

STATIO

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

Sunday, January 15

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 16

Read: Jeremiah 2:13

Let's begin this week by taking time to think about what our heart most deeply desires – the thing or things our soul desperately craves. After all the holiday shopping and unwrapping of gifts, perhaps there is still a deep ache in your soul that could not be comforted by all the things the season handed you. Do you find yourself entering 2023 a little emptier than you had hoped?

Emptiness is difficult, especially when you look around and see how much you have and yet how unfulfilled you feel—the human mind races to fix the problem. We don't want to feel empty or lonely or lost. We want to feel satisfied, fulfilled, content, and even happy. The problem could be that our desires have become disordered and counterintuitive to what God truly desires for us. Here's the hard truth, disordered desires seek disordered cures. Disordered desires are birthed in our flesh, and if we are not careful, we will seek solutions and cures from a world that are never meant to satisfy us fully. Pain wants immediate relief, and the danger we all face is we are just one click away from having whatever it is we think will fill our emptiness. We can easily spend most of our lives drawing from our broken cisterns that cannot hold water. Our broken cisterns are the people, places, and things we draw from to fill the emptiness of our souls.

The human soul has ached for wholeness since the beginning of time, and God, in his goodness, speaks to this problem through the prophet Jeremiah. He reminds his people that they have deserted him, The Spring of Living Water, and have, in a sense, made themselves their own gods – doing what is right in their own eyes. Drinking from our own cisterns simply reveals the condition of our hearts. When we rely on ourselves to fill the ache of our souls, at the heart level, we say, "God, you are not good, and you cannot be trusted." We have forsaken the one who knows us best yet loves us the most by declaring, "I know what is best." The result will always be emptiness.

Jesus is our Spring of Living Water. Jesus promises that whoever drinks from him will never thirst again (John 4:14). He knows everything we need and will not withhold what he has purposed for our lives. Although we will forsake him many times, he promises never to leave or forsake us. He is with us. He is for us. He is all that we need, our eternal Spring of Living Water.

Take a moment to surrender the things you are relying upon for peace and fulfillment today, and ask your Heavenly Father to help you trust his provision for the empty places in your heart.

Tuesday, January 17

Read: Galatians 6:9

The Apostle Paul speaks about the battle we have with our flesh many times in his New Testament writings. A good working definition of the word *flesh* would be that which is contrary to the Spirit of God within us. John Mark Comer defines flesh as "our base, primal, animalistic drives for self-gratification, especially as pertains to sensuality and survival." That is a heavy definition, but it clearly describes all that is contrary to the Spirit of God in our lives. Any action we take, word we speak, or thought we think outside of God's divine plan for us is of the flesh and can ultimately be defined as sin.

Even as regenerative Believers, we still battle the flesh. We can still struggle with sin and temptation, and some of us may have even given up on ever changing or being set free from the thing we struggle with the most. One of the enemy's greatest schemes is to get us to the point of believing there is no hope for change. He wants us to think, "this is who I am, this is what I've got, and nothing is ever going to change for me." Sadly, this is a lie we all too often succumb to.

We will behave in line with what we believe, and when we think we will never change, guess what? The body will follow suit. By believing this lie, you have put yourself into a chronic sin cycle that seems impossible to escape. Paul says it this way, "you are sowing to your own flesh." For gardeners reading this, you understand the time it takes to produce a garden. You don't just put the seed in the ground, walk away and hope for the best. You water it, care for it, and give it everything it needs to thrive, grow and produce the vegetables you planned for.

The same applies to our hearts. As a Believer, you have a choice and the power of the Holy Spirit to sow into your heart things of the Spirit. Or, on the contrary, you can sow things of the flesh. Continuing with the garden analogy, sowing to the flesh will result in anger, bitterness, envy, unforgiveness, and sexual immorality, which Paul says all reap corruption in our lives. The fruit produced in us from sowing to the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit. They aren't even from us. Praise God. They are his fruit flowing through us. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). And finally, the eternal life Paul talks about in this text is not just about heaven. As his image bearers, it is possible to bring heaven to earth by living a life cultivated by the fruit of the Spirit. This is how the world will know we truly belong to Jesus.

Wednesday, January 18

Read: Psalm 73:26

Follow your heart. Live your best life. Be true to yourself. These are all ideologies our culture has normalized as pathways to finding purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in this life. The problem is this way of thinking will always lead us to a life of self-gratification, self-centeredness, and entitlement. Our hearts, when left alone, cannot be trusted. God's Word tells us the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9). Let's be honest; that sounds a little hopeless...because it is.

King David's story is an example of what it looks like to follow your heart. His affair with Bathsheba and the eventual killing of her husband are some of the most scandalous events recorded in biblical history. Yet he declares from his own mouth, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." In a sense, he is saying my hopeless heart has a hopeful future. He is honestly admitting that his heart, when left to its own strength, can and will make wrong decisions. "But God." These are two of the greatest words written in scripture. Our hearts are messy and broken....but God. Our hearts are selfish and weak...but God. Ultimately, David finds his strength in God, not within himself. Willpower can only go so far, even for you Type A, get-it-done people out there. We all will eventually get to the end of ourselves. And that's not a bad place to be because that is when we find that Jesus is our portion, our help, our strength, and our exceedingly great reward. The word *portion* here literally means inheritance. As children of God, we have been declared heirs to the promise. A reward is stored up and waiting for us; nothing can take this away from us. You can't mess up and miss out. Our portion is secured not based on the goodness of our work but on the greatness of the work of Jesus. David knew this. He believed this and trusted this to be true. He anchored his hope to this truth.

Without the redemptive work of Christ, there is no cure for our deceitful, broken hearts. The goodness of the Good News is that the work of Jesus done on our behalf offers to us an opportunity for our hearts to be reformed and reshaped into his image. Do not miss this. You can have a transformed heart. Your disordered desires can be re-ordered into his desires, and your disordered loves can be re-ordered into receiving the love of Jesus and, in return, loving Jesus above all others. This should encourage your heart today. Your hope, your portion, and your strength all rest in the work of Jesus. Thanks be to God.

Thursday, January 19

Read: John 14:27

Peace. We all want it, but few indeed find it. Mankind was created for true *shalom*, the peace that only God can give, and as long as we live and take up occupancy in this world, our hearts will ache for it. One of the names of God in the Bible is Yahweh-Shalom, the Lord is Peace (Judges 6:24). The Hebrew word for peace is shalom, which means wholeness in all of life, completeness, welfare, and safety.

Adam and Eve had perfect shalom. They knew what it meant to be completely whole (unbroken in mind, body, and spirit) and to live in perfect unity with Yahweh, their Creator. Even so, they were tempted to believe there was more. They worshiped the created instead of the Creator by choosing to gratify their flesh and be their own god, and the result was broken shalom.

Jesus said he came to give us peace. The peace he talks about here is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling. This adequately describes the peace the world gives...a temporary sense of happiness or bliss because everything is going as planned. The kingdom of this world is upside down from the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of this world, or the kingdom of darkness, is operated by the enemy, and like a bad door-to-door salesman, he over-promises and under-delivers. The culture of the kingdom of this world is marked by scarcity, stress, fear, anxiety, and hopelessness.

Jesus was clear when He proclaimed, "I do not give to you as the world gives you." The Kingdom of God is one of absolute, complete peace. In Christ Jesus, shalom peace is a peace we have, but we will never fully experience it if we don't fully receive it. To receive his perfect peace, we must know that Christ is our sovereign King and that he rules and reigns over every detail of our lives. You might think you are powerful enough to interrupt God's divine plan for your life. Let me give you some good news today; you are not that powerful (Job 42:2).

When we choose peace, we are choosing to rest our hearts in the eternal care, provision, and love of our Heavenly Father. His peace is not dependent upon life circumstances. You can walk through one of the most challenging seasons of your life and still have peace when you trust in God's sovereign hand. He is good; everything He does is for our good and His glory. Jesus reminds us not to let our hearts be troubled and not to be afraid. This can only be realized when we know in our hearts that he is good and can be trusted.

Are you relying on yourself to manufacture your peace today, or are you fully resting and trusting in Yahweh-Shalom, the God of Peace?

Friday, January 20

Read: Psalm 23:1

There is a story recorded in 1 Kings 17 about a widow and her son on the verge of starving. There was a great drought, and many people were passing away. God sends the prophet Elijah to visit this widow. The first thing he asks for is food and water. She explains to Elijah that she is gathering wood to bake her last loaf of bread for herself and her son, and then they will die. Elijah responds with these words, "do not fear, go and do as you have said." So, she makes her last loaf of bread and invites Elijah into her home to share this final meal.

God, in his goodness, blesses this poor widow. Elijah promises that her jar of flour and her jug of oil will not be empty until he sends rain upon the earth. The Word of God says, "she went and did as Elijah said, and she and her household ate for many days." I love the faith of this desperate widow. In a moment of great fear, she steps into great faith, and God blesses her.

We all face times of fear in our lives. Some of us are almost always bent toward fearing the worst-case scenarios. Sound familiar to anyone? We can fear the future and fear making the wrong decisions for ourselves and our families. When our fear is not surrendered to our Heavenly Father, it can paralyze us or send us into a frenzy of making bad choices. We have read a lot this week about the struggle of our flesh, and there is never a more tempting time to lean into our flesh than when we are afraid. In moments of fear, we can often make decisions that do not align with God's plan for our lives.

I am sure, in her flesh, the widow did not want to share her last meal. As a mother, I am sure she wanted to save her child's life. But she opened her hands to God and gave him all she had. She leaned into the power of Yahweh – her provider, keeper, and sustainer. She obeyed in the face of fear, and she trusted God knew best and would provide everything she needed.

We can draw strength from the Word of God. The Psalmist, David, speaks to living a life without lack or fear. Psalm 23 is written to describe a life fully surrendered, fully resting, and fully trusting in the care of a Good Shepherd. What if we resolved to believe today – "The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need." How would believing this inform how you live your life, not worrying about past mistakes or what tomorrow holds but simply resting in this promise for today? Dear friend, you have everything you need. You lack nothing. Choose to live with your hands open and your heart to God, trusting in his providential care for your life.

Saturday, January 21

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.

We trust that these 21 days have been richly rewarding for you and hope you will continue engaging with Statio throughout the year ahead.

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.