

CHAPTER 3 PRAYER SERVICE

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: St. Augustine was an early church father who took a long and winding path to find God. After years of restless searching for satisfaction in many different places, he finally found peace in a relationship with God. Let us listen to St. Augustine's description of his conversion.

Reader 1: A reading from St. Augustine's spiritual autobiography, *Confessions*.

Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved Thee! For behold Thou were within me, and I outside; and I sought Thee outside and in my unloveliness fell upon those lovely things that Thou hast made. Thou were with me and I was not with Thee. I was kept from Thee by those things, yet had they not been in Thee, they would not have been at all. Thou didst call and cry to me and break open my deafness: and Thou didst send forth Thy beams and shine upon me and chase away my blindness: Thou didst breathe fragrance upon me, and I drew in my breath and do not pant for Thee: I tasted Thee, and now hunger and thirst for Thee: Thou didst touch me, and I have burned for Thy peace.

Leader: Encountering God in Scripture changed everything for St. Augustine and many other saints who followed in his footsteps. Let us listen to the word of God that was at the heart of St. Augustine's conversion, praying that we may also be transformed by its truth.

Reader 2: A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans.

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, [namely] "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

And do this because you know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh. The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: As we listen to this song inspired by St. Augustine, I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember a time when God made a positive change in your life. Perhaps God provided something you or a family member needed, or you received an answer to prayer. If you can't remember a time when God made a positive change in your life, I invite you to bring a current situation to Jesus in prayer and ask him to breathe new life into it.

Play "Alive Again," by Matt Maher, available for free on YouTube.

Leader: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we know that you created us out of love and desire to bring us into a relationship with you. We thank you for the ways in which you have made your presence known to us and created positive change in our lives. Continue to call us and guide us to your loving embrace, even when it is hard to hear your voice or see your presence, so that we may enjoy eternity in Heaven with you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.