

STATIO

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

Sunday, January 8

Station One - Pause

At this moment, slow down and quiet your soul before the Lord. Allow your mind and heart to be attentive to God.

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

"For God alone, my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation" (Psalm 62:1).

In a quiet place:

Set aside any distractions.

Sit still before the Lord.

Breathe deeply and slowly.

Allow your mind and heart to settle.

Acknowledge the presence of God.

Pause and Pray; Welcome the Lord into this moment of holy pause.

Station Two - Seven Prayers for Church:

Today, we invite you to pray for your church and prepare yourself for worship.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7

"I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my words."
Psalm 17:6

1. Pray that God will be glorified in all of our worship services today.
2. Pray that God's people would not forsake the assembly of the saints today.
3. Pray that the manifest presence of God will be experienced in our worship services today.
4. Pray for the preaching of God's Word and that those who preach it will be anointed by the Holy Spirit today.
5. Pray for people to respond in faith to the gospel's good news today.
6. Pray that God would set people free from sin today.
7. Pray that God will speak to you personally as you engage in the life of the church today.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you today (2 Cor. 13:14).

Amen.

Monday, January 9

Read: 1 John 2:15

If you take a quick look at the world, it is no secret that things aren't looking too good. There is trouble and confusion at just about every turn. Even when you say the term "the world," there is a negative connotation that goes along with it. Why is that? "The world" does not refer to God's glory on display in his creation. Instead, we are talking about a "culture corrupted by the twin sins of rebellion against God and the redefinition of good and evil." That's how John Mark Comer puts it. How fitting.

Twin sins. Rebellion against God and the redefinition of good and evil. Let's split those up and talk about them. Rebellion comes easily, doesn't it? Just listen to new parents discussing their parenting journey. Inevitably, they hit the road bump when their child learns to say "No." Rebellion 101. We instinctively know how to buck the system, and we live in a context where devaluing God's *system*, or design is being flaunted like an unending parade. The by-product of subverting God's plan and design starts with the redefinition of good and evil. This redefinition of good and evil happens when we invent new definitions that are separated from the truth of the Bible. By redefining good and evil, we ask the one true God to step off his throne because we know better than he does. God always knows better than we do, and whenever we disagree with God, we are always wrong.

There are two healthy responses to this understanding of "the world." First, we run to God's Word. We measure everything according to the Word, including the system that is parading all around us. Second, we walk in love. By knowing God and his Word, we know the blessing of boundaries. All of them are designed by God for our flourishing. Let it be said that when "the world" comes into contact with us, they are met by truth and love.

Tuesday, January 10

Read: Isaiah 40:8 and Psalm 119:105

Brainstorm with me. When you think about a burglar fleeing a crime scene, what do you imagine them wearing? Your guess is as good as mine regarding their shoe choice, but in your imagination, I'm sure they are wearing a mask. You know the picture—Beanie over the head, holes for the eyes, and a hole for the mouth. Now let me ask, why are they wearing a mask? They don't want to be identified. Then why would they flee the scene? Also obvious, they don't want to get caught. That tells me one thing – burglars know their actions are wrong. Even more, no one looks at a burglar and says, "What a model citizen. Somebody put their name on a building." Of course not! Stealing is always wrong.

Your truth, my truth, their truth, our truth. These days, everyone gets their own real estate when it comes to truth. Indeed, you've encountered this. There is an aggressive push against absolute truth. As in, the world would say, "Stealing isn't wrong. It's wrong to you." That, my friends, is a slippery slope.

Isaiah 40:8 says, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever." In other words, what God says is right will always be right, and what he says is wrong will always be wrong. God's Word is the standard for all of humanity – for all time. The Bible is not some outdated manual; it is the very Words of God that have graciously been given to us so that we can live our lives honoring Him.

"But why does someone have to be right? Can't we just love everyone?" The world would "Amen" those questions, big time. Here's the dilemma. Imagine parents never stepping in to guide or protect their children. Imagine a judge with complete indifference to every crime committed by lawbreakers. On the flip side, imagine what it would be like never to applaud positive things that are right, like breakthroughs in medical research or rescuing someone's life from harm. This is why we need right and wrong. This is why we need a standard. And his standard is the path that leads us to life.

Wednesday, January 11

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:6 and John 8:32

In 2013, news emerged of a man who survived three days of being trapped in a sunken tug boat off the coast of Nigeria. In the early hours of May 26, the Jacson-4 capsized by a towering wave, causing the boat to plummet 100 feet. During the boat's descent with water pounding into the upside-down vessel, Harrison Okene encountered a miracle; he found himself in an air pocket. Cold, in the dark, and trapped under an immense amount of pressure, he was able to endure the three-day wait for the rescue team. He was the only survivor, and all because of an air pocket.

Pressure is hard to live with, isn't it? You might not be capsized in a plummeting boat, but I am sure you deal with pressure. In particular, I am sure that you deal with pressure from the world. Theo Hobson hints at this struggle when he says, "What was universally condemned is now celebrated. What was universally celebrated is now condemned. Those who refuse to celebrate are condemned." That last line hits a nerve. We live in a world that is unsatisfied with celebrating evil; it wants you to celebrate it, too. If you work in the business world, you know this. If you are parenting kids, you know this. If you are breathing...you know this. The world expects you to celebrate evil.

So, what is our air pocket? 1 Corinthians 13:6 says, "Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." The truth, dear friends, is our air pocket. There is no shame in knowing right from wrong. As a matter of fact, God wants us to know right from wrong. I think there is a distinction between celebrating behavior and loving a person. Celebrating sinful behavior says, "That is right." Loving a sinful person says, "I love you, even though I think your behavior is wrong." See the difference? In love, we celebrate the truth. We do not need to cave under the pressure to bend or abandon God's Word. His Word is unchanging, and we can live confidently that we have His approval when we follow his Word. Commit to following God's Word despite the pressure you might face to do otherwise.

Thursday, January 12

Read: 1 John 2:16-17

Heaven. The longer I live, the more I look forward to it. To be perfectly honest, I am not concerned about streets of gold or pearly gates. I just want to see Jesus. The author and perfecter of my faith, the Prince of Peace, the One who saved me. One day, my faith will be sight. I will see Jesus, and so will you if you know him as your Lord and Savior.

But we aren't there yet. We still live in a fallen world where things are not as they should be. A world where we experience pain and sickness. A world where our lives pan out differently than expected, and we are slow to become the person we want to be. A world where people that we love make mistakes. A world where we wait. This world, as it is today, was not God's original design. His design was perfect, but our sin introduced brokenness on every level. Everything was ruined. But praise God for 1 John 2:17, which says, "And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." Our hope is that the best is yet to come. This life is the worst that we will experience. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from the dead, we have hope beyond our last breath. If eternity is a marathon, this lifetime is just the first step of the 26.2-mile race. Our waiting, suffering, and pain have an expiration date.

When Jesus saved us, he didn't take us straight to heaven. He intentionally left us here for a purpose. As heaven-bound people, we aim to know Jesus and make him known. Brokenness has touched all our lives somehow, but we have been made whole in Christ. So, we praise him. We follow him. We love him. To a watching world, we are called to live in a way that proves that we truly believe this is not our home. Heaven is our home, and we want to take as many people with us as possible. So, we make it our aim to reach as many people with the good news of Jesus as possible. Is that the defining aim of your life?

Friday, January 13

Read: Psalm 139:23-24

Is it just me, or is it fascinating that the go-to question people ask in passing is, "How are you?" How am I? As in, do you want to know my family's level of crazy or how well-kept my home looks at a moment's notice? Of course not. Most people are content with a "Good," "Busy," or, if you are in church, "Blessed."

We have arrived in 2023, and I want to pose that question to you. How are you? We are not crossing paths at the coffee bar for 8.7 seconds, so this should be an appropriate window to ask. Let me be more specific. How is your walk with Jesus? The Bible describes a Christian as a person who is continually being changed. Someone whose opinions become more aligned with the Bible. Someone whose outlook on life becomes more intentional and driven by a sense of purpose. Someone whose treatment of people becomes more loving. Someone whose behavior looks more like Jesus. So, how are you?

Hear me; I am not trying to shame you. I am just inviting you back into the life God has called you to as a believer. You may feel like there is a canyon between where you are and where you want to be with Jesus. You might be tempted to doubt any potential progress in your relationship with him because of things you have done, something you've said, or habits that you still haven't shaken. Friend, jump in. Engage. Jesus loves you, and your church wants to celebrate every step with you. No matter where you are in your journey, you can walk forward with Christ. In Psalm 139:23-24, David says, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In other words, David flipped the question we started with today. He essentially asked God, "How am I doing?" Maybe that's your first step. Ask the Lord the same question, and let him weigh in on the state of things in your life. Through his Word, he will show you, and through his Spirit, he will give you the strength to move forward.

Remember these words from Richard Sibbes, "We have this for a foundation truth, that there is more mercy in Christ than sin in us." Thanks be to God.

Saturday, January 14

Reflect

Take some time to pause and think about each of the devotionals from this week.

What has the Lord revealed to you?

Respond to the Lord in prayer today.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you today (2 Cor. 13:14).

Amen.