



**222**

**benediction  
thoughts**



## A PREFACE

Several years ago the idea of having some kind of concluding thought for the worship service occurred to my wife, and through the process of tossing ideas around we came up with the wording "Benediction Thoughts." Sometimes they are appropriate to the message of the hour; again, they are distinct from it. However, the thought or thoughts can be taken home by the worshiper in addition to the statements of the sermon.

Because of the comments from and the help given to many, these "Thoughts" have been compiled to enlarge the extent of their ministry.

Having a benediction thought has become a part of the service of worship and as the congregation hears: " . . . before the Benediction, this thought, 'GOD RECKONS OUR SERVICE, NOT BY OUR ABILITY BUT BY OUR WILLINGNESS,' may we pray . . . "

L. Neal Carlson  
Beverly Hills Baptist Church  
Birmingham, Michigan

August 1964

1

"Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance,  
but taking hold of God's willingness."

2

"A string of opinions no more constitutes  
faith than a string of beads constitutes  
holiness." -- John Wesley

3

"The measure of a man's real character is  
what he would do if he knew he would never  
be found out."

4

"The light that shines farthest shines  
brightest at home."

5

"Tithing is a compass that keeps your  
heart on God's course." "Where your  
treasure is, there will your heart be  
also." -- Matthew 6:21

6

"To win men to an acceptance of Jesus as  
Saviour and Lord is the only reason  
Christians are left in this world."  
-- R. A. Torrey

## A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

The Bible, its message,  
An organ and a song,  
Prayer of supplication -  
A closer walk with God.

A morning, its brilliance,  
A robin and its song,  
Thoughts of love and kindness -  
A closer walk with God.

The evening, its silence,  
Day's work done with rest won,  
Uttered prayer of thanks, bring -  
A closer walk with God.

This life, with its challenge,  
Faith and events to come,  
Hope of things not seen, bring -  
A closer walk with God.

-- Nancy Carlson

217

"There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below."  
-- C. H. Spurgeon

218

"The reward for a good deal is to have done it."  
-- Elbert Hubbard

219

"Those who forgive most shall be forgiven."  
-- P. J. Bailey

220

"God's love is the course of our meal; His patience unto us is the dessert of our soul."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

221

"The most completely lost of all days is that on which one has not laughed."  
-- Chamfort

222

"Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week."  
-- Addison

38

7

"Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid . . . for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."  
-- Deuteronomy 31:6

8

"It is a common thing for ignorance to denounce what it doesn't understand."

9

"The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm."

10

"The depth and greatness of your faith will determine the size and distance of the mountain it will move." -- L. Neal Carlson

11

J. Edgar Hoover has said that the place to reform America is not in the electric chair, but in the high chair.

12

"I know I have worshipped God if my faith is stronger, my vision is brighter, my mind is clearer, my heart is purer, my sympathies are broadened and my love is deeper."  
-- Perry F. Webb

3

13

"The thinker is always about four hundred miles ahead of the talker, and the doer is a mile in the lead of both."

14

"A new broom sweeps well, but the old one is best for the corners."

15

"Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."

16

"Happiness must be fashioned out of the rough materials of life."

17

"May, from the pulpit of your soul and the pulpit of your job, the proclamation of Jesus be seen in you."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

18

"Success is not made by lying awake at night, but by keeping awake in the daytime."

4

211

"God often tells us to wait, but never to worry."

212

"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

213

"The diamond cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials."  
-- Chinese Proverb

214

"There are two kinds of men who never amount to much--those who cannot do what they are told, and those who can do nothing else."  
-- Cyrus H. K. Curtis

215

"When you are discouraged because you are in a valley, remember that every valley reaches up to the hills."

216

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as it is in what direction we are moving."

37

205

"Live as if Christ died yesterday, rose this morning and is coming back tomorrow."

206

"God gives to us that we may give to others."

207

"If you would be happy be active as a running stream, not cloudy and morbid as a stagnant pool."

208

"A good way to have a clean mind is to change it occasionally."

209

"If you can consistently do your best, the worst won't happen."

210

"Have faith in God--He has faith in you."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

19

"Trouble is usually produced by those who produce nothing else."

20

"Perhaps the reason there is so little peace in the world today is because there is so little peace in our hearts."

21

"Dropping an unkind word is like leaves dropping from a tree--it denotes a deterioration, a dying."

-- L. Neal Carlson

22

"The man who has not been to church for thirty years is usually the one who says that modern preaching is behind the times."

23

"Give all he asks--take all he promises."

24

"Pride was the thing that first overcame man--and it is about the last thing that man overcomes."

25

"Prayer does not need proof, it needs practice."

26

"All the time which God allows us is just enough time for the work which God allots us."

27

"Observe when others are suffering and drop a word of kindness."

28

"Statistics show that ten thousand people are killed by intoxicating liquor, where only one is killed by a mad dog. Yet we shoot the dog and license the liquor."

29

"When you have accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace; God is awake."  
-- Victor Hugo

30

"You've heard it said, 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away' and 'an onion a day keeps people away' but Prayer and Bible reading this week will keep the Devil away."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

6

199

"There are no victories without conflicts-- no rainbow without a cloud and a storm."

200

"Folks who get on their knees stand up to life."

201

"Ten cents' worth of help will make more religion than a dollar's worth of argument."

202

"The Bible becomes God's Word only when the spirit of God breathes upon and through it to us. It is then a living Book for us personally."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

203

"Hardship is the compliment a wise Providence hands to plucky souls."

204

"God holds us responsible not for what we have, but for what we might have; not for what we are, but for what we might be."  
-- Mark Guy Pearse

35



193

"Even if we are one of God's shining lights,  
we still need recharging on Sunday."

— L. Neal Carlson

194

"When it is dark enough, men can see the  
stars.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

195

"We are to give our bodies a living  
sacrifice--not a half dead sacrifice as  
some people seem to imagine."

— Henry Drummond

196

"Did you ever notice how serious a slight  
ailment becomes on Sunday morning?"

197

"We talk a great deal of religion in this  
country, but we need to stop long enough  
to let our feet catch up with our mouths."

— Billy Graham

198

"You are not one person, but three--the one  
you think you are, the one other people  
think you are, and the one God knows you  
to be.

34

31

"There never was a person who did anything  
worth doing that did not receive more than  
he gave.

32

"When you stop to think, don't forget to  
start again."

33

"It is part of human nature to think wise  
things and to do ridiculous ones."

34

"Human minds are like wagons. When they  
have a light load they are much noisier  
than when the load is heavy."

35

"Whitewashing the pump won't make the water  
pure."

36

"God's Word is the air-conditioner to a dry  
and parched soul. Read daily this week."

— L. Neal Carlson

7

37

"One way to make the world better is to improve on yourself."

38

"Prayer is the breath of the newborn soul, and there can be no Christian life without it." -- R. Hill

39

"Between the great things we can't do and the little things we won't do, the danger is we shall do nothing at all."

40

"If we but remember, 'If you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me' our approach to and conduct in the world would be drastically altered." -- L. Neal Carlson

41

"We reform others unconsciously when we walk uprightly." -- Mme. Soymonoff Swetchine

42

"The work of the world is done by a few; God asks that a part be done by you."

8

187

"The cheapest part of beverage alcohol is the price paid per drink. -- Shelton Gibbs

188

"No one has ever climbed the ladder of success with his hands in his pockets."

189

"Being more spiritual is available to us all if we are but willing to pay the price, which is: losing our life for the sake of Christ." -- L. Neal Carlson

190

"Wisdom is knowing what to do next; skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it." -- D. S. Jordan

191

"Friendliness pays bigger dividends than any other form of church service; for friendliness is outward expression of love."

192

"The will of God will not lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you." -- Lolste Dotson

33

181

"Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself."  
-- Martin Vanlee

182

"The best remedy for a sick church is to put it on a missionary diet."

183

"All things will come to the other fellow if you sit down and wait."

184

"So live that you would not be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip."

185

"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried."  
-- G. K. Chesterton

186

"The Church long has been symbolized by a ship. There must be no striking on our job of shipbuilding."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

43

"Give not from the top of your purse, but from the bottom of your heart."

44

"Tears often prove the telescope by which man can see into heaven."

45

"Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

46

"To bemoan the past is to becloud the future."

47

"Keep your Sundays for the great things of your soul."

48

"Sometimes our lack of faith produces a lack of sight into the everyday experiences with God."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

49

"Love not only suffers long, but it is charitable during the misunderstandings in life."

50

"Spoken words of appreciation make beautiful things to grow, like water in a garden make the plants to grow."

51

"Remember, God is understanding in all our trials, and it is with this handkerchief that he dries our tears." -- L. Neal Carlson

52

"Don't fret over what you'd do with your time if you could live it over again--get busy with what you have left."

53

"A friend is one who steps in when the whole world steps out."

54

"Trouble is a sieve through which we sift our acquaintances; those who are too big to pass through are friends."

10

175

"In our haste to deal with the things which are wrong, let us not upset the things which are right."

176

"Our love toward our fellow man is the thermostatic reading of our love toward God." -- L. Neal Carlson

177

"The greatest test of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none."

178

"It is easy to give others a piece of your mind, but when you are through you have lost your own peace of mind."

179

"The trouble with some folks who give until it hurts is that they are so sensitive to pain."

180

"People are not reached by the ringing of church bells, but by the ringing of door bells." -- E. D. Horton

31

169

"A holy life does not live in the closet,  
but it cannot live without the closet."  
--E. M. Bounds

170

"Go as far as you can see and when you get  
there you can see farther."

171

"What on earth are we doing for Heaven's  
sake?" -- Eugene Hugg

172

"Even though you are on the right track,  
you will get run over if you just sit  
there." -- W. Marshall Craig

173

"I had no shoes and complained until I met  
a man who had no feet."

174

"He that made the waves is greater than  
the waves."

55

"When Robert Louis Stevenson discovered  
himself in a despairing mood he would  
laughingly say, I must get out my wings."

56

"I try to be most careful each day the  
words I speak; for I never know from day to  
day which one I'll have to eat."

57

"If you carry the Bible while you are  
young, it will carry you when you are old."

58

"Strive always to be like a good watch:  
open face, busy hands, pure gold, well  
regulated, and full of good works."

59

"Four things come not back: the spoken word;  
the sped arrow; time past and the neglected  
opportunity."

60

"One of life's joys is doing a deed with  
only God knowing." -- L. Neal Carlson

61

"Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere."

62

"Visitation has always characterized successful churches." -- John Sisermore

63

"The man who walks with God always gets to his destination."

64

"Behind our mask for society stands a bare soul before God." -- L. Neal Carlson

65

"If prayer is recorded, appropriate it, and launch it as a featured arrow from the bow of your desire."

66

"Sorrow makes us either bitter or better."

163

"Faith keeps the man who keeps faith."

164

"If you cheerfully bear your cross, it will bear you." -- Thomas a Kempis

165

"We show our best side to those who mean least to us." -- Arnold Glasow

166

"What a grand world this would be if we could forget our troubles as easily as we forget our blessings."

167

"Your outcome in life doesn't depend on your income, but on how you overcome."

168

"There are thousands of men who would become more useful in God's Kingdom if they would wake up to this fact: It isn't brains God wants--it is the heart." -- D. L. Moody

157

"Real religion is to draw strength from  
God in order to give it to others."

-- W. Barclay

158

"Virtue, wisdom, goodness and real worth,  
like the lodestone, never lose their  
power."

-- Richard E. Burton

159

"Jesus said unto him, 'I am the way, the  
truth and the life, no man cometh unto the  
Father but by me.' "

-- John 14:6

160

"We are always punched in on God's  
timecard."

-- Richard Riis

161

"Life is the soul's nursery--its training  
place for the destinies of eternity."

-- Thackeray

162

"Habit is something you can't get rid of.  
You take away the 'H' and you still have  
'a bit.' You can take away the 'a' and  
you still have 'bit.' If you take away the  
'b' you still have 'it.' Take away the  
'i' and you have habit down to a T."

28

67

"Opportunity seems to have an uncanny habit  
of favoring those who have paid the price  
of years of preparation."

68

"Those are our best friends in whose  
presence we are able to be our best  
selves."

69

"Hardly a boy would be a problem child if  
his father would put his foot down now and  
then--on a spading fork, with the kid  
holding the bait can."

70

"The world is not a 'prison house' but a  
kind of Spiritual kindergarten where  
millions of bewildered infants are trying  
to spell God with the wrong blocks."

-- E. A. Robinson

71

"Why fear death? It is the most beautiful  
adventure in life."

-- Charles Frokman

72

"Children may tear up a house, but they  
never break up a home."

13

73

"To read the Bible is to take a trip to a fair land where the spirit is strengthened and faith renewed."

74

"Prayer, like yeast, can go a long way; but unlike yeast it never has an expiration date."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

75

"The Gospel is free, but true worship never is, for that involves giving up of self to honor God."

76

"One shouldn't resent growing old--there are millions who are denied the privilege."  
-- Dutton Stahl

77

"If you can consistently do your best, the worst won't happen."

78

"Keep your face toward the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind you."

14

151

"The driver is safe when the roads are dry, the roads are safe when the driver is dry."

152

"Remember this week: God is on call 24 hours a day. Take advantage of this. Whenever help is needed, talk often with him as your Father, instead of waiting for an emergency to arrive."

-- L. Neal Carlson

153

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

-- Ecclesiastes 12:1

154

"A home is a shelter for love, and a setting for you and growth."

155

"Sin is the willful, deliberate resistance to the authoritative will of God."

156

"The law did not inaugurate the tithe; neither did it terminate it."

27



145

"The greatest path in the world is the one which leads from the threshold of your home to the Sunday School each Lord's Day."

146

"Money is a medium of exchange. The Christian takes money which he cannot keep and exchanges it for that which he can never lose. That is one way to lay up treasures in heaven."

147

"Give according to your means or God may give you means according to your giving."

148

"Everyone this side of Heaven should be interested in everyone this side of Hell."

149

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself."

150

"As we have been married to God through his son, Jesus, we have been given a ring of unending love and undying fellowship."

79

"The big things in life are never done by fussy people. Poise is one of the earmarks of mental strength."

80

"Weakness cannot cooperate with anything. All weakness can do is beg." --Eisenhower

81

"The question is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with failure."

82

"The best gifts are always tied up with heartstrings."

83

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." -- Dr. John Watson

84

"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed-- easy to get into but hard to get out of."

85

"Those who bring sunshine into the lives  
of others cannot keep it from themselves."  
-- Barrie

86

"There is no better exercise for the heart  
than reaching down and lifting someone up."

87

"Stewardship puts the Golden Rule into  
business in place of the Rule of Gold."

88

"God does not comfort us to make us  
comfortable, but to make us comforters."  
-- Jowett

89

"A kind deed is never lost, although you  
may not see its results."

90

"Someday we will understand why it was;  
in the meantime God says, know that I AM.  
-- L. Neal Carlson

16

139

"No need worry about the opinion of the  
finance committee if he has satisfied the  
Holy Spirit."

140

"The greatest sum in addition, is to count  
your blessings."

141

"We say, speak Lord, for thy servant  
heareth . . . sometimes."--L. Neal Carlson

142

"Running down people, is like running up  
stairs; it is bad on the heart."

143

"Life is not so short but that there is  
always time enough for courtesy."

144

"Anyone can praise Christ, but it takes a  
real Christian to follow him."

25

133

"When you get to the end of your rope, tie a prayer knot and hang on." - W. T. McLean

134

"A friend that isn't in need is a friend indeed."

135

"It is good to have money, and the things that money can buy, but it is good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure we haven't lost the things that money can't buy."

136

"It is not in life's chances, but in its choices that happiness comes to the heart of the individual."

137

"There are several good ways to achieve failure, but never taking a chance is the most successful."

138

"You cannot to a wrong person about Jesus."

91

"Christian people lose more battles because they do not pray, than for any other reason."

92

"A temper is a valuable possession, so don't lose it."

93

"Some defeats are only instruments of victory."

94

"If you can't be thankful for what you receive, be thankful for what you escape."

95

"Alcohol is that something that so often puts the wreck into recreation."

96

"May the representation of what you have experienced in your heart be not like a stained glass window, but a clear, unmarred plate glass." - L. Neal Carlson

97

"A lot of good could be done for the world if nobody cared who got the credit for it."

98

"Anyone can quarrel; it takes a Christian to yield his rights."

99

"Make a success of today, and you need not worry about tomorrow."

100

"Jesus did not say it was not blessed to receive, but He did say that it was more blessed to give." - Perry F. Webb

101

"Opportunity often looks so much like hard work that most people never recognize it."

102

"Pack not your religion away in a suitcase as you leave, lest some of your true religion be caught hanging out."  
- L. Neal Carlson

18

127

"The Christian life is like riding a bicycle; if you do not go on you go off."  
-- W. H. Griffin Thomas

128

"Christians are like tea; their real strength is not drawn until they get into hot water."

129

"You are as young as your faith and as old as your doubt."

130

"When Christ is kept outside, something must be wrong inside."

131

"Keep smiling. It makes everybody wonder what you've been up to."

132

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if God saw us as people see us? But God knows our heart."  
-- L. Neal Carlson

23

121

"Cast all your care on God. The anchor holds."

122

"One is not likely to commit evil during the day when he leaves home in the morning fresh from family altar."

123

"A coffee break is good, a prayer break is better, a praise break is best."

124

"Silence is one of the great arts of conversation."

125

"There is only one way to improve one's work--love it."

126

"When prayer and love are put together in the laboratory of our soul there is ultimately a reaction of deeds and work in the experiments of hands and feet and lips."  
- L. Neal Carlson

103

"Are you the sort of Christian you expect the person near you to be?"

104

"Remember as you leave you are taking your segment of the church with you. Return it next Lord's Day not weaker but stronger, not tarnished but polished, just as beautiful as you take it now."

- L. Neal Carlson

105

"The quickest way to get a church on its feet is to get it on its knees."

106

"Even if you are too deaf to hear the preacher, the Church is still a good place for listening to God."

107

"The marriage knot should not be a slip knot."

108

"The man who keeps busy pulling away at the oars doesn't have time to rock the boat."

109

"Many a church member would be scared to death if he could feel his spiritual pulse and find how nearly dead he is."

110

"Our saddest memories at the end of life will be our lost opportunities for serving God."

111

"You cannot lead anyone else farther than you have gone yourself."

112

"The block of granite which was an obstacle in the path of the weak, becomes a stepping stone in the path of the strong."

113

"God gives us memory that we might have roses in December." - W. F. Powell

114

"The Christian lives on an Expressway, which is to say, many decisions for the future must be made carefully and in advance."  
- L. Neal Carlson

115

"God calls men when they are busy; Satan calls them when they are idle."

116

"There is plenty of action in a rocking chair, but no progress."

117

"Let us always remember that it is not the amount of religious knowledge which I have, but the amount which I use, that determines my religious position and character."

118

"It doesn't take horse sense to nag."

119

"A smile is a curve that sets things straight."

120

"While the Ten Commandments stand as a measuring tape for and in society, accepting God's Son as personal saviour remains the measuring tape into Heaven. It is: Ten Commandments for life; one Son for eternity." - L. Neal Carlson