choose readings from those suggested below, or choose favorite passages from the Bible.

Lessons from the Old Testament

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Wisdom 3:1-5, 9

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,

because God tested them and found them worthy of himself. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

Job 19:21-27a

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! Why do you, like God, pursue me, never satisfied with my flesh? "O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Lessons from the New Testament

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

2 Corinthians 4:16—5:9

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

1 John 3:1-2

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not

know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him for we will see him as he is.

Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 21:2-7

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning; and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children."

Lessons from the Gospels

John 5:24-27

[Jesus said] "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

John 6:37-40

[Jesus said] "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."

John 10:11-16

[Jesus said] "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, and one shepherd."

John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

John 14:1-6

[Jesus said] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said, "Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Psalms Appropriate for Funerals

Psalm 23 — traditional

The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
He shall feed me in a green pasture,
and lead me forth beside the
waters of comfort.
He shall convert my soul,
and bring me forth in the paths of
righteousness for his Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley
of
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for thou art with me; thy rod and
thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou shalt prepare a table before me
in
presence of them that trouble me;
thou hast anointed my head with oil,
and my cup shall be full.
Surely thy loving-kindness and mercy
shall
follow me all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the
Lord
for ever.

Psalm 23 — contemporary

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green
pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
He revives my soul
and guides me along right pathways
for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of
the
shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and
your
staff, they comfort me.
You spread a table before me in the
presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
Surely your goodness and mercy shall
follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the

Lord forever.

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?
the Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?
When evildoers came upon me to eat
up
my flesh,
it was they, my foes and my
adversaries,
who stumbled and fell.
Though an army should encamp
against me,
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
And though war should rise up against
me,
yet will I put my trust in him.
One thing have I asked of the Lord;
one thing I seek;
that I may dwell in the house of the
Lord
all the days of my life;
To behold the fair beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble he shall
keep me safe in his shelter;
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his
swelling and set me high upon a rock.
Even now he lifts up my head
above my enemies round about me.
Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an
oblation with sounds of great
gladness;

I will sing and make music to the Lord.
Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I
call;
have mercy on me and answer me.
You speak in my heart and say,
"Seek my face."
Your face, Lord, will I seek.
Hide not your face from me,
nor turn away your servant in
displeasure.
You have been my helper; cast me not
away;
do not forsake me, O God of my
salvation.
Though my father and my mother
forsake me,
the Lord will sustain me.
Show me your way, O Lord;
lead me on a level path,
because of my enemies.
Deliver me not into the hand of
my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen up
against
me, and also those who speak malice.
What if I had not believed that I should
see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living!
O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your
heart.

Psalm 42:1-7

As the deer longs for the water-
brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, athirst for
the living God;
when shall I come to appear before

the presence of God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
while all day long they say to me,
"Where now is your God?"
I pour out my soul when I think on these things;
how I went with the multitude and led them into the house of God,
With the voice of praise and thanksgiving,
among those who keep holy-day.
Why are you so full of heaviness,
O my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me?
Put your trust in God;
for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

Psalm 90:1-12

Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born,
from age to age you are God.
You turn us back to the dust and say,
"Go back, O child of earth."
For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past
and like a watch in the night.
You sweep us away like a dream;
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

For we consume away in your displeasure;
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.
Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
The span of our life is seventy years,
perhaps in strength even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
Who regards the power of your wrath?
who rightly fears your indignation?
So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Psalm 106:1-5

Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his mercy endures for ever.
Who can declare the mighty acts of the Lord
or show forth all his praise?
Happy are those who act with justice
and always do what is right!
Remember me, O Lord, with the favor
you have for your people,
and visit me with your saving help;
That I may see the prosperity of your elect and
be glad with the gladness of your people,

that I may glory with your inheritance.

Psalm 116

I love the Lord, because he has heard
the
voice of my supplication,
because he has inclined his ear to me
whenever I called upon him.

The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me;
I came to grief and sorrow.

Then I called upon the Name of the
Lord;

“O Lord, I pray you, save my life.”

Gracious is the Lord and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

The Lord watches over the innocent;
I was brought very low, and he helped
me.

Turn again to your rest, O my soul,
for the Lord has treated you well.
For you have rescued my life from
death,

my eyes from tears, and my feet
from stumbling.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living.

I believed, even when I said,

“I have been brought very low.”

In my distress I said, “No one can be
trusted.”

How shall I repay the Lord
for all the good things he has done for
me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord

is the death of his servants.

O Lord, I am your servant;

I am your servant and the child of
your hand-

maid; you have freed me from my
bonds.

I will offer you the sacrifice of
thanksgiving

and call upon the Name of the Lord.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

In the courts of the Lord’s house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Hallelujah!

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved
and he who watches over you will not
fall asleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over
Israel

shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The Lord himself watches over you;

the Lord is your shade at your
right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by
day,

nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all
evil;

it is he who shall keep you safe.

The Lord shall watch over your going
out

and your coming in,

from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you,
O Lord; Lord, hear my voice;
let your ears consider well the voice
of my supplication.
If you, Lord, were to note what is done
amiss,
O Lord, who could stand?
For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared.
I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for
him;
in his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the Lord,
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy;
With him there is plenteous
redemption,
and he shall redeem Israel from all
their sins.

Psalm 139:1-11

Lord, you have searched me out and
known me;
you know my sitting down and my
rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You trace my journeys and my resting-
places
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
You press upon me behind and before
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for
me;

it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
Where can I go then from your Spirit?
where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are
there also.
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the
sea,
Even there your hand will lead me
and your right hand hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover
me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day;
darkness and light to you are both
alike.