

*Jesus said....."My house shall be called a house of prayer."
Matthew 21:13*



Prayer Devotions

February

Luke 18:1

Pray Always and Never Give Up

Daily prayers for February...

Thursday, February 1st: It's National Freedom Day, celebrating the signing of the 13th Amendment of the Constitution by President Lincoln in 1865. The purpose of this holiday is to promote good feelings, harmony, and equal opportunity among all citizens and to remember that the United States is a nation dedicated to the ideal of freedom. As Christians, we should be the frontlines of proclaiming that there is true freedom in Christ and that His desire is that all would come to a saving knowledge of Him. This is a freedom that cannot be taken from us! Declare it and rejoice in it. Gal. 5:1; 2 Peter 3:9

Friday, February 2nd: The apostle is noted for using vivid imagery in his letters to the church. He attempts to persuade his audience by employing metaphors to explain spiritual truths. In this passage he strongly emphasizes "seeing." Because the veil is removed when we turn to the Lord, we can all see the glory of God in a way that was not possible before Christ. But how do we see this glory? Paul says that sight comes "as though reflected in a mirror," and when we look in a mirror, what do we see? We see our- selves. Not only do we behold God's glory, but we can reflect it. As we grow in our faith, our image grows "from one degree of glory to another." We more accurately reflect the divine image to those around us. This occurs not by our strength but by God's grace, which gives us strength to carry on in difficult times. **2 Corinthians 3:17- 4:2**

Saturday, February 3rd: Don't ever let yourself minimize the magnitude of having the DNA of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He sacrificed Himself in order for us to become His righteousness, and we now are raised up in Him, carrying with that every attribute of Him!! We are not slaves or orphans, we are sons and daughters! We are meant to reflect Him in all things as conquerors, spreading the sweet fragrance of hope, love, joy, and power. Seize that with every fiber of your being. Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:17-21
Sunday, February 4th:

Monday, February 5th: Remember to keep School Connect in your prayers as God continues to pour out His provision, guidance, and blessing on this movement which has the potential to dramatically change the landscape of public education. We are seeing schools, local businesses, churches, parents, and government begin to see the incredible potential of working together for the benefit of our students. And this is all being forged in the name of Jesus Christ to further His kingdom in raising up a generation standing in the truth and mightily prepared to face the challenges of a changing world. Pray for Tracey, Gary, Jill and Shea to be encouraged, refreshed, and divinely directed for His glory. Prov. 22:6; Col. 4:3; Prov. 3:5-6

Tuesday, February 6th: There are so many important things about prayer that we could learn from Jesus. First, if He, when He was on earth as fully man, did not do anything on His own initiative but was in constant communication with the Father, shouldn't we also be seeking His counsel at all times? Jesus said the Father's house was to be called a house of prayer – not of great messages, music, or fellowship. Those will rather be the fruit of first plugging into the power source of prayer. If we truly want to experience the abundant, victorious life personally and as a church body, we need to make prayer a priority. Jesus did! 1 Tim. 2:1-8; Col. 4:2-4

Wednesday, February 7th: For something to be revealed, something has to first be unseen. It could be hidden, unnoticed, or camouflaged. When what was unseen is then revealed, we often react. Fear, awe, surprise, delight. Our emotions respond. Open our eyes, Lord, and let us see what you would have us see. Let us see with the eyes of Christ, and let us respond with a spirit of faith. Ephesians 1:18

Thursday, February 8th: Jesus returned from the Jordan River full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There he was tempted for forty days by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and afterward Jesus was starving. The devil said to him, “Since you are God’s Son, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus replied, “It’s written, People won’t live only by bread.” Luke 4:1-4. Pray that God would help you to remember that when you are feeling all alone that He is there , although you may not experience a perfect answer He is there to carry you through the wilderness.

Friday, February 9th: Pray for all those attending the Resilient Church Building Conference today to be open and eager to hear and to share God’s heart for those who are prisoners to any form of addiction or are plagued with mental health issues. He came to set the captives free, and those whom He has set free He desires to equip to carry on that mission. Pray for Biblical tools and wisdom to be imparted that we may be the voice of hope and restoration. Is. 61:1; Matt. 25:35-46; Col. 1:13-14

Saturday, February 10th: These may not be the five things that we are taught this weekend, but I think God shows us that His presence is definitely worth it as He reveals His beauty to us through our five senses. Close your eyes and imagine: the beauty of the most magnificent sunrise over the ocean; the perfection of a symphony or choir performing your favorite piece, or the unrestrained laughter of child; the fragrance of spring, or your favorite meal cooking on the stove when you’ve had a rough day; the sweet taste of the most luscious fruit right off the tree; the feel of silk against you face, or the gentle touch of a comforting hand. These are all Him speaking to us of His immeasurable love for us – that should be worth it! Psa. 19:2; Rom. 1:20

Sunday, February 11th: There are a lot of uncertainties in our lives. Relationships don't always last. Possessions can be taken away or lost. Our abilities can change or even leave us over time. Nothing on this earth is unconditional and true. And yet, over and over God proves that we can trust in the Lord for all of our needs. We can find rest for our souls in knowing that God always does what is promised. God always loves us, God always shows us the path we should follow, and God blesses us when we simply trust in who God is. Proverbs 3:5-6

Monday, February 12th: All of us have times of feeling invisible, unloved, unappreciated, or unworthy. These can be devastating, and our fast-paced, task oriented society can certainly fuel these insecurities. But there's a Bethel Music song called "Reckless Love" that beautifully shows us how amazingly valuable we are to Him! We don't deserve His love, we can't earn His love, yet He gave His life for us. The lyrics state, "Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine," and "There's no shadow You won't light up, mountain You won't climb up, coming after me; There's no wall You won't kick down, no lie You won't tear down, coming after me." That's His love for you, and nothing you do can change it! Thank Him, and learn to receive, rest in and relish that love. Zeph. 3:17; Luke 15:4-5; Rom. 8:37-39

Tuesday, February 13th: Life can sometimes stink! Seriously! In the opening sentence of the first chapter of *The Road Less Traveled*, Scott Peck wrote that "Life is difficult." It's true: life is difficult and can be very frustrating. Our loved ones get sick, and sometimes they die; friends let us down; our parents get divorced; people suffer all kinds of abuse and injustice. And yet, as Christians, people who follow Christ and try to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world, we have hope that things can get better. This hope is an active hope that is rooted in our Christ-like love for one another. When we honestly love one another as Christ has loved us, we bring hope to this troubled world, and our message is clear. With Christ in us, we can make things better. Psalm 30:1-5

Wednesday, February 14th: What if Jesus were to ask you the same question He asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” This is His utmost desire for us, to fully love and know Him and then enjoy the amazing life He has designed ahead of time for us. We have a hard time wrapping our minds around this, but in her book *Audacious*, Beth Moore shows us His divine formula for transformational relationship with Him: if only you knew + you would ask Me = I would give you. We must acknowledge Who it is we are asking, what He is capable of, and expect Him to make good on His promise. We are powerless to genuinely, boldly love Him in our own strength, but He will enable us to do so if we will only ask! John 4:6-10; 1 John 5:14-15; 1 John 4:19

Thursday, February 15th: We go to work, we take naps, we read books and watch movies, we spend time with friends and family, we take adventures, and we rest. And maybe, in the midst of all these things, we go to church. What is our motivation? If Jesus is, in fact, our motivation for the church piece of our week, what is our motivation for all those other things? In the midst of everything that consumes our daily lives, it is easy to lose our focus on Jesus. But it is in the everyday, not just at church, that we are transformed. And transformation happens not by our doing, but by the Son of God, who continues to guide us even when we are forgetful. Let us now turn our hearts and minds to Jesus. 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Friday, February 16th: The season of Lent gives us a chance to slow down and to take time. Take time in prayer. Take time with God. Take time to walk through the scriptures and figure out what this Lent thing is, anyway (even if all you know until now is that you usually give up soda for a few weeks). Take time to repent, to turn your heart toward Jesus. And consider that at the end of the day, what God really wants is your sincere self, no more; no less. You can learn a lot in this season, if you take time. I offer my life to you, Lord. My God, I trust you. *Please don't let me be put to shame! Don't let my enemies rejoice over me! For that matter, don't let anyone who hopes in you be put to shame; instead, let those who are treacherous without excuse be put to shame. Make your ways known to me, Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth—teach it to me—because you are the God who saves me. I put my hope in you all day long. Lord, remember your compassion and faithful love—they are forever! But don't remember the sins of my youth or my wrongdoing. Remember me only according to your faithful love for the sake of your goodness, Lord. Psalm 25:1-7*

Saturday, February 17th: People will say they can't afford to tithe; my husband always says he can't afford not to tithe! God has actually challenged us to test Him in this, so it stands to reason that giving back to Him what is already His anyway is a pretty safe bet. Since we know He desires for us to live life to the fullest, we can trust Him to give us sound advice on how to handle our finances. Besides, we should be honoring Him in every aspect of our lives, and that includes how and where we spend our money. If we sow sparingly, we can't expect a bountiful harvest, but Paul makes it quite clear that God's grace will more than suffice for us in every area of life! Investing in eternity is worth it! 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Mal. 3:10; Prov. 3:9-10

Sunday, February 18th: “Holy” is a word we hear a lot in church. But what does it mean? Simply put, “holy” means “set apart.” This doesn’t necessarily mean being physically separate, but rather to be different in one’s deepest self, in one’s way of being. To be holy is to be designated for a sacred purpose, set apart to live a life that does not look like others. The Bible frequently praises God as holy. This makes sense who would want to worship a God who was just like anyone else? We need God to be different than us and the standards we are used to. But what might it mean when God tells us to “be holy, as I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44)? Perhaps it means that we, too, are to live lives that look different, that are set apart from what is ordinary or standard, to serve a sacred purpose. What might it look like for you to live as a reflection of a holy God?

Monday, February 19th: The physical transformation process of our campus is now quite evident, and with it come some “inconveniences.” You may have to walk farther, ride the shuttle, have meeting rooms relocated, or just get used to the idea that some things will have to go. But we need to remember that anytime you upgrade, it is replacing something – and it’s usually something that needs to be upgraded. Instead of nostalgically clinging to the past, praise God for the new thing He is doing and seek His perspective on the spiritual shifting and sifting that will give birth to greater purpose and fidelity to His plans. Is. 43:19; Phil. 3:12-16

Tuesday, February 20th: Abraham and Sarah are prominent characters in the Old Testament. Who doesn't remember singing "Father Abraham" a thousand times when you were little? What does their story have to do with a faith that suffers? We read about the covenant, or agreement, that God makes with them. The agreement is that God will make it so they can have children. As a symbol of this agreement, God changes their names from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of all) and Sarai (princess) to Sarah (noblewoman). Where is the suffering? They are old. They have tried all their lives to have children in a time when having children was the most important thing. They have suffered. Now they are going to give birth to many nations. The raising of this child is not easy. Those children will suffer as well; basically, what we read in the rest of the Old Testament. Yet, they believe. The agreement means God will be with them through all that will come, and that makes them strong.

Wednesday, February 21st: In order for Pure Heart to be a healthy and effective body, it is important for us to be in unity. In science, synergy is "the combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately."(Cambridge Dictionary) Several months ago Dan encouraged us to spend some time in Romans 12, where Paul points out the importance of each of us doing our part in the functioning of the body. In fact, when the priests in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 were in one accord, the glory of the Lord was so overpowering that they could not even minister! Pray for us to join as one in seeking His face and in working together to reflect Him and produce results that are beyond our individual abilities or imaginations. Eph. 3:20-21, 4:1-16; John 17:21

Thursday, February 22nd: In this passage, God speaks! God speaks to the people saying, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." For the previous 400 years the Hebrew people had been captives, knowing lesser lives than God wanted for them. They were probably worried that things would always be the same. But the God who created the sky, the earth, and the waters wanted them to be free, so God

created the change they needed! The one true God would be their God “to the thousandth generation” if they would forget other images or gods they might worship instead. To be together with God as God’s worshiping people, this saving and creating God must be their only God. They must choose. What choices do you make that involve God? What choices do you make without God? Do you have idols or things that you allow to replace God in your life? God saves us! How will we show our thankful praise? Exodus 20:1-6

Friday, February 23rd: Numbers 21:4-9 Think about a specific time when you were impatient. What was the situation? How did you feel? Were you angry or sad? Did you complain about the situation? It is hard to blame the people in the scripture passage Numbers 21:4-9 for their frustration and fear. As humans, we really don’t deal well with the unknown. We are anxious about our futures. We are anxious about performing up to expectations. We are anxious about relationships and friendships and the way they change. How much more intense would the anxiety be for us if God had called us to live in the desert? Think back to the situation in which you were impatient. What was your attitude towards God? If you didn’t complain, thank God for being near to you in a way that you recognized. If you remember complaining, use this as a learning opportunity. Think about God’s love for you while remembering the frustrating situation. How might your conversation with God be different?

Saturday, February 24th: The psalmist proclaims, “Let everything that has breath give praise to Him!” There is great power and healing released in the corporate, heartfelt, unified offering up of praise to our God by His people. We are told that if we fail to praise Him, the rocks will cry out! All of creation (and that includes us!) was made by and for Him, so is it too great a thing to ask for us to express our thanks? Consider joining other worshippers after tonight’s service, and come fully expectant and prepared to enter into the presence of the King! He is worthy. Heb. 13:15; Psa. 71:23; Psa. 150; Luke 19:40

Sunday, February 25th: We can become so preoccupied with our “to do” lists that we find ourselves running on auto pilot without stopping to intentionally, thoughtfully analyze and prioritize our time. It can easily turn into the tyranny of the urgent or the habitual. But if we will just push pause and ask God to direct us, everything else will fall into place. He tells us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and He is eagerly waiting for us to call on Him. He is the First and the Last; He is the Creator of life itself; He, after all, has all the answers! Seek Him first and depend on Him to supply your needs. Matt. 6:33; Acts 17:24-28; Prov. 8:14-17

Monday, February 26th: In “The Second Coming,” poet W. B. Yeats writes: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.” Sometimes our world and our lives echo this line. The darkness of fear, sin, and self-doubt; the evils of prejudice, injustice, and suffering; the chaos of broken promises and broken relationships are all part of our human experience. Dealing with any part of that darkness can make us feel as if everything around and within us has fallen apart. Because he was human, Jesus experienced that same darkness on his way to the cross. But because He was God, Jesus also fully experienced God’s power and grace. And so, Jesus makes a promise. Even though His body was also to fall apart, He will rise and “draw all things” to himself. As you walk with Jesus to the cross, as you experience the particular shades of darkness that creep into your life, do not forget this promise. Remember always: Jesus is at work. In his life, death, and resurrection he puts our world and our lives back together again. John 12:27-33

Tuesday, February 27th: Judgment can come in many forms, some more obvious than others, but we are admonished to be very cautious in how we assess others. We can jump to conclusions based on appearances, our own insecurities, and false information or assumptions. Ask God to give us wisdom and compassion, forgiving us for times we have been unduly critical or prideful, and showing us how to extend His love, grace, and mercy according to His divine direction. Rom. 2:1-2; Matt. 7:1-5; John 7:24

Wednesday, February 28th: Who or what can we trust? People have asked this question for centuries. Take the community addressed by Peter's second letter; they were desperately trying to figure out whether accounts they'd heard of Jesus' life were dependable. The writer reminds them that Jesus is not some fantastic fairy-tale character; real people saw with their own eyes what God did through Christ. Real folks heard God's voice declare Jesus' identity. How do we decide who or what to trust today? We are surrounded by so many voices and perspectives. Sometimes it is even difficult to trust what we see and hear with our own eyes and ears!

But this is faith: straining towards something bigger and more powerful than ourselves. Many times we will wonder, as the community to whom today's text was written did, what we have gotten ourselves into, if the whole thing is some made-up myth. But if we keep looking and listening, we might be amazed by what we see and hear. 2 Peter 1:16-18