

THE CROSS



“A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL”



Holy Week

Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** (Sunday, March 28) to **Easter Sunday** (Sunday, April 4)

The key to many customs and traditions in Lent is what down through the ages has come to be known as Holy Week, the last week in Lent. It has become a tradition to trace the activities of Jesus that led to the cross of Calvary.

Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** as a reminder of Jesus' triumphant entry into
(Holy Week on page 13)



MARCH-APRIL 2021
Volume 25 Issue 2

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The Mind of Christ in These Times

When we look at the current events taking place around the world and in our nation with spiritual eyes we can see and hear the words of our savior whisper in our spirits.

We hear the sobering words which Jesus spoke to an innumerable number of people in Luke chapter 12:54-56; "And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye

say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, there will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"

We hear also the firm rebuke given to the Sadducees and Pharisees in Matthew 16:2-3; "He answered and said unto them, When it is evening,

It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Having discernment to know the time period we are living in and the signs of the times was evidently important to our savior.

(These Times on page 16)

Soul To Soul

In order to tell the story of "Soul to Soul", I have to explain a couple of things up front. Back in the days of the sixties and early seventies, the word 'soul' was used in reference to black popular music. Later, it became fashionable and acceptable to use it as an identifier to anything

unique to black culture. So, for example, on the 125th street in Harlem, New York, if you desired a restaurant that catered to black and ethnic cuisine, it would be customary to ask for 'soul' food. James Brown had a hit single called 'Soul Power'. And Arthur Conley had released a number one

song titled 'Do you like good music?' pointing to 'sweet soul music'. The term 'soul' clearly signified a genre of music mostly played by black performers and entertainers.

It wasn't too long when the term became a

(Soul to Soul on page 15)



From The Pastor's Desk

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

We have been going through tremendous difficulty, both in our country and worldwide, due to Covid-19 or Coronavirus. It has been a year, and the impact of this Pandemic has been monumental. Many businesses are shutting down and continued cancellations of events. We had hoped for a better outcome by now. We give thanks for the Vaccines that are available, and we look forward to the post-pandemic.

With all the postponed events and cancellations, let me remind you today that Easter is **NOT CANCELED!** Indeed, we may celebrate the Resurrection for the second time in a different way. Still, I believe that we have tremendous hope for today, tomorrow, and all eternity.

A song that we sing during this season brings hope for a brighter future. The words to the simple yet powerful chorus go like this:

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because He lives, all fear is gone.

Because I know, yes, I know, He holds the future.

And life is worth the living just because He lives!

We give thanks that we serve a risen savior, and he is in the world today.

It's also possible we will meet to celebrate the same way as last Easter Sunday, having a "Drive-In Church Service"!

We miss gathering together in worship, the fellowship, the interaction with the children, youth, and sponsoring events for the community. Zoom Ministry and Facebook and Conference Calls have become our new normal. It has kept us connected to Christ, His Church, and His people.

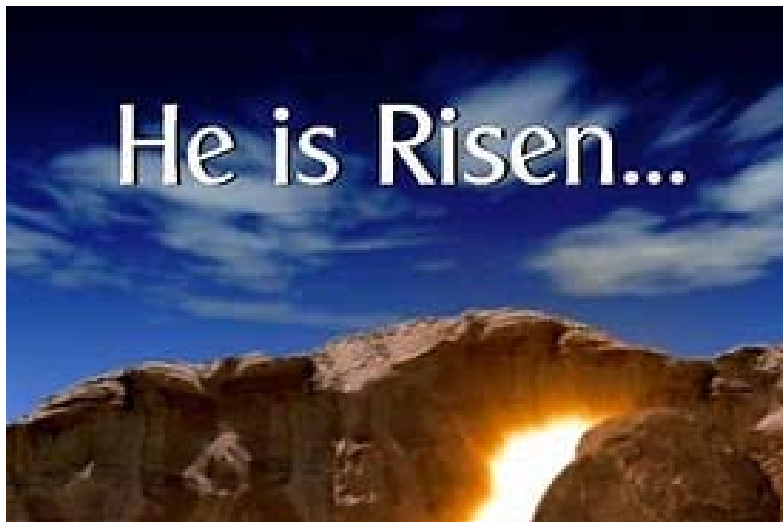
We can say with all assurance: Jesus Christ is alive and well! There's no reason to dismay concerning what tomorrow may bring. Our long-term belief is that we will be with Him now and throughout the endless ages of eternity, and that's worth rejoicing!

Please be sure we have your updated address, phone number, and email to reach out to you with our ultimate plan for Easter Sunday and other events. The Pastor, First Lady, Ministerial Staff, Officers, and Leaders send our love and commitment to serving you and the family.

Just remember, Easter is **NOT CANCELLED!**

Christ Blessings,

Pastor Moses L. Harvill



RETOOLING FOR CHURCH GROWTH 2021

- Renewing
- Reconnecting •Reopening

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33*

Growing the Church via Zoom & Virtual Church

Starting Stronger:

RENEWING

*Bible Study— Growing in Christ: Lessons on Assurance—Lessons on Christian Living
‘Living for Christ isn’t easy, but it is possible!’ Learn how with GROWING with CHRIST
Lessons will be emailed & available for you to pick up at the church.*

*We begin the year with Spiritual Renewal
-Prayer & Bible Study*

RECONNECTING

Growing the church by coming back together in love & fellowship

REOPENING

Returning with zeal for Christ and His Kingdom mission

Hear Our Prayers Lord

God's Presence

Lord, may nothing separate us from You today. Teach us how to choose only Your way today so each step will lead us closer to You. Help us walk by the Word and not my feelings. Help us to keep our heart pure and undivided. Protect us from our own careless thoughts, words, and actions. Keep us from being distracted by OUR wants, OUR desires, OUR thoughts on how things should be. Help us to embrace what comes our way as an opportunity...rather than a personal inconvenience.

And finally, help us to rest in the truth of Psalm 86:13, 'Great is Your love toward us.' You already see the ways we will fall short and mess up. But right now, we consciously tuck Your whisper of absolute love for us into the deepest part of our heart. Today we recognize Your love for us is not based on our performance. You love us warts and all. Which amazing us. But what's most amazing is that the Savior of the world would desire a few minutes with us this morning. Lord, help us to forever remember what a gift it is to sit with You like this, its In Jesus Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Daily Miracle Prayer Request

God above, we stand before You today as Your humble servant, powerless and weak when compared to Your vast excellence. In this world and the next, You control all, including our life and we stand to gain everything in our worship of Your name.

Lord Almighty, we pray for instant miracles that will turn our heart's desires into realities, so we can move forward with You in the lead at every step. Your miracles will touch all parts of our lives and testimonies will be in praise of Your Heavenly name, Father. Today we pray that You allow not the jest from our enemies and instead, make us living wonders that will hear Your Word, received Your mercies all the days of our lives. We thank You for Your answers and in Jesus Name we Pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Morning Prayer

Romans 15:13 says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit," Amen.

Let us pray, "Father in Heaven, You're the El-Shaddai and the one who sleepeth not when we sleep. You safe kept us through the night, and You are still the one who protects us

and makes our decisions for us. Today as we start a new day, we pray that You do not leave us and continue Your day-to-day good deeds in our lives. We ask Father, build us as an unshakeable wall-so that we may resist the dangers that aim to topple us daily. We glorify Your eternal name we look forward to the day we ascend to Your Kingdom, its In Jesus Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Prayer for God Masterpiece

Dear Lord, Thank You that Your love is so personal, that You created us, and that there is only one of us. You set Your eyes on us from the beginning. You created us with a purpose and You promise to work out all the plans You have for our life. Thank You that You are a faithful God. That all throughout Scripture, time, and time again, You showed Your faithful love to Your people. We ask You Lord, to remind us in moments of doubt, that You will never abandon us, for we are Your unique workmanship We are Yours. We are Your creation. Help us to not compare ourself to others. You created us, just as we are, and You view us as Your masterpiece.

Help us to see ourself the way that You see us, not as the world sees us. Remind us that You have given us everything we need to work out the plans You have set before us and help us remember that if You have called us to it, You have also equipped us for it, Amen.

Thank You for Your Word as our guide, the lamp unto our feet and for the Holy Spirit as our helper. Allow us to rest in the confidence that You will finish what You began in us. We worship You, Lord, praising You for Your everlasting love for us, its In Jesus' Name, Amen, Hallelujah, Thank You Jesus!

Teach Me to Love

Oh Holy Christ, Your life was perfect in constancy. You have never failed those who loved You, for Your love is eternal, perfect and unfailing. You never change, never weaken, never vary. Teach us the steadfastness of Your love, mighty Savior. Teach us Your humility, Your selflessness. Teach us to be a devoted servant. Look with grace, we pray, on our small and tarnished loving; protect it. Foster it, strengthen it, that our love may be less unworthy to be offered to You and to Your children. O light of the world, teach us how to love, In Jesus name, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Submitted by Barbara Perry



Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. Psalm 99:9

Lent

Lent is the period of time to reflect on the events that led Jesus to Calvary. It begins with Ash Wednesday and covers a period of forty days (excluding Sundays) culminating with Holy Week (including Passion/Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). Lent is a time of fasting, sacrifice, and preparation.

Color: Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting.

A guideline given by some money managers is as follows: Give 1/10 (tithe of your income to God). Put 1/10 in savings. Put 1/10 in an emergency account until three months of pay is set aside. Live on the remaining 7/10 with freedom to work towards giving as much as possible to God's work.

Eastertide

Eastertide covers a fifty-day period (six Sundays) that challenges persons to reflect on the resurrection of Jesus. Ascension Day is celebrated the sixth Thursday after Easter and commemorates the last manifestation of Jesus to His followers after the resurrection. (Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:2-11.) Ascension Sunday is the Sunday following Ascension Day. The season ends with the Day of Pentecost.

Color: White is the appropriate color for the season, with gold as an accent color. White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth.

Liturgical Colors

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word "leitourgia" that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and King-tide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

Black represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

Gold is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

Other Colors

Blue is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

Kente Cloth is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word "kenten" referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one's heritage.

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; F A I T H F U L N E S S, *h a l f -heartedness*, **infidelity**;
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

Read the BIBLE in ONE Year

MARCH

1 Joshua 7-9
2 Joshua 10-12
3 Joshua 13-15
4 Joshua 16-18
5 Joshua 19-21
6 Joshua 22-24
7 Judges 1-4

8 Judges 5-8
9 Judges 9-12
10 Judges 13-15
11 Judges 16-18
12 Judges 19-21
13 Ruth 1-4
14 1 Sam. 1-3
15 1 Samuel 4-7

16 1 Samuel 8-10
17 1 Samuel 11-13
18 1 Samuel 14-16
19 1 Samuel 17-20
20 1 Samuel 21-24
21 1 Samuel 25-28
22 1 Samuel 22-24
23 2 Samuel 1-4

24 2 Samuel 5-8
25 2 Samuel 9-12
26 2 Samuel 13-15
27 2 Samuel 16-18
28 2 Samuel 19-21
29 Samuel 22-24
30 1 Kings 1-4
31 1 Kings 5-7

APRIL

1 1 Kings 8-10
2 1 Kings 11-13
3 1 Kings 14-16
4 1 Kings 17-19
5 1 Kings 20-22
6 2 Kings 1-3
7 2 Kings 4-6

8 2 Kings 7-10
9 2 Kings 11-14
10 2 Kings 15-17
11 2 Kings 18-20
12 2 Kings 21-22
13 2 Kings 23-25
14 1 Chronicles 1-3
15 1 Chronicles 4-6

16 1 Chronicles 7-9
17 1 Chronicles 10-13
18 1 Chronicles 14-16
19 1 Chronicles 17-19
20 1 Chronicles 20-23
21 1 Chronicles 24-26
22 1 Chronicles 27-28
23 2 Chronicles 1-3

24 2 Chronicles 4-6
25 2 Chronicles 7-9
26 2 Chronicles 10-13
27 2 Chronicles 14-16
28 2 Chronicles 17-19
29 2 Chronicles 20-22
30 2 Chronicles 23-25

MAY

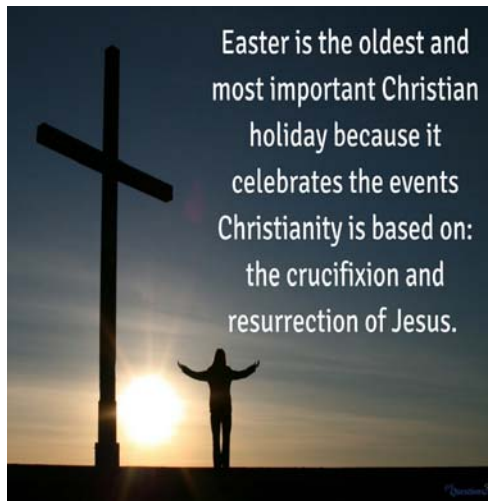
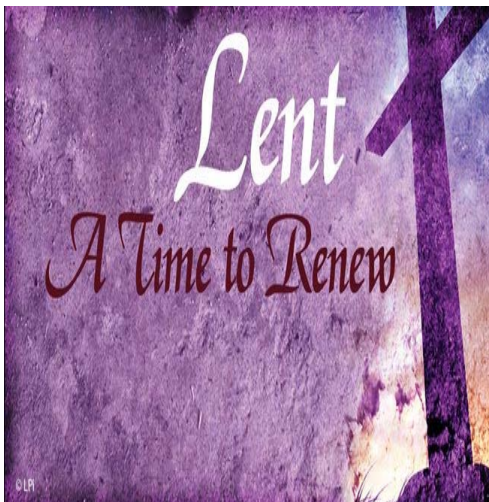
1 2 Chronicles 26-29
2 2 Chronicles 30-32
3 2 Chronicles 33-36
4 Ezra 1-4
5 Ezra 5-7
6 Ezra 8-10
7 Nehemiah 1-3

8 Nehemiah 4-6
9 Nehemiah 7-9
10 Nehemiah 10-13
11 Esther 1-3
12 Esther 4-7
13 Esther 8-10
14 Job 1-4
15 Job 5-7

16 Job 8-10
17 Job 11-13
18 Job 14-17
19 Job 18-20
20 Job 21-24
21 Job 25-27
22 Job 28-31
23 Job 32-34

24 Job 35-37
25 Job 38-42
26 Psalms 1-4
27 Psalms 5-8
28 Psalms 9-12
29 Psalms 13-15
30 Psalms 16-18
31 Psalms 19-21

Name of God	Meaning	Application
ADONAI	The Lord My Great Lord	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total authority.
EL	The Strong One	He is more powerful than any false god. God will overcome all obstacles. We can depend on God.
EL ELOHE YISRAEL	God, the God of Israel	The God of Israel is distinct and separate from all false gods of the world.
EL ELYON	The God Most High	He is the Sovereign God in whom we can put our trust. El Elyon has supremacy over all false gods.



10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting
By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: "your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."
2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God's Kingdom is from "strength to strength" (Ps. 84:7), "from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:17), and from "glory to glory" (2Cor. 3:18).
3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.
4. During your period of fasting, feed on God's Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.
5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.
6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.
8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.
9. Remember that hunger is purely a matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.
10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

Total Fast: Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

Partial fast: Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

1 Meal Fast: Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

Daniel Fast: Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart far God's Vision for the Church

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)
2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast. "Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" (Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)
3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant. Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)
4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)
5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer- "Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

Guidelines for Daniel Fast

Foods We May Eat

Whole Grains: Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

Legumes: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries Oats, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangerines, Tangerines, Watermelon

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili

Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Liquids: Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100 % o All-Natural Fruit Juices, 100 % All Natural `Vegetable Juices

Foods To Avoid

Meat, White Rice, Fried Foods, Caffeine, Carbonated Beverages, Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives, Refined Sugar, Sugar Substitutes, White Flour and All Products Using It Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products.

Note: May the Lord give us inner desire and outer Discipline Spiritual commitment for 7 days in constant prayer during the fast.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)



Sunday School is a Family Affair

8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
New Members Class meets at the same time.
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

The Suffering Servant Brings Salvation (Finding Hope in the Midst of Oppression)

Devotional Reading:
Philippians 2:1-11

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Luke 24:1-35

EXALT!

Declaration:
Isaiah 53:4-11 (end with “light”)

⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, stuck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹ They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. ¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see light;

Affirmation:
We commit to sharing the story of the Suffering Servant, who is the resurrected Jesus Christ.

ENGAGE

Unit II, “Prophets of Restoration,” has four sessions, which reveal the compassion of God during the times in Israel’s history when the people continually forsook the ways of God. On Easter, Isaiah’s prophetic writings and the Book of Luke are used to portray Jesus as the Suffering Servant and the one through whom believers receive salvation. Passages from the prophecies in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Lamentations show the faith of the prophets as they presented new hope to the Israelites.

When life reaches its darkest depth, people wonder if there is still hope for the future. Where can we find the promise of joy that will overcome our deepest sorrow? Isaiah 52:13-53:12 reminds us of God’s servant who suffers profoundly for others, and Luke 24 records the encounter of the Emmaus travelers with the resurrected Jesus.

If able, break into two or three groups and share with one another heroes you admire in our society who risk their lives for others. Perhaps you can begin with first responders such as fire rescuers, police, doctors, nurses, soldiers etc. But name specific ones you know. Also, share if such persons are family members, community persons, or church members. Also, consider experiences you have had or those who take the place of others—proxy, substitute, stand-in, understudy, etc. Do these usually take the payment or power for others, not their punishment? Characterize your understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ by comparison with such persons in these categories. Share your groups’ findings with the whole.

(Wisdom on page 10)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God’s hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God’s children.

(Wisdom from page 9)

EDUCATE

Isaiah 53:4-5: Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the climax of four servant songs of Isaiah. The first three are found in 42:1-4; 49:1-6; and 50:4-9. As one proceeds through the servant poems, one can see first descriptions that would fit the nation of Israel, and then in other cases there is the image of a person who would suffer for the nation of Israel as well as for humankind at large. The suffering servant experience is traceable to other persons in the Old Testament, such as Joseph, who was sold into Egypt by his brothers and suffered much in order to eventually become the redeemer of his family and benefactor of others. The affirmation of the servant being a substitute for others is repeated several times in this text. The servant not only pays for the sin of others but grants wholeness to them as well. This particular servant song is quoted multiple times in the New Testament as a description of Jesus' ministry, death, and burial (examples: Matthew 8:17; Luke 22:37; 1 Peter 2:22).

Isaiah 53:6-8: Sheep/shepherd imagery that is common in Scripture has a double focus in this song. First, humankind is depicted as reckless sheep that wander into danger. Second, the Servant steps in to be led to slaughter in our place (53:6-7). "The guilt of our sins was transferred to Jesus, and He offered Himself as a sacrifice in our place. As Paul wrote, God' made him to be sin who knew no sin' (2 Corinthians 5:21)" (Reformation Study Bible). "Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Revelations 5:6) in obedience and submission to God (cf. Matthew 26:63; 27:12; 14; 1 Peter 2:23). He was put to death as a result of injustice" (Ibid). "Philip, the evangelist interpreted this suffering servant song for the Ethiopian eunuch, explaining to him the work of Christ (Acts 8:26-40). The eunuch was confused by the verses we now identify as Isaiah 53:7-8.

Isaiah 53:9-11: The common wisdom in biblical times was that disease and suffering was a punishment for the sin of a person or family (John 9:2). In contrast, the Servant suffered though he was completely innocent (Isaiah 53:9). "Although people supposed that Jesus was dying as a common criminal, through the intervention of Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus was buried in honor. His suffering for sinners had been successfully completed. Christ's righteousness is imputed to His return, He accepted their guilt so as to 'bear their iniquities'" (Ibid). The statement that "out of his anguish he shall see light" (Isaiah 53:11a) makes this song about resurrection as well as crucifixion.

ELEVATE

If able, break into two groups and have each group share experiences Christians encounter, whereby, they are called upon to worship a Saviour who was victorious through nonviolent sacrifice, not military conquest. Discuss how this is possible and what examples we have seen of this in recent history. Can we follow the example of Jesus who sought to serve rather than dominate others? Discuss how we might view the Crucifixion as willing sacrifice, not as martyrdom; share the hope that as Jesus was resurrected, we shall be resurrected as well; and proclaim Jesus' crucifixion as the payment for our sins and the sins of the whole world. How might we actually live His resurrected life today?

ITHINK

1. If the college basketball season has taken place and possibly ended with the conclusion of the NCAA men's tournament, can you tell what you saw as the most remarkable victories in the tournament? Use the idea of remarkable victories to transition into the Scripture study of the greatest victory of all.
2. Discuss: proxy, stand-in, surrogate, substitute, understudy. Begin by asking how participants have heard one or more of these words used—a substitute teacher, a surrogate mother, etc. Lead into Bible study by asking the group to reflect on the significance of someone taking the place of another. Why would one do such a thing?
3. Play a clip from a movie about the life of Jesus that depicts the Crucifixion. How well does this depict the actual event, do you think?
4. Have participants underline as many references to substitutionary suffering in today's text as they can find. Identify contemporary parallels.
5. Read Acts 8:35 that states that Philip proclaimed the good news of Jesus starting with this Suffering Servant song. Role-play how someone today may explain the role of Jesus to a friend starting with our lesson text.

KEY VERSES

"He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

Prayer—90 devotions from Our Daily Bread Compiled by Dave Branon

MORNING PRAYER

Read: Psalm 92

It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night. Psalm 92:1-2

When British preacher and writer John Stott turned 80, a friend penned a tribute to him that highlighted his discipline of prayer. For decades, Stott began each day with a prayer like this: “Good morning, heavenly Father. Good morning, Lord Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit.” Stott then went on to worship each member of the Trinity individually, acknowledging and praising them for their work in the lives of believers.

Then he continued, “Father, I pray that I may live this day in Your presence and please You more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow You. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day You will fill me with Yourself and cause Your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons in one God, have mercy upon me. Amen.”

The psalmist said that “it is good to praise the Lord...proclaiming [His] love in the morning” (92:1-2). So why not use John Stott’s prayer of praise and petition as a pattern for yours today? It a wonderful way to begin a conversation with God. David McCasland

Prayer Tip: Post a few prayer verse plaques or note cards around the house as reminders.

OUR FULL-TIME INTERCESSOR

Read: Hebrews 7:11-28

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 7:25

It was dawn, and I was painfully aware of being only a few weeks into widowhood. After another restless night, I felt too weary to pray for myself. “Lord,” I sighed, “I need someone to pray for me right now.”

Almost instantly God’s Spirit comforted my distraught mind with the words of Hebrews 7:25, reminding me that Jesus was praying for me that very moment. With a wave of relief, I acknowledged Him as my lifelong intercessor. I will never forget how that bleak morning became gold-tinged with hope. Since then, I have drawn courage and strength countless times from my faithful High Priest.

Scottish minister Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843) testified, “If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!”

We too can draw courage and strength from Jesus. He is our priestly representative before God the Father.

Are difficult circumstances creating fear in your heart? By all means, ask others to pray for you. But don’t forget that you can count on the prayers of Jesus himself. By faith, think of Him as praying around the clock for you, as if He were in the next room. Foanie Yoder

Prayer Tip: Create a prayer bulletin board somewhere in the house.

CRYING OUT TO GOD

Read: Psalm 142

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6

After all these years, I still don’t fully understand prayer. It’s something of a mystery to me. But one thing I know: When we’re in desperate need, prayer springs naturally from our lips and from the deepest level of our hearts.

When we’re frightened out of our wits, when we’re pushed beyond our limits, when we’re pulled out of our comfort zones, when our well-being is challenged and endangered, we reflexively and involuntary resort to prayer. “Help, Lord” is our natural cry.

Author Eugene Peterson wrote, “The language of prayer is forged in the crucible of trouble. When we can’t help ourselves and call for help, when we don’t like where we are and want out, when we don’t like who we are and want a change, we use primal language, and this language, becomes the root language of prayer.”

Prayer begins in trouble, and continues because we’re always in trouble at some level. It requires no special preparation, no precise vocabulary, no appropriate posture. It springs from us in the face of necessity and, in time, become our habitual response to every issue—good and bad—we face in this life (Philippians 4:6). What a privilege it is to carry everything to God in prayer! David Roper

Prayer Tip: “Husbands,...be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect..., so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Peter 3:7).

HELP NEEDED

Read: Hebrews 4:9-16

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

During World War II, the British Isles represented the last line of resistance against the sweep of Nazi oppression in Europe. Under relentless attack and in danger of collapse, however, Britain lacked the resources to see the conflict through to victory. For that reason, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill went on BBC radio and appealed to the world: “Give us tools, and we will finish the job.” he knew that without help from the outside, they could not endure the assault they were facing.

Life is like that. Often, we are inadequate for the troubles life throws at us, and we need help from outside of ourselves. As members of the body of Christ, that help can come at times from our Christian brothers and sisters (Romans 12:10-13)—and that is a wonderful thing. Ultimately, however, we seek help from our heavenly Father. The good and great news is that our God has invited us to come confidently before Him: “Let us then approach God throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

At such times, our greatest resource is prayer—for it brings us into the very presence of God. There we find, in His mercy and grace, the help we need. Bill Crowder

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18
 "... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11.

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)
 Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)
 The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed. →

The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)
 Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)
 Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)
 Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)
 which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak

(Holy Week page 1)

Jerusalem. The people along the roadside waved palms and shouted “Hosanna” the Hebrew word for “save now.” (See Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-40, and John 12:12-19.) Many churches today bless the palms and distribute them in the form of crosses to be worn by the worshippers.



Maundy Thursday lifts up the event of the Lord’s Last Supper that was celebrated in the Upper Room at the time of the Jewish Passover. It is the basis for the establishment of sacrament of Holy Communion. Historically, the Passover marked the Israelites’ departure from Egypt when the final plague was cast upon the Egyptians to smite the first born dead (Exodus). The Hebrews received special instruction to kill a lamb the or goat for each household and to sprinkle the blood on the doorpost and the life of the first born would be spared. Every Jew/Hebrew was required to celebrate the Passover, and the Lord’s Last Supper was Jesus’ observance of the Passover. However, Jesus brought new meaning to this event as it commemorated Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage – all of humanity was delivered from sin.

The Lord’s Supper was the last meal that Jesus shared with the disciples before going to Calvary. It occurred on what is called Maundy Thursday. “Maundy” is a variation of the Latin word “mandatum” meaning “commandment” (see John 13:34). The significance of God’s love for humanity comes forth in this act because it was and is through Jesus’ blood and body that persons are redeemed. Therefore, the new commandment requires persons to love one another just as God loves all persons. The Latin word “Mundo” means to wash, and some claim this is how Maundy Thursday came into being, since Jesus washed the disciples’ feet on that day. Some denominations and congregations still carry out the practice of washing feet before Holy Communion, at least on Holy Thursday.

Yet another tradition credits the name to the word “maund” for basket and the practice of giving baskets of goodies to the poor. Whatever the source, Maundy Thursday is practiced in just about every Christian church with either a love feast or Holy Communion being participated in by all. One cannot but help call to mind the celebration of the feast of the Passover by Jews. Christians celebrate similarly, for this is in remembrance of the Lamb of God who willingly shed blood for the sins of the whole world.



GOOD FRIDAY

Most authors agree that the term “Good Friday” evolved from “God’s Friday.” It is one the three days that many persons make an effort to attend church, the other being Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. Services in most churches last about three hours since generally, the seven last words of Jesus are used.

The Seven Last Words are:

1. “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34
2. “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43
3. “Woman, here is your son, ... Son, Here is your Mother.” John 19:26-27
4. “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46

5. “I am thirsty.” John 19:28

6 “It is finished.” John 19:30

7. “Father, into your hands I commend My Spirit.” Luke 23:46

More and more today, however, times and length of services are being arranged to meet the working schedules of most parishioners. Good Friday represents the day of that dreadful crucifixion and is not just a day of mourning. It is a day of remembrance of the events of the day, especially the time Jesus hung on the cross. It is appropriate to leave the alter bare and use no liturgical color. However, if desired, black may be used. In many countries, the old practice was (and in some instances still is) not to cook on Good Friday. Rather, one drinks some beverage and eat hot cross buns. Like most other customs and traditions, cross buns have pagan origins. According to Rudolph Brasch, it was part of a pagan festival of bread offered to idols at spring time. Horns were stamped on the buns. This, however became the mark of the cross. It not only was a symbol, but served a practical purpose. When these buns were used in love feasts, it was easier to divide one into four pieces.



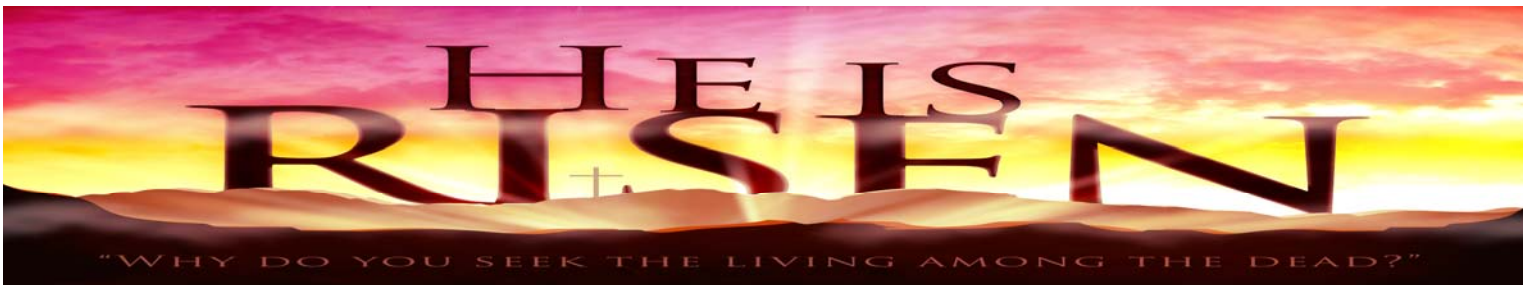
Easter Sunday commemorates the glorious resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It is the other highest point of the Christian Year. Thus, joy and celebration engulfs the season as the Christian Church rejoices in the fact of the resurrection and its meaning to the Christian faith, hope, and life. Many wonder why Easter occurs on various Sundays from year to year? Easter does not occur on a set day like Christmas because it is determined by the moon and the seasons in nature. Thus, for most Protestants and Roman Catholics, Easter falls on the Sunday near the beginning of Spring, which is also after the first full moon. Because of the fluctuating cycle, Easter Sunday can occur anywhere between March 22 and April 25. Therefore, Easter is a determining factor in the cycle that sets the beginning and end of some of the seasons. The number of days in the season of advent

(four Sundays weeks prior to Christmas), Christmas / Christmastide (from Christmas day to the day before Epiphany-January 6, twelve days), Lent (forty days, excluding the Sundays), and Eastertide (fifty days), are constant seasons in terms of length. The Season After Epiphany, The Season After Pentecost, and Kingdomtide experience the variation from year to year.

(Holy Week from page 13)

Easter has been described as the oldest festival of the church. It truly is the key to Christianity, since it emphasizes the redemption of humans. Note that in the early Christian Church, the word used for Easter was *Pascha*. This is from the Hebrew word for Passover. The closeness and similarity between the Jewish Passover and the celebration of Lent and Easter should be recalled and remembered. The Jews observed the *Passing Over* of the houses of the Israelites who had the blood of the lamb smeared upon the posts of their houses, by the death angel during their sojourn in Egypt. This was the final plague before Pharaoh agreed to let God's people, the Israelites go. For Christians, the blood that saves persons from eternal damnation is the blood of Jesus, shed upon the cross at Calvary. Easter, like the word Lent, has nothing to do with the reason for celebrating these occasions. Rather, Easter comes from the name of an Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, *Easter*, whose festival was observed at the spring equinox. Easter is indeed THE DAY of the days in the church calendar. This is the day that celebrates Christ's resurrection from the grave. Without the resurrection, there would be no Christian Church. This is why many Christians moved their day of worship to Sunday. So, not only is it a day of worship, but a little Easter, when persons remember that Christ rose from the dead. (See Matthew 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-10.)

The observance of Lent would have no meaning if it were not for that victorious first Easter. The crucifixion without the resurrection would not be a victory and would destroy the essence of the Christian faith and God's redemptive act. To be resurrection signifies that something or someone who was dead has return to a living state. Christ's resurrection was a demonstration of that fact and a revelation of God's power over sin and death. Thus, the agony and tragedy of the cross was transformed into a joyous celebration and God's fulfillment of the covenantal promise was affirmed. ALLELUIA! Jesus arose as a "mighty triumph over His foes" and lives forever. The liturgical color for Easter/Eastertide is white, symbolizing purity. Along with white, gold is often used to give emphasis to this most holy day of the church year.

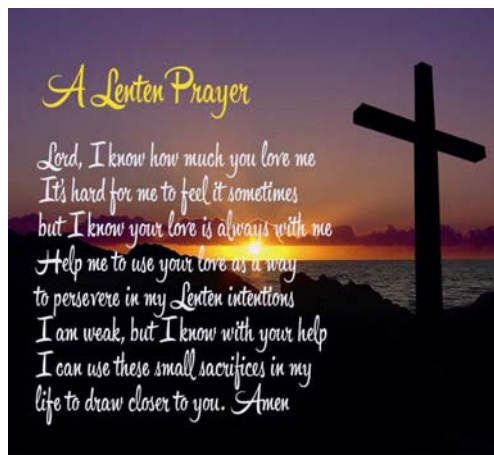
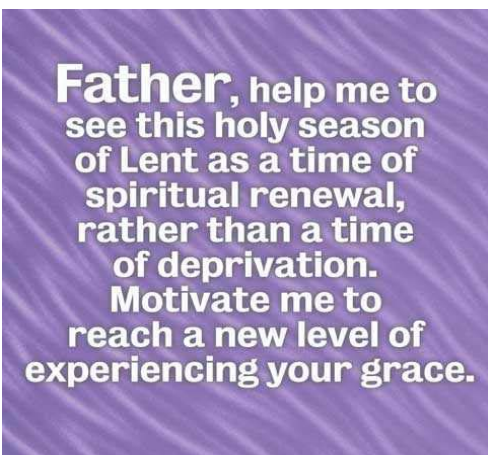


ALLELUIA, HE IS RISEN, ALLELUIA, HE IS RISEN!



Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on [Ash Wednesday](#) and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning "lengthen" and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, [fasting](#) and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.



(Soul to Soul from page 1)

blanket cover for all things relating to race, culture, ethnic and tribal values in relations to everything black and African American. I am referring to the first part of the term “soul to soul”. The second part, even though sounds and spells the same, is not to be confused with the initial one. The other “soul” is the broader category of the spiritual source of the ancestry of all humans from the motherland of Africa; regardless of where they find themselves at any moment in time. The point is, people of African descent making any inference to their ancestors, would point back to the continent of Africa, irrespective of how they got to where they might be at any time.

With that clarification, let’s get to the story of “Soul To Soul”, knowing that the reader understands what it means. That is, the physical manifestation of black American culture finding its way back into the folds of its ancestry through the medium of popular music. Yes, an event happened a long time ago, half a century to be precise, when a number of African American popular musicians made a ‘pilgrimage’ to Ghana, West Africa, to present themselves to their brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, on the other side of the Atlantic by way of entertainment. The event was planned to coincide with the independence anniversary of Ghana on March 6, 1971. This year 2021, marks the fiftieth anniversary of that event popularly known as “Soul To Soul”. And I was there in person.

Think of it as the ‘Woodstock’ of Ghana, with better, warm weather and exclusive to black and brown performers for a predominantly black audience in a country where the concept of personal freedom and universal liberty meant exactly that. Similar to the Woodstock music festival of 1968, no one who attended in person can ever forget the experience in their lifetime. In effect, the event itself has to be considered one of the greatest music events of all time. Even though it had all this aura of historical proportions, the initial idea came from a single individual. That was Maya Angelou. There was a time in Ghana when a number of African Americans had been visiting the country on the auspices of the Ghanaian leader, Kwame Nkrumah, who had reached out to all Africans in the Diaspora all over the globe to consider a trip back ‘home’ as a pilgrimage and homage to their original native land. “A small but illustrious

community of African Americans, including W.E.B. DuBois, George Padmore, painter Tom Freelings and author Maya Angelou had made Ghana their home away from the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Maya Angelou was the one who suggested the idea of inviting African American artists of West African descent to come into Ghana to participate in the celebration of their independence day”. The rest, as is customary, is history of major proportions.

So it was that the event involved the ‘who was who’ of the African American popular musicians at that time. It included Les McCann and Edie Harris as proponents of soul jazz music, Roberta Flack, Wilson Pickett, Ike and Tina Turner, Mavis and the Staple Family singers, the voices of East Harlem and the up and coming Afro-Latin performer Carlos Santana. Local performers included Guy Warren, the Damas Choir, the Kumasi Atumpan drummers, Kwa Mensah and Amoa Azanglo. The highlight of the event would be remembered for the monumental fourteen hour non-stop performances by the musicians. However, the main soul searching and personal ‘pilgrimage’ for each of the visitors were the various tours that were organized for them across the entire country.

Some of the visiting Americans were privileged enough to visit with traditional chiefs and royalty. For example, Ike and Tina Turner, the Staple Singers, Wilson Pickett and the Voices of East Harlem traveled north of Accra and met with Nana Osai Gyan II, the King of Aburi at the time. While there, the Voice Of East Harlem entertained the King and his subjects with a performance of Miriam Makeba’s song Jolinkomo. All over Ghana, for specific traditional and cultural functions the Americans attended. They were at a real funeral, took part in a traditional Muslim wedding and witnessed a Ga baby naming ceremony. Then there was the life-changing tour to the town of Cape Coast, where a slave castle and fort has been converted into a museum as a memorial to the thousands of slaves who passed through the gates of the castle as part of the Middle Passage Atlantic slave route to the other side of the ocean. They had ample time to visit and shop in the open markets of Accra, the capital city. They in turn, were entertained by various Ghanaian cultural groups at which the Americans were invited to participate, to

dance, to sing and to revel with the regular native Ghanaians.

My motivation for telling this story is multi-fold. For one thing, this year is the 50th anniversary of the event. For another thing, I have been blessed to have lived this long to be able to recall the real-life experience. I never knew I would ever have this opportunity to be part of the celebrations. My role in recalling the event itself had me featured in this past weekend Saturday, February 27, AfroPop worldwide program on National Public Radio, which in Connecticut can be found on Fm 90.5 as WNPR. The program is eternally archived on www.afropop.org and will remain, as all things on the web, ‘forever’.

Most of all, I have to recount the ‘soulful’ experience of Mavis Staples, in particular. She commented that the experience of visiting Ghana at the time, touring all over the places; touching and holding onto babies; hugging and embracing people; shaking hands with total strangers; attempting to speak the foreign language of people who looked so much like her and coming physically in contact with what she thought were the real manifestation of her kin folk and blood relationships, filled her heart with a feeling and spiritual healing that was going to live with her for the rest of her life. She added that she purchased numerous traditional fabric that she was personally going to sew into various designs of ‘dashikis’ for her own use as well as gifts to her American family members who could not make the trip with them, at the time. Overall, it has been reported that many of the over 130 American nationals who made that trip that time, had been back multiple times, connecting to individuals they bonded with in one way or the other, from that memorable day in March 1971.

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(These Times from page 1)

Discernment gives us understanding and understanding gives us perspective and the ability to allow God to put us in our perfect place in these times.

Discernment and understanding also gives us a mind set which sets our topic for discussion.

Having the mind of Christ in these times means having control over our thoughts. For it is our thoughts which are the foundation of how we conduct ourselves from day to day.

So important are our thoughts that our brother Paul said they were part of our spiritual warfare in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Our every thought must be brought under obedience to Christ.

With that said, when we look at some of the things Jesus told us it's no wonder so many people today especially during these tumultuous times are finding it difficult to live in the moment and enjoy each precious moment God has given us.

We want perfect peace but how is this accomplished? We don't want to worry about tomorrow but find it harder than ever to live for today.

We get so busy in the hustle and bustle we wonder if we will ever have time for what's important and needful.

And yet, Christ gives us the answers to all of these most common anxieties that plague society and especially the good Christian.

First, let's look at perfect peace because it all begins in the mind and without peace our minds cannot be used by God to their fullest potential.

Isaiah 26:3-4 Tells us, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength:"

Perfect peace comes to a person whose mind is stayed on Christ and Christ alone. Why? Because that mind

is trusting Him for everything. Trusting Him for our very next breath even. When we trust Him peace always follows and because He is so good, He throws strength in as well to give us the ability to continue to trust.

When it comes to fear and anxiety Christ gives the remedy as well and again it has to do with our mind and our thoughts Matthew 6:25,31,33-34 Jesus himself says to us. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

It's pretty clear God doesn't want you and I to be thinking about tomorrow at all. That's Gods business not ours.

With the thoughts of tomorrow in the hands of God we are free to live for today and that is a thought which brings much peace and joy to the Christian.

Furthermore, Paul encouraged the Philippian brethren to; "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:6

The word careful here means anxious or nervous. God truly wants us in prayer. Our prayer life will certainly determine our mindset. There are days when we must fight to find that time to run into our prayer closets but it is absolutely necessary.

It was said to me many years ago that prayer is our direct line to God. Think of it as picking up the telephone and talking to God personally and

intimately as you would in your most personal relationship on earth. He wants to hear it all

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing" Paul tells us.

Finally, one of the most important and needful things we can do is spend time reading God's Holy Book, The Bible.

Remember Martha? She was very busy much like we can be. Jesus explained to her that only one thing was needful and Mary chose what was good .

When we look at how crazy things can be lately and how much our busy schedules try and dictate our course of action, we can take comfort in sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to His words.

Luke 10:41-42: "And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

- Having the mind of Christ in these times is trusting the Savior for everything.
- Having our mind on Him only.
- Having our thoughts on today and not tomorrow.
- Having a healthy prayer life.
- Taking the necessary time to listen as He speaks.
- Doing these things will keep us all in a spirit of peace, joy and stability in very uncertain times.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16

The mind of Christ

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

(Philippians 2:5-8)

Our Daily Bread

NEVER GIVE UP

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips. Joshua 1:8

“Time went by. War came in.” that’s how Bishop Semi Nigo of the Keliko people of South Sudan described delays in his church’s long struggle to get the Bible in their own language. Not one word, in fact, had ever been printed in the Keliko language. Decades earlier, Bishop Nigo’s grandfather had courageously started a Bible translation project, but war and unrest kept halting the effort. Yet, despite repeated attacks on their refugee camps in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the bishop and fellow believers kept the project alive.

Their persistence paid off. After nearly three decades, the New Testament Bible in Keliko was delivered to the refugees in a rousing celebration. “The motivation of the Keliko is beyond words,” said one project consultant.

The commitment of the Keliko reflects the perseverance God asked of Joshua. As God told him, “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8). With equal persistence, the Keliko pursued the translation of Scripture. Now, “when you see them in the camps, they are smiling,” said one translator. Hearing and understanding the Bible “gives them hope.” like the Keliko people, may we never give up seeking the power and wisdom of Scripture. Patricia Raybon

What will help you persist I reading Scripture? How could another person help you better understand it?

Loving God, stir up in me a greater hunger to seek, study, and know the Bible, never giving up my quest to understand Your wisdom.

To learn more about how to study the Bible, visit:
ChristianUniversity.org/SF106

Today’s Scripture: Joshua 1:1-9

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: ² “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

INSIGHT

We have limited background information about Joshua the son of Nun, but he was clearly a man who trusted God. Joshua is first referenced in Exodus 17:9, when Moses instructed him to lead Israel’s troops into battle against the Amalekites. In Exodus 24:13, Joshua is portrayed as Moses’ assistant and companion. When the time came to explore the promised land, Joshua was among the men sent for that purpose (Numbers 13-14). Most significantly, it was Joshua whom God selected to replace Moses and lead the people of Israel into the promised land (Deuteronomy 3:28). Bill Crowder

NEW EVERY MORNING

[God’s] Compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Lamentations 3:22-23

My brother Paul grew up battling severe epilepsy, and when he entered his teenage years it became even worse. Nighttime was excruciating for him and my parents, as he’d experience continuous seizures for often more than six hours at a time. Doctors couldn’t find a treatment that would alleviate the symptoms while also keeping him conscious for at least part of the day. My parents cried out in prayer: “God, oh God, help us!”

Although their emotions were battered and their bodies exhausted, Paul and my parents received enough strength from God for each new day. In addition, my parents found comfort in the words of the Bible, including the book of Lamentations. Here Jeremiah voiced his grief over the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, remembering “the bitterness and the gall” (3:19). Yet Jeremiah didn’t lose hope. He called to mind the mercies of God, that His compassions “are new every morning” (V. 23). So too did my parents.

Whatever you’re facing, know that God is faithful every morning. He renews our strength day by day gives us hope. And sometimes, as with my family, He brings relief. After several years, a new medication became available that stopped Paul’s continuous nighttime seizures, giving my family restorative sleep and hope for the future.

When our souls are downcast within us (V.20), may we call to mind the promises of God that His mercies are new every morning.

—Amy Boucher Pye

How has God sustained you through the trials you’ve faced? How could you support someone who’s enduring a challenging time?

God, Your love will never leave me. When I feel spent and without hope, remind me of Your mercies and compassion.

Today’s Scripture: Lamentations 3:19-26

¹⁹ I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. ²⁰ I well remember them, and my soul is downcast with me. ²¹ Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

²² Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.”

²⁵ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; ²⁶ it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

INSIGHT

The writer of Lamentations isn’t named, but there are reasons to believe that Jeremiah wrote this book. Having prophesied for some forty-seven years (627-580 BC) to a disobedient, disbelieving Judah, Jeremiah writes as an eyewitness, lamenting the destruction and devastation of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian army. For two years (588-586 BC), Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. Second Kings 25:1-4 tells of the desperate conditions within the besieged city. Jeremiah witnessed the eventual destruction of the city and temple (Jeremiah 52:12-27). In Lamentations, in five emotionally charged dirges or funeral laments, the prophet describes the suffering of the people and the reasons for them. But he also writes of their hope in the midst of despair. God, who rightly judged their unfaithfulness, is still the God of hope, compassion, faithfulness, and salvation (Lamentations 3:21-33). K.T. Sim

Words To Live By

Prayer: Command & Declare Your Healing

A TOUCH from JESUS

JEHOVAH RAPHA, my HEALER,
I glorify Your name. I command all
sickness, all diseases, all pain to leave
my body right now, in the name of
Jesus Christ! JESUS, at the sound of
Your name, every knee shall bow and
every tongue shall confess that You are
Lord over all the earth.

I decree and declare that I hunger and
thirst for Your healing touch Lord and
that rivers of living water will flow
through my veins, my arteries and my
blood. I confess that I AM HEALED
by the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST!

Read full Prayer at:
christianstt.com

“Daily Confession of Faith”

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

***Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.***

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgement You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

***Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.***

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Spirit Lifters

By Norman Vincent Peale

Realize the Power Within You

Realize the power that is within you, and you will no longer be the victim of a depressed spirit.

And what is this inner power? Simply the God-given ability to believe. To the extent to which you develop this faculty, you will master the defeats in your life. The great issue is to learn to believe. This is stated in one of the most

important of all Scripture passages:

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Mark 9:23

Learn to believe. Learn to cast out doubt. This is done by the practice of affirmation. Affirm faith, think positively,

visualize achievement. Never think doubt. Always think faith.

This text affirms that when you learn to believe, the area of the impossible is vastly reduced and the area of the possible is greatly increased.

If you set this text firmly at the center of your thought patterns, you will never again be a victim of low spirits.

He Makes You Whole

Depression of spirit is often caused by a haunting sense of incompleteness and by unresolved conflicts. Jesus Christ, the skillful Physician, heals the personality as surely as he heals the body and soul. This described in a wonderful passage:

Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. Mark 6:56

To experience His healing power, yield yourself to Him willingly. Make the first move, however timidly. He will respond with the miraculous touch that makes you whole in body, mind and spirit. How your spirits will rise as you gain a deep inner sense of wholeness!

When You Feel "Down"

Here is a true Spirit Lifter, a strength renewer, to use when you feel "down":

He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Isaiah 40:29

God is the source of all energy-in the sun, in plants and in people. Through the channel of spiritual thought, He will pour new energy and strength into you. You will feel it physically, emotionally and mentally.

Conceive of our Lord as touching you. Affirm that He is sending into your being His illimitable strength. Repeat this Spirit Lifter. You will feel new strength.

The Renewed Soul

Staleness results from lack of spiritual inspiration. But there is a cure.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still

waters. Psalm 23:2

Anyone who has traveled through a desert area is refreshed when he comes finally to the green grass country. What makes the difference? Life-giving water.

Similarly, the arid human personality becomes as green pastures when the water of life flows through mind and heart. The soul is restored. It becomes peaceful and develops new vitality. The spirit rises to new heights.

Healing of Sorrow

Sorrow over the death of a loved one is a heavy weight upon the spirit. It often causes the one who mourns to feel that life will never again be filled with high and joyful attitudes.

But life goes on---and one must live it. The passage the follows has probably brought more healing to the human soul and given more lift to the spirit in sorrow than any other passage in all the

literature of the world.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. John 11:25

What a glorious message! Jesus Christ is alive, and those who believes in Him live, also. So our loved one whom we though dead isn't dead at all, but lives and shall forever touch our lives with the

same love and tenderness.

This gives a lift to the spirit that one wants to shout from the housetops the glorious fact that through faith in Jesus Christ, we live. So when sorrow comes, repeat over and over this wonderful passage. And presently the shadows will flee away, and the light of a new day will dawn for you.

Receive God's Blessing

Our spirits rise when we learn how to receive the abundance of good things God wants to give to us. The secret is in two verses:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you. For everyone who ask receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10

word will be given; that directly after the word seek are the words you will find; and that quickly after the word knock is assurance that it will be opened. It is to emphasize that everyone who seek finds, and to all who knock the storehouse is opened.

Therefore, confidently ask. Then visualize yourself as now receiving; seek, then affirm that you have found; knock, then believe that God's storehouse is opened. Practice receiving. Believe that you have been given. Then feel your spirits lift as you realize that God's blessings are actually showered upon you.

Note that the word ask is immediately followed by the

Barbara Perry Speaks

A Moment at TJ Maxx

I was at TJ Maxx today and heard a loud crash and something shattering. Being nosy, I walked towards the sound and saw some people whispering and looking back to the end of the next aisle. When I walked down that aisle, I saw that an older lady had hit a shelf and many things had fallen to the ground and broken. She was kneeling on the floor embarrassed, frantically trying to clean up. I felt so bad for her. Every one was just standing there staring at her. So I went and knelt beside her and told her not to worry and started helping her pick up the broken pieces.

After about a minute, the store manager came and knelt beside us and said, "Leave it, we will clean this up." the lady, totally embarrassed said, "I need to pay for all this." the manager smiled, helped her to her feet and said, "No ma'am, we have insurance for this, you do not have to pay anything!" if you have read this far, give me another minute.

and you're there trying to collect all of the pieces and fix them yourself. Now imagine God comes and kneels right down beside you, smiles and says to you, "Leave it all there, I will clean this up for you."

Wherever you are, close your eyes, and imagine God doing the same for you! Imagine the broken pieces of your mistakes or the pieces of your broken heart from all the blows life has thrown at you all over the floor

He loves you that much and wants to put all of those pieces back together if you will let Him! With Him we have this insurance and it's called GRACE! It's free! All you have to do is ask Him to forgive you, help you, and to heal you. He faithful, I promise! Wow!

Days of Acceleration

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. Amos 9:13

Today we are believing that blessings are overtaking us even now, its In Jesus Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

harvest. But Amos said the day is coming when it's going to be simultaneous.

In the Scripture, prophet Amos was saying there's coming a time when a man will be out plowing the field and sowing the seed, but the harvest is coming up so fast, the growth has so sped up that the harvest pops up as soon as he sows the seed. The plowman can't keep up with it. Typically in those days, the plowman would have to wait seven to eight months once he sowed the seed for the

See as soon as we sow the seed, the harvest will begin to spring forth. I believe we are living in the day Amos talked about. We're sowing the seed, doing the right thing. It should take months, even years, but as soon as we sow, the harvest is these. Blessings are overtaking us, favor that we didn't deserve. It's not the usual process. It's not going to be what's been in the past. But God is in the acceleration business, Amen.

Let us pray, Father, thank You that You can make things happen faster than we could ever imagine. Thank You that You can accelerate our harvest, accelerate our deliverance, and accelerate our healing.

Better Is Coming

Ecclesiastes 7:8 says, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning of it." Amen. Let us pray, "Father, thank You for our past, the successes and victories as well as the mistakes and failures. Thank You that the past has prepared us for today and for the better things You have in store for us. Today we believe breakthroughs are coming, new opportunities are coming, and healings are coming, its In Jesus Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

We may have had a rough start, but we don't have to have a rough finish. Better is the end. Today don't keep dwelling on the negatives of the past. God is saying, Something better is coming. We may be going through a rough spot today, but better is coming. Don't cancel out the better by dwelling on the regrets, the failures, and what didn't work out.

breakthroughs are coming. We're not defined by our past; we're prepared by our past. If the past hadn't happen, we wouldn't be prepared for the better that is coming our way. Living with guilt is not going to make anything better. It's time to drop it. You'll not only feel a weight lift off of you, but you'll step into the better things God has in store, Amen, Amen, Hallelujah. Thank You Jesus

See if our mind is always on yesterday, we're going to move in that direction. Better is coming, healing is coming, and

Quit Hiding What God Gave You

Matthew 5:15 says, "Don't hide your light! Let it shine for all; let your good deeds glow for all to see, so that they will praise your heavenly Father," Amen. Let us pray, "Father, thank You for the gifts and talents You have given to us and are unique to our life. Thank You that You created us to shine and make a difference in the world. Today we declare that we refuse to let fear keep us in hiding, its In Jesus Name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

God has put gifts and talents in us. He's given us dreams and goals that are unique to our life. But it easy to let fear hold us back. We often let the what-ifs talk us out of it, knowing that many of us has dreams, talent, and potential.

Because our gift isn't for us; it's to share with the world and when we come to the end of life, nothing will be more disappointing than to think, what could we have become if we hadn't let fear hold us back? Remember Life is short, so stir up what God put in us.

My message to you today is very simple: Quit hiding what God has given us. When God breathed His life into us, He created us to shine to make a difference, to leave our mark.

So make the most of our talents, our dreams, our gifts. Don't let fear hold us back.

In The "Deep End"

Jude 24-25 says, "To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence, with fault and with great joy to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen, Amen, Amen.

please help us remember that You're always holding us by Your grace, so we can let go of fear, worries, doubt, and disappointment, its In Jesus' name we ask, Amen, Amen, Amen.

moments we've always been held up by the grace of God, our Father, and that won't change because He's never out of His depth or caught off guard, so we can know that we're just as safe in life's "deep end" moments, Amen.

Let us pray, "Father, thank You that we are safe in Your arms, even when we feel like we're in over our head. We ask today to

We all face some problems that just seem too big: a job lost, someone dies, there's strife in our family or close relationships, or a bad report comes from the doctor. When these things happen, our temptation is to panic because we feel like we've lost control. But when it comes to life's most overwhelming

So remember; No matter what we're going through, God's promised us to fight for us, so we can trust Him to hold us up, even when the waves get high.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RASING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCERE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HSEVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEMUM, THE MICHELANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALLAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SERVAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND.

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPORT TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANCE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLANE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ILTALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REM-BRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ILTALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFI-CANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

Joyce Meyer: Promises for your Everyday Life - a Daily Devotional

Do Your Best

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Philippians 1:10

God is excellent. As His representatives, we should be too. So it's important that we do our best in everything that our hands do. We must be motivated to do our very best in whatever we set out to accomplish. Paul urges us to "learn to...prize what is

excellent and of real value." as we make excellence a way of life, we will sense God's joy and be good examples to the world.

You must sow excellence in order to reap an excellent harvest. We can't expect excellent results in life when we don't live a life of excellence.

The Bible teaches us to develop diligence, steadfastness and determination, all of which will help us live lives of excellence.

So I encourage you to do your best with any project or activity that God

places in your path. Be diligent. Don't leave things undone, but finish what you start to the best of your ability. Set your mind to be steadfast and determined. Commit yourself to excellent results.

God honors an attitude of excellence. Choose to do your best, and He will always work alongside you.

Prayer starter: God, I want to live a life of excellence. Strengthen me and help me to do my best in every situation with steadfastness, diligence and determination.

Move Past Regret and Make New Choices

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Wrong choices cause regret, and when we experience regret we need to deal with it and let it teach us how to make better choices in the future.

I understand firsthand that wrong choices lead to regret. I remember a time several years ago when I looked at

myself and saw a noticeable difference between my husband Dave, and me, because he has exercised all his life and is healthy, strong and in good physical shape.

Initially, I merely regretted that I wasn't as strong as Dave, but then I realized I could do something about it. I now exercise regularly and have been amazed by the positive difference.

The Bible says that with God, you are a "new creation." you don't have to live in your old ways, but you can now make new, better choices empowered by the Holy Spirit. If you find yourself

regretting some of the unwise choices you have made in the past, don't be deceived into thinking it is too late to do anything about it. Just start doing what's right and then stick with it.

As you start making better choices, you will come to experience a life in which you enjoy God's blessings every day.

Prayer Starter: Holy Spirit, I know that I have been made a new creation. I don't want to live in regret about the past. Help me to make good choices so I can enjoy the future You have for me.

Trust Him Through the Process

4 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. Psalm 23:4

We often think of trusting God for things we need or want, but a true relationship of trust in God extends beyond trusting Him just to get something. We need to learn to trust Him through the process of attaining those things we desire.

There was a time in my life when I

focused intensely on trusting God for things, saying, 'I want this, God,' and 'I need such-and-such, God.' He began to show me that getting all those things was not the most important issue in my life.

He wanted to teach me how to trust Him enough to walk through situations with stability and with a good attitude on a consistent basis. He needed me to learn that He may not always rescue us when we want to get out of circumstances, but He is always with us as we walk through them.

God does not always deliver us from everything when we think He should, but

He is always with us. Today, instead of focusing on just the end result, realize that God is with you now. He is near to you, so trust Him to walk with you through the process.

Prayer Starter: God, I am so glad that You are with me now. I don't just trust You to give me things, but I trust You through the process of life.

Experience A New Beginning

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Ephesians 4:23

The Bible is filled with stories about people who experienced new beginning. Moses became a leader after being a shepherd for 40 years. Paul hated Christ until God renewed him and made him the greatest apostle of all time.

When we receive Jesus as our Savior, it is the ultimate new beginning. We become new creatures with an opportunity to learn a new way of living.

But the first step to experiencing that new life is believing that it's available to you.

Ephesians 4:23 says we must be constantly renewed in our minds and attitudes. It's easy to read about great people in the Bible and think that you are nothing like them, but when you start to think that, you need to renew your mind right away.

Choose to think according to God's Word, not how you feel. Receive His love and experience a new beginning. Life will become so much sweeter if you live with an attitude that says "God is

completely change me from the inside out. He's giving me a new beginning and there are greater things ahead."

Prayer Starter: Lord, I renew my mind in You. I know that You have a new beginning and a calling for me just like you did for Moses and Paul. I receive it today, believing that You can bring it to pass.

A Bird's Eye View Of The Bible

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library.
There are four types of writing in the Old Testament:
Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and "Minor Prophets" (the last 12). The "Minor" ones are shorter, not less important.

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library.
There are three types of writing in the New Testament:
History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PROPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



A Prayer for Our World

God, You alone are worthy of honor, glory, and praise. With You, we can overcome every storm—including the global impact COVID-19 is having on our world.

Right now, we are asking You to:

- Heal those who are sick and protect those who are not.
- Give our leaders extra wisdom as they navigate this pandemic and economic uncertainty.
- Strengthen Your global Church. Reveal to us how we can partner together to reach the needs of those around us.
- Calm our fears. Fill us with Your hope, joy, and peace as we continue to trust in You.
- Use this pandemic to pave the way for spiritual renewal. We want Your glory, power, and healing to be on display.

Come Lord Jesus, come.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

YouVersion

IN THE GARDEN

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" John 20:18

My dad loved to sing the old hymns. One of his favorites was "In the Garden." A few years back, we sang it at his funeral. The chorus is simple: "And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known." That song brought joy to my dad-as it does me.

Hymn writer C. Austin Miles says he wrote this song in spring 1912 after reading chapter 20 Of the gospel of John. "As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary's life when she knelt before her Lord and cried, "Rabboni [Teacher]."

In John 20, we find Mary Magdalene weeping near Jesus' empty tomb. There she met a man who asked why she was crying. Thinking it was the gardener, she spoke with the risen Savior-Jesus! Her sorrow turned to joy, and she ran to tell the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" (v. 18).

We too have the assurance that Jesus is risen! He's now in heaven with the Father, but He hasn't left us on our own. Believers in Christ have His Spirit inside us, and through Him we have the assurance and joy of knowing He's with us, and we are "His own." Alyson Kieda

How is it comforting to know that you don't have to do this life on your own? When have you intimately felt Jesus presence?

Jesus, I'm so thankful You're alive and that as Your child You live in me!

To learn more about the resurrection of Jesus, visit: ChristianUniversity.org/resurrection.

Today Scripture: **John 20:11-18**

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for? Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

INSIGHT

While there are differences in each of the gospel accounts of the discovery of Jesus' empty tomb, John's account (John 20:11-18) is unique in that Mary's emotion takes center stage. Mary is crying when she's introduced in the scene, and her tears are the impetus of the question asked by both the angels and the risen Lord: "Women, why are you crying?" (vv. 13, 15). To the angels she responds, "They have taken my Lord away" (v. 13). She has lost Him twice-first through death and now through an apparent conspiracy. The angels and Jesus knew why she was crying, but this is where Jesus meets her. When he says her name-"Mary"-she recognizes Him (v. 16). He meets her where she is in her grief and confusion.

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Reprinted by Permission



Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day. Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

PLEASE dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY

We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?

Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

For more information contact:

Church office 860-344-9527.or

Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Church School** (see Zoom Meeting)

12:00 p.m. **Worship Service**

<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>

Meeting ID: 959 628 798

(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from across the Country.
We can be watched worldwide.

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/562367770>

(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday School ZOOM Meetings

8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 734629713#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/734629713>

9:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 140827210#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/140827210>

9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 233007146#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/233007146>

11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 614890401#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401>

11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 856361645#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/856361645>

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

Online: crossstreetamezion.org

1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/> TJXKDEVIXE)

2. Text 73256 (Thecross)

3. PayPal,

4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440

5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct 06457,

6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

7. Call the office for someone to pick up

8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website; <http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/Give>)

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: crossstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: ken46@snet.net. If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (Ken46@snet.net), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net
www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Moses L. Harvill, M. Div.,
Pastor

Email: mharvill@snet.net

The Rev. Dr. Terry L. Jones
Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor
Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor
Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson-Turner
- Rev. William D. Wilson
- Rev. Ella Frances Perry
- Rev. Karen Nesmith
- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



Retooling For Church Growth In 2021

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteous; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33 KJV

“I am a Christian”

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not shouting “I’m clean livin’.”
I’m whispering “I was lost,
Now I’m found and forgiven.”

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I don’t speak of this with pride.
I’m confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not trying to be strong.
I’m professing that I’m weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not bragging of success.
I’m admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not holier than thou.
I’m just a simple sinner
Who received God’s good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, “**Oh, that You would bless
me indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may nor cause pain!**” So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

“God’s Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discernor of
the thoughts and intents of the heart”
Hebrews 4:12*

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to all
that you have promised to me. Not one
word of all your good promises has ever
failed. In light of this truth, I will walk in
your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
All of your words are pure, O God, and
you are a shield to me. Lord God, your

way is perfect, and your Word is tried.
You are a shield and a mighty buckler to
me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heavens,
O Lord. all of your promises are yes in
Christ, unto your glory, O God. You
have spoken through your Word since
ancient times, in order to give light to
those who sit in darkness, and you guide
my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and powerful,
and sharper than any two-edged sword.
It pierces even to the dividing asunder of
my soul and spirit, and of my joints and
marrow, and is a discernor of the
thoughts and intents of my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word, and
I will endeavor to walk in the light of your
Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25