

Worship at home for Sunday, July 26, 2020

Arusha Community Church

Gathering

Welcome to this time of worship, with a service designed for people of all ages, but with children in mind for this family service. Whether you are by yourself or meeting together with your family or household, we pray that you will know the presence of the Living God with you today. Rebecca Mosley prepared this service and Erwin Kinsey brings us the sermon today.

Some children may find it difficult to just sit quietly and listen to the scripture readings and the sermon. They often need something to keep their hands busy so that their minds can be quiet and listen. At the end of this order of worship, there are some coloring pages, drawn from our scripture passages, for kids to decorate and help them hear the message better. You might want to print these in advance if you are able.

Our [call to worship](#) comes from Psalm 46: 1-3, 10a (NLT)

God is our refuge and strength,

always ready to help in times of trouble.

² So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.

³ Let the oceans roar and foam.

Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

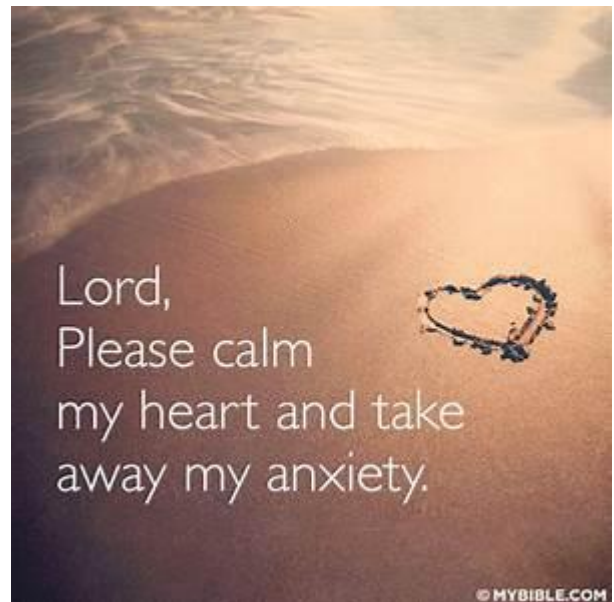
“Be still, and know that I am God!

I will be honored by every nation.

I will be honored throughout the world.”

Let us pray:

Lord, in the morning I start each day,
By taking a moment to bow and pray.
Beginning with thanks, I then give praise
For all your kind and loving ways.
Today if sunshine turns to rain,
If a dark cloud brings some pain,
I won't doubt or hide in fear
For you, my God, are always near.
I will travel where you lead;
I will help my friends in need.
Where you send me, I will go;
With your help, I'll learn and grow.
Hold my family in your hands,
As we follow your commands.
And I will keep you close in sight
Until I crawl in bed tonight. Amen.



--Mary Fairchild © 2020

Hymn of Praise: Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus (MP
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DdgvnsHjM>

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

I'm so glad I learned to trust Him,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend

And I know that He is with me,
Will be with me to the end.

Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood
And in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.

Our Confession of sin to God:

Dear God,

You are a great and awesome God.

Today we come to you in a prayer of confession.

We are sorry for the many things that we have done that are wrong in your eyes.

We are also sorry for all the things we should have done but we didn't do.

We are asking now for forgiveness for these things,

and for other things that we have done wrong and don't even know about.

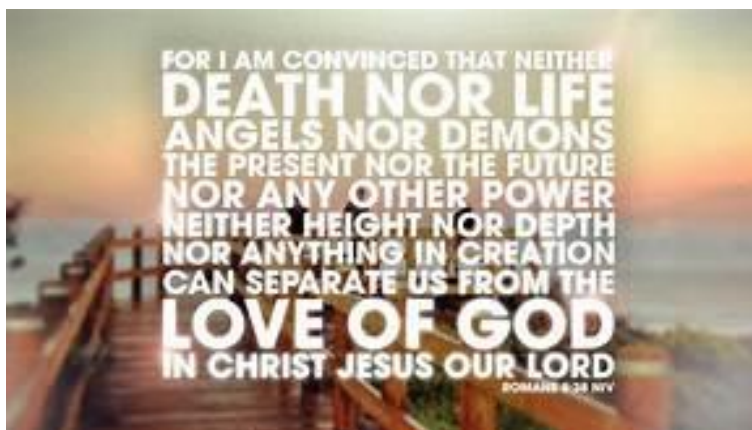
Please forgive us.

In your name alone we pray, Amen. (*Lynnae Keeley, age 13*)

God's response to us (from Romans 8):

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. Nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about

tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Songs of Praise

These two praise hymns should be familiar to the children in our Sunday school. They include movements to help our bodies teach our hearts to trust Jesus and love him more. You can sing along with the songs and follow the movements on these two videos recorded by our family.

God Helps Me (by Lifeway Kids)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=287223199209265>

Who is greater than God? Nobody!
Who calms the waves in the sea?
Nobody but God, yes God, and God is with me.
Who is stronger than God? Nobody!
Who makes the wind blow gently?
Nobody but God, yes God, and God is with me.

God helps me! Yes, God helps me
And I will not be
Shake-shake-shaking in my knees, No!
God helps me, yes, God helps me
And I will not be afraid.

Change My Heart (by Lifeway Kids)

<https://www.facebook.com/ArushaCommunityChurch/videos/291820435500943/>

I wanna live my life with courage
I wanna live with confidence
I wanna have Your hope within me
And a joy that never ends
No doubt, no fear
No wonderin' if You are here

Change my heart, oh God
Open up my eyes, I wanna see Your glory
Shinin' like a light
Change my heart, oh God
Stir me up inside
I wanna feel Your spirit movin' in my life
I wanna live my life with passion
I wanna live out on the edge
I wanna have a faith to trust You
With everything and nothin' less
No doubt, no fear
No wonderin' if You are here

Change my heart, oh God
Open up my eyes, I wanna see Your glory
Shinin' like a light
Change my heart, oh God
Stir me up inside
I wanna feel Your spirit movin' in my life

Oh, oh, open up my eyes
Oh, oh, stir me up inside
Oh, oh, open up my eyes
Oh, oh, stir me up inside

Change my heart, oh God
Open up my eyes, I wanna see Your glory
Shinin' like a light
Change my heart, oh God
Stir me up inside
I wanna feel Your spirit movin' in my life

Receiving God's Word

Gospel Reading

Our first reading is from the Gospel of Matthew, [Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52](#)

Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ Here is another illustration Jesus used: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches."

Parable of the Yeast

³³ Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough."

Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴ “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. ⁴⁶ When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

Parable of the Fishing Net

⁴⁷ “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹ That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, ⁵⁰ throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ Do you understand all these things?”

“Yes,” they said, “we do.”

⁵² Then he added, “Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old.”

Children’s Story

“Hidden Treasure!” from the Jesus Storybook Bible

This link will lead to a retelling of one of these parables we just heard from Matthew 13.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dFodiwZXEA>

New Testament Reading

Our second reading comes from Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Chapter 8

[Romans 8:26-39](#)

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers^[a] in harmony with God’s own will. ²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together^[b] for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn^[c] among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

Nothing Can Separate Us from God’s Love

³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then

will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep."^[d]) ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[e] neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As we prepare ourselves to receive the sermon (or read it aloud to our household), let us sing together:

Hymn of Preparation: Be still for the presence of the Lord (MP 50)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00cxtr5>

(I like this recording because it shows a whole congregation singing together – something we really miss! The people look a bit different from our people, but they are joining their voices to make a joyful noise.)

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The holy One, is here;
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour he is crowned:

How awesome is the sight
Our radiant king of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister his grace -
No work too hard for him.
In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

Sermon

The sermon for today was prepared by Erwin Kinsey

Who says that a child does know anxiety like their parents?

I know that I felt their anxieties. I remember when our house roof caught on fire, and the seven of us brothers and sisters had to stay inside at the supper table, while Dad and some neighbors put the fire out – he did not want us to be haunted by the images of the fire. Can you imagine how our minds imagined that fire?

Later we saw in the distance another farmer's barn go up in flames. Many a midnight if I woke up from sleep, I would look out at the barn roof and pray to God that He would not let that happen to us. It never did.

We experienced farm accidents and illnesses, neighbors' children died of cancer, one poked a nail into her eye and was blinded, a cousin died in a terrible farm accident before her father could stop the machine. My brother dropped a farm implement on his foot and lost a little toe, my father shortened his thumb in a hay baler when pulling out hay stuck between the plunging knife of that contraption. Angry bulls chased us through barbed wire fences; we herded cows with an axe or baseball bat in hand. We saw life as accidents ready to happen although most of our family prayers to God were answered for our protection.

As long as I can remember, my parents owed a lot of money to the bank; there was never much cash for frivolous purchases. We saw worry on our parents faces when a cow died in calving, when the monthly payment for milk did not cover the bills. How would they afford to send us to college? THERE WAS ALWAYS ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT. MY PARENTS COULD NOT SHIELD US CHILDREN FROM THE ANXIETIES THEY OFTEN WORE ON THEIR FACES.

Where then is wisdom in the face of anxiety? How can we deal with the unknown calamities which may befall us? How can we find peace in the midst of loss of work, a looming pandemic, financial calamity, joblessness and demands we cannot fulfill? In the Bible?

Jesus told many parables, stories that have different meanings, not easy to understand, somehow answering the most important challenges of life. We have to search for what Jesus means to find a reward.

One parable shared in today's texts is of a merchant who finds a pearl of great value and sells all that he has to obtain it. I always thought this parable is about you and me like merchants, finding salvation, the pearl of great value, for which you and I should forego everything in order to obtain. Yet, in Philip Yancey's book, What's so amazing about grace? he describes it quite differently – it is about God who shows great grace to us not because we deserve it. He likens each of us as pearls not yet found, but of great value. God finds us as pearls and gives up everything He has, even His only Son, in order to save us, you and me, even though we do not value Him or each other as we ought, as He does. This is the wonder of God's Kingdom. It is about undeserved grace. How great God values each of us. Is that how you see this parable?

Understanding parables and fathoming God through His word for us can indeed be like finding pearls. You all know the central 'pearl' of Jesus' teaching: John 3:16 **"For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life."** Another speaks to the anxiety we often face in childhood, and in fact throughout life, when we do try but do not rely on Him: John 14:1 **"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."** Jesus wants us to know **peace** even in the face of calamities like the present pandemic. This does not often mean **ease**. His 12 disciples all died violent deaths; many of the first believers also, but they did not count themselves worthy of the call they were given to follow Jesus, and faced death gladly. They were faithful, empowered by His Spirit.

One of those followers, Paul, writes a letter to the Christians in Rome. Romans 8 is a chapter full of pearls for the anxious:

- for those anxious if they will carry their sins to death, and cannot find forgiveness, read Verse 1: **"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."** Are you one who is anxious about your salvation or your death? That is very common, and this is a most comforting promise.

Many of the verses of today's text are pearls:

- for those anxious about what or how to pray, or do not see answers, read verse 26: **"..the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself prays for us with groanings too deep for words."** God hears even the silent heart's prayer.
- for those anxious if things will work out, read verse 28: **"..God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."** Can you see your present predicament as a temporary state of affairs? In the length of eternity, it is a moment of trial, before an age of blessing. Stay faithful, trust God.
- for those facing a sense of abandonment and being destitute, read verses 31-32: **"If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son...will He not also give us all things?"** Claim this promise as your own.
- for those anxious in the face of their enemies or accusers: read verses 33-34: **"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus ...also intercedes for us."** Do what is in your power for righteousness, and then let God fight your battle.
- for those anxious in their loneliness and isolation, seeking love and safety: read verses 35-37: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."** You may not feel like a conqueror, but life does not depend upon feelings, but facts.

Finally, for those who seek God's strength in the face of any challenge: read verses 38-39: **"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

May you experience the embrace of our loving God and Savior Jesus Christ through the coming days, weeks, months and throughout your life, as you experience His undeserved grace for each day. May you find these 'pearls' to be of significance to you.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Do you try to shield your children / parents from anxiety? How successful are you? What might be a good way to guide our loved ones through our anxious times?

What Biblical responses in overcoming anxiety are most meaningful to you? Overcoming depression? Overcoming fear?

Response to God's Word

Hymn of Response: **Abide with me (MP4)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84YASWe3_2Q

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grown dim, its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy
victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
shine through the gloom, and point me to the
skies;
heaven's morning breaks,
and earth's vain shadows flee:
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Offering

We teach our hearts and our minds to trust God as we commit our tithes and offerings to the work of the Kingdom. We pray and seek the Lord's wisdom to know how to give, and we pray for the grace to remain faithful to God's direction on our giving. May these offerings we give be multiplied for the good of God's precious people and for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Offerings can be made to ACC by using MPESA as follows;

ACC MPESA number +255 755 992 394 in the name of Nasieku Mollel (ACC Administrator's last name).

Prayers of God's People

For households including children, pray together using the Five-Finger Prayer. Kids and adults hold their hands together in a posture of prayer, using each finger as a prayer guide. Have an adult lead the time of prayer and give each member of the household a time to contribute a sentence prayer for the prayers of each finger.

(You can reinforce the prayer concepts by explaining how each finger works as a reminder: the thumb is positioned closest to us, the pointer finger gives direction, the middle finger stands above the others, the ring finger is weaker than most of the others, and the pinky is the smallest.)

- **Thumb:** Say a prayer for those closest to you.
- **Pointer:** Say a prayer for school teachers and Sunday school teachers.
- **Middle:** Say a prayer for the president and the country.
- **Ring:** Say a prayer for a sick person or someone with a serious need.
- **Pinky:** Say a prayer for yourself.

You may also pray freely and intercede for God's beloved world, as the Spirit leads you.

Hymn of Sending: When peace like a river (MP 757)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz3_ZQjk5RE

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul

*It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul*

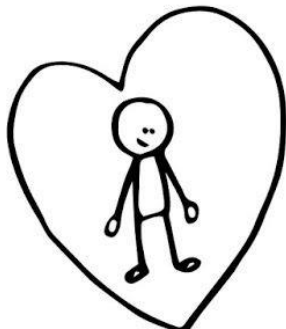
Though Satan should buffet,
though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul

O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be
sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall
descend;
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Benediction

You are precious in the sight of the Lord and nothing can separate you from God's love. So go forth strengthened and encouraged in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



FOR I AM PERSUADED THAT

neither death, nor LIFE

nor angels, nor rulers,

nor things present, nor things to come

nor POWERS, nor height,

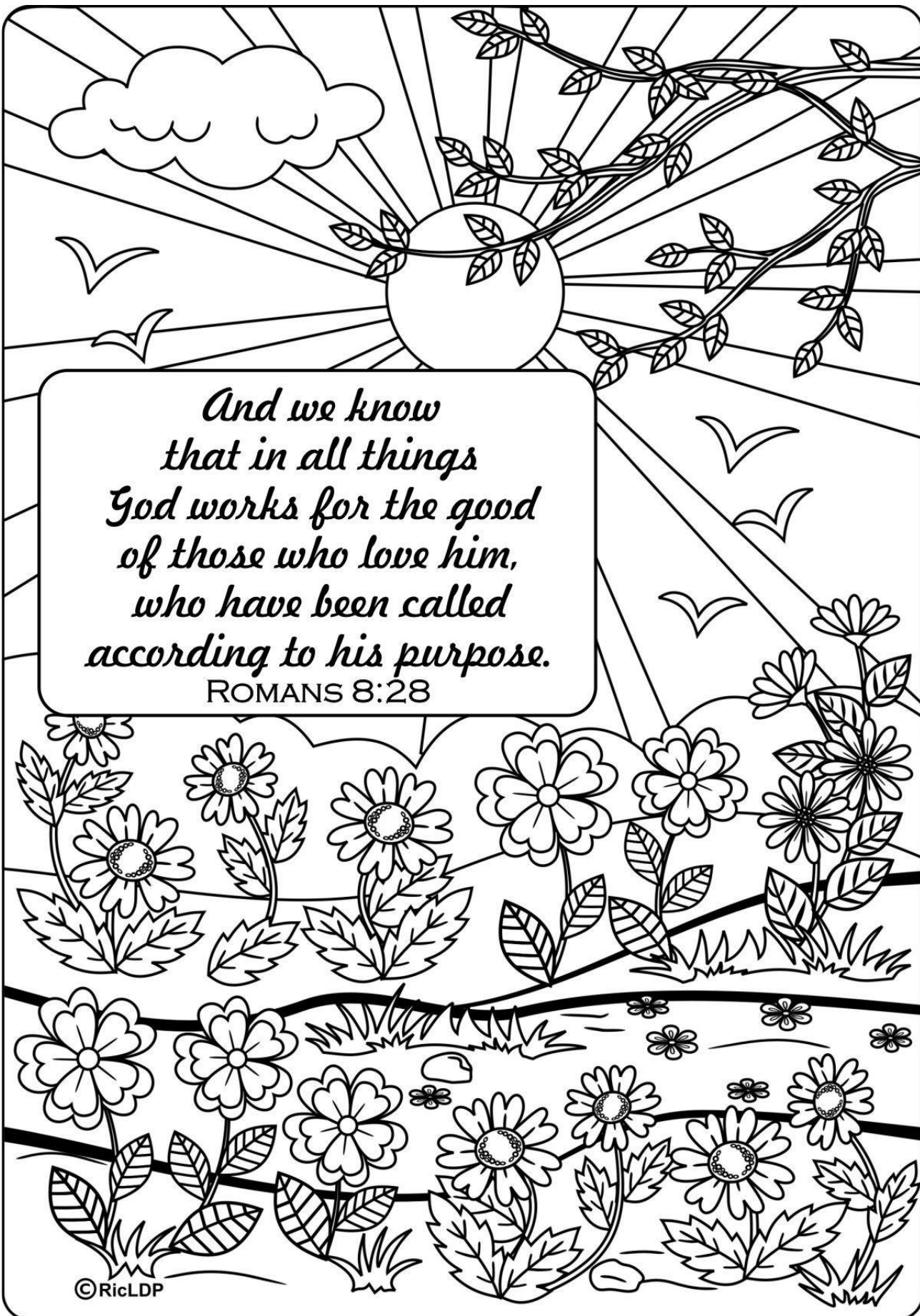
nor depth, nor any created thing,

will be able to separate us from the

LOVE of GOD which is
IN CHRIST JESUS
our LORD.

ROMANS 8:38-39



A black and white line drawing of a landscape. At the top, a sun with rays is partially obscured by a cloud on the left. A vine with leaves arches over the sun. Several birds are flying in the sky. The foreground is filled with various flowers, including daisies and larger multi-petaled flowers, with some leaves and stems visible. A central text box is overlaid on the scene.

*And we know
that in all things
God works for the good
of those who love him,
who have been called
according to his purpose.*
ROMANS 8:28