

21 Days of Prayer | 2024

Monday, January 1

Exodus 1:6-7

God is a promise maker and a promise keeper. The book of Exodus reminds us that God remembers His promises and faithfully keeps each one. We must look back briefly to understand the fulfillment of God's promise in Exodus. In Genesis 12, God called a man named Abram (later changed to Abraham) from his home to follow Him. God led him to a new land and promised him He would make him into a great nation and bless him, and all peoples on earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:2-3). God confirmed the promise to his son, Isaac, saying, "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring, all nations on earth will be blessed..." (Genesis 26:4). Isaac's son, Jacob, received the same promise, "Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and the east, to the north and the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Genesis 28:14).

The promise given to Abraham and his descendants was the beginning of the nation of Israel, but even more, this promise pointed ahead to Jesus. Going back a little further, in Genesis 3, sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of their disobedience, man's relationship with God was broken. Only a perfect Savior could reconcile what had been lost. God's response in Genesis 3 looked ahead to a Savior, and Genesis 3 points to Jesus, just as the promise given to Abraham points to Jesus. When God promised Abraham all nations on earth would be blessed through him, He was preparing the way for the Savior. Through Abraham, God would raise a nation, take them as His own people, and from that nation, fulfill the promise of Genesis 3. The coming Savior would be born through Abraham's descendants.

It was through Jacob's children that God's promise would begin to unfold. This brings us back to Exodus. Jacob's family settled in Egypt by the provision of God and were given the best of the land of Egypt. When Jacob entered Egypt, his family numbered 70, yet while there, their numbers increased. Generations passed, as Exodus 1:6 tells us, yet Jacob's family continued to grow just as God promised to Abraham. Verse 7 says, "the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceeding numerous, so that the land was filled with them." God was building a nation and preparing them to leave Egypt and finally settle in the place He had promised to Abraham generations before. God was preparing a nation that would enter into a covenant relationship with Him and be His people. God was preparing a nation because, at just the right time, He would send His one and only Son to earth to die for the sins of every person in every nation so we could have a relationship with Him. Exodus 1:7 shows us God does exactly what He promises He will do. We can trust that He will be faithful to every promise He has made, just as He was faithful to His promise to send a Savior to reconcile the lost. "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so, through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Tuesday, January 2

Exodus 1:8-10

Have you ever found yourself cruising along, all is going well, living where God has called you, right in the center of His will, and then something changes? A job that seemed perfect isn't so perfect anymore. A place you felt called doesn't feel like home anymore. You can see things changing, and you feel disruption in your life. This was the case for God's people. In Exodus 1:8, we learn that a new king has come to power in Egypt. He is unaware of Joseph, which means he does not know Joseph held a high position in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, and that his father, Jacob, and his family had been well received and established in the best part of Egypt. He did not know they were welcomed in Egypt and had been given privilege because the king highly esteemed Joseph. The new king had no reason to treat the Israelites well because he did not know their history. Life can change quickly when you go from being well-known and respected to completely unknown!

The new king sees that the Israelites are becoming too numerous. He fears that if war breaks out, Israel will join their enemies and fight against Egypt. We discussed yesterday that God had been faithfully fulfilling His promise to Abraham to make him into a great nation. The unfolding promise of God threatened Pharaoh, the king. God was already increasing the Israelites, but the king feared they might increase even more. The very thing that revealed God's movement among His people was the same thing the new king feared. When the promise of God is evident in your life, do not be surprised if it draws the enemy's attention. If he knows God is working in your life, our enemy, the devil, is likely to respond with difficulty. He desires to create discord and strife in the lives of those who belong to the Lord. For the Israelites, the promise of God brought the fear of the king, and he responded with hard labor for the people of God. Pharaoh's answer to stopping the Israelites from increasing and potentially turning on Egypt was to put a heavy burden on them. Tomorrow, we will look at the new conditions placed on God's people that made their lives incredibly difficult, but because God was working among His people, the Israelites increased in number. This made the new king take action against them. Pharaoh said, "Come, we must deal shrewdly with them, or they will become even more numerous..." (Exodus 1:10). God was moving; the king did not know it, but God was preparing Israel for something greater. He was preparing them for their new home promised to Abraham, and He was preparing them for a new relationship with Him. The move of God and the fulfillment of God's promise brought the enemy's response.

When you are walking with the Lord and seeking His will in your life, and your circumstances begin to change, consider what new thing the Lord might be doing. When the enemy seeks to oppose the move of God, remember these promises: "But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me" (Psalm 31:14-15). "My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you" (Psalm 9:3).

Wednesday, January 3

Exodus 1:12-14

We've talked the last two days about God's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham and his descendants and the king's fear of the growing Israelite nation. Our verses today, Exodus 1:12-14, reveal the contrast between Israel's changing circumstances and God's unchanging promise. God continued to bless His people. Verse 12 says, "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites..." Anytime there is a "but" in Scripture, make sure to take notice of what is happening. The Egyptians put slave masters over the Israelites and oppressed them with forced labor, making "their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields..." (Exodus 1:14). However, the more they oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied. Despite their conditions growing increasingly difficult, God continued to multiply them. The working conditions of the Israelites did not get better; in fact, they got worse before the Lord delivered them, but even under Pharaoh's heavy thumb, God continued to do what He promised.

Have you ever been through a difficult season or trial, and in the midst of uncertainty and difficulty, you were able to see glimpses of God working in your situation? I call those "God's still in it" moments because it reminds us God is still working even when we cannot see the outcome yet. In the midst of hard seasons, those moments assure us that He is still with us, and we can lean on His promises and depend on His faithfulness. Isaiah records this promise, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). The Israelites life became difficult and burdened, yet the Lord's plan for them remained. He continued to prosper His people despite Pharaoh's heavy burden. This week's reading has shown us the burden placed on God's people resulting from the king's fear because of the blessing of God, and the burden was purposeful to move God's people out of Egypt to the land He promised them years ago. The fulfillment of one promise opened the door for fulfillment of the next promise. However, God's activity in their lives invited opposition from the enemy. The king of Egypt was against them, but it is the devil who is always against God's people. He is always the driving force behind any opposition to God's people. Even so, the opposition caused greater blessings. Not only that, but it also caused the enemy to be afraid of them.

When God is moving in our lives, we can depend on His faithful promises to us and expect opposition from the enemy. Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The devil seeks to destroy what God is doing in the lives of those who follow Him, but the devil's effort did not stop God's continued blessing on the Israelites. Instead, "the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites" (Exodus 1:12). May the Lord's activity in our lives cause the enemy to dread us and all that God is doing in us for His glory. "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Thursday, January 4

Exodus 1:15-17

Yesterday, we talked about Pharaoh's attempt to stop the growing nation of Israel by placing on them a heavy burden. Because of God's faithfulness, the Israelites continued to grow and multiply even as the king oppressed them. In the last several verses of Exodus 1, we get a snapshot of what was happening with God's people. These verses detail the difficult circumstances of the lives of the Israelites under Pharaoh, the very present help and blessing of the LORD, and show us an example of courage to stand up for the commands of God. The Hebrew midwives were named Shiphrah and Puah. They were given an order by Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, "When you help Hebrew woman in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live" (Exodus 1:16). It seems the king's back up plan for the Israelites harsh labor was to murder the Hebrew boys when they were born. The condition of God's people was already difficult, and now, the death of all Hebrew baby boys had been ordered. The midwives were told what to do, but they did not comply with the king's order; instead, they chose to fear God. Their incredible response to the king's command is recorded in verse 17, "The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live."

What does it mean to fear God? The Bible gives us the answer when we consider verses like Job 1:1, which tells us that Job was "blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil," and Proverbs 8:13 tells us, "To fear the LORD is to hate evil..." The midwives feared God, making their choice to honor Him and trust His word. If they had any fear of disobeying the king, the fear of God ruling in their hearts was greater. Their example serves as encouragement to us. We live in a world that constantly asks us to compromise our beliefs and comply with questionable and often evil ideas. In our ever-changing culture, the things of God are continually being attacked, and worldly ideas and thoughts seek to replace truth. There can be fear of not complying or accepting these worldly thoughts and ideas because our enemy, the devil, wants us to believe we have too much to lose. He would like us to believe the cost of following the Lord is too high. The prince of this world wants us to compromise our faith and follow the trends. But God is calling us to do so much more. He calls us to live differently, to be separated from the world's view of right and wrong, and instead, to honor Him above everything. We will see in tomorrow's verses that God blessed the midwives for fearing Him and obeying His commands. Their faith to honor God and their courage to defy the king exemplify living for God alone and choosing Him even in the most difficult situations. May their example give us the courage to live for God, fear Him only, and obey His commands, no matter the circumstances.

Friday, January 5

Exodus 1:20-21

Yesterday, we discussed the midwives' example of fearing God and defying the order of the king of Egypt. They honored God above the king when they chose to obey His commands. Their hearts of obedience furthered God's blessing on Israel and allowed them to receive God's blessing in their own lives. They refused to compromise the commands of God. In Genesis 9:5-6, God said to Noah, "And for your lifeblood, I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." Killing the Hebrew baby boys, as the king demanded, would have put Shiphrah and Puah in direct violation of the command of God, and they would be accountable to Him for the lives lost. This was a difficult position, and not unlike how we might feel when those in authority over us are ungodly.

How do we stand firm when faced with direct orders and the consequences of refusing to comply? I think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, living in Babylon. They refused to worship the image of gold set up by King Nebuchadnezzar. When faced with being thrown into the fiery furnace, they replied, "...we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18). They refused to obey the king's order because it defied the order of God. They knew God said, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3), and to obey the king meant disobeying God. Their faith gave them the courage to stand against the king. God rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the blazing furnace, and they were promoted in the province of Babylon. In the same way, the midwives' obedience to God brought the provision and blessing of God. The Bible tells us, "So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own" (Exodus 1:20-21). God continued to bless Israel by increasing their numbers even more because the midwives honored Him. God also blessed Shiphrah and Puah with families of their own. Blessing followed obedience.

1 John 5:3 says, "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." To love the Lord is to obey His commands. These followers of God did not seek honor for themselves but simply lived in obedience to God. When the opportunity came, they chose faithfulness to God over worldly acceptance or consequences. We live in a world that is always asking us to compromise our beliefs and sacrifice our allegiance to God and His commands. May their examples encourage us to stand against worldly pressures to compromise our faith and instead honor God in every situation. "He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children, it will be a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death" (Proverbs 14:26-27).

Saturday, January 6

Week in Review

Take some time to pause and reflect back on each of the devotionals from this past week.

What have you learned about God?

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).

Sunday, January 7

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 services today.
4. Pray for the preaching of God’s Word and that those who preach it will be filled with 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).

Monday, January 8

The Faith of Jochebed

Chapter 2 of Exodus opens with the birth of Moses. Scripture teaches that both Moses' parents are from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe. Although Moses' parents are unnamed in Exodus 2, we learn from Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59 that Moses' parents are Amran and Jochebed. They have three children: Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. Moses, the baby of the family, was born at the time of Pharaoh's edict to cast every male baby into the Nile. For three months, Moses' parents hid him, believing the Lord had plans for their son other than destruction. Scripture shows us a couple filled with faith, determined to live in fear of the Lord, not the fear of man. When Moses can be hidden no longer, Jochebed lovingly prepares what can be best described as an ark basket for Moses. If Pharaoh declared all baby boys must be thrown in the Nile, well, she would lovingly place her baby in the bulrushes near the banks of the Nile.

Jochebed's faith is astounding. Having received this baby as a gift from God, she turns him back over to the Lord in faith. Knowing crocodiles were in the water, and he would ultimately be discovered, she trusted God. Her faith reminds me of Abraham's faith when Scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Like Abraham, she believed God would spare her son. She would not have told Miriam, her very young daughter, to keep watch over her brother if she expected Moses to be murdered or to be eaten by something in the Nile. John MacArthur says, "The careful actions of Moses' mother to construct the ark of bulrushes, to set Moses afloat close to the royal bathing place, and to have his sister watch to see what would happen, indicate a hope that something would work out right for the child." Hebrews 11 attests to her faith when it says in verse 23, "By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict." The risk to Jochebed was greater if she held on to him than if she yielded him to God.

It is riskier to keep our families in our hands, in our control, in our plans than it is to surrender them to a loving God who loves them more than us, who is wiser than us, and whose plans are always higher and better than ours. Does anyone but myself need to hear that today? Jochebed feared God, and in this, she grabbed onto extraordinary faith. This faith allowed her to place Moses in the Nile because it was part of God's plan to help him achieve his destiny.

Tuesday, January 9

The Courage of Miriam

Amran's and Jochebed's faith seems to have spilled onto their daughter, Miriam. In Exodus 2:4, the Bible says, "And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him." Pharaoh's daughter comes down to the water to bathe, and her servants walk beside the river, presumably looking for danger. As Pharaoh's daughter enters the Nile, she sees the basket and has one of her servants retrieve it. Opening the basket and finding baby Moses, she recognized him as one of the Hebrew boys. Rather than immediately dictate his death into the river, this young woman speaks with Miriam. She springs into action and smartly asks Pharaoh's daughter if she can get a nursing woman to care for the baby. Does Miriam's courage spark courage in Pharaoh's daughter to spare Moses' life? Scripture doesn't say, but we clearly see a child and a young woman boldly defy the edict of a Pharaoh and a father. Their actions save Moses's life.

When I read this portion of the Scripture, I always wonder if Pharaoh's daughter suspected that Jochebed when Moses's mother "hired her" to care for the boy. This is unclear, but what's extremely clear is that even as a little girl, Miriam sees the woman's pity on the baby and risks encountering her to spare her brother. Again, Moses is to be cast into the Nile to die. So, when Miriam approaches Pharaoh's daughter, she, too, is placing herself at significant risk. She courageously asks, "Let him live, and let me be responsible." The faith of her parents is already bearing fruit in the faith of this little girl. Parents and grandparents: Do not underestimate what your children or grandchildren see in your life of faith. Do not underestimate how God works through your prayer life in the lives of your children and grandchildren.

Young adults do not undervalue what your life of faith models to your family, to your co-workers, and even to unbelievers around you. College students and teenagers, others see your faith, and they are inspired by your courageous actions to follow Christ daily in the face of a culture that defies the authority of God.

As Christians, we must not undervalue speaking our faith to others. We must courageously risk doing right and encourage others to stand up for what is right, even if it's risky. Miriam does this, and her brother is spared. Like Jochebed, Miriam's courage is a building block of faith in Moses rising to lead the people of God to freedom.

Wednesday, January 10

Unnamed and Unlikely

As we open God's word today, we focus on another character in the story of Exodus 2. The daughter of Pharaoh seems to be an unlikely person to be used by God, but this Egyptian woman is central to the story of the Exodus.

We do not know the name of Pharaoh's daughter, but we know she defies her father's order and spares a Hebrew baby, who she will later take as her son. Pharaoh dictated that every Hebrew boy must be thrown into the Nile, but instead, his daughter drew a Hebrew baby boy from the water. She must know a little Hebrew because she names him Moses, which sounds like the Hebrew verb *mashah*, meaning "to draw out." The Bible says she chose this name because "I drew him out of the water." Indeed, she didn't know that the name she chose hinted at his spiritual leadership destiny. Just as Moses was drawn from the water, he would draw God's people out of Egypt through the sea.

Pharaoh, who ruthlessly desires the destruction of every Hebrew boy, in an ironic turn of events, becomes the grandfather to Moses. The Preach the Word commentary says of Pharaoh's daughter: "The pity of this Egyptian woman is a reminder that the exodus was not just for the Jews; ultimately, it was for the salvation of the whole world, including the Egyptians themselves. When the Israelites finally make the exodus from Egypt, a 'mixed multitude goes with them.'" We see this later in Exodus 12:38. Probably, some of those seeking salvation from the Pharaoh were Egyptians. This makes sense because God's plan had always been to save people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Isaiah later foretells that the Lord would "make himself known to the Egyptians." As Christians, we can be thankful for Pharaoh's unnamed daughter, who, as a Gentile (like us), was part of God's saving plan for the nations.

During these 21 days of prayer, is there an unexpected way that God may want to use you? Is God leading you to take an action that feels unexpected? Is there a person that you sense God is asking you to share your faith story so they might come to faith in Christ?

Thursday, January 11

The Fears and Frustrations of Moses

As we shift our focus to Moses, Exodus 2:11 tells us, "Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and observed their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his people." Although he was raised in Egyptian luxury as the son of an Egyptian princess, Moses still identified with the Hebrews as a Hebrew. When he sees how the Egyptian taskmasters treat the Hebrew slaves, he is angered and justifies retribution against the Egyptians. He kills the Egyptian aggressor and hides his body in the sand. He thinks the murder is hidden.

Isn't that what we always think about sin? It's hidden. Truthfully, it's never hidden from God, and it's rarely hidden from others. Often, the only person we are fooling about our sin is ourselves. Moses's mother may have successfully hidden Moses for three months, but Moses's sin is discovered by the next day. When Pharaoh learns of the killing, he tries to kill Moses, and a terrified Moses flees and goes to live in the land of Midian.

After feeling the momentary spotlight because of his sin, Moses lives in relative obscurity in Midian for the next 40 years. He marries Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, a Midianite priest. They raise a family, and he becomes a shepherd. Much of their life, like mine and your life, is very ordinary, and the glitz of Pharaoh's palace is a distant memory. Yet, like us, every part of Moses's journey was orchestrated by God. Moses could have never expected that God was preparing him to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. Moses probably didn't think God was preparing him for anything.

As we reflect on this passage and portion of Moses's life, here are some insights we relate to:

(1) Sin may have forced us to "flee" certain aspects of life. Is there a relationship broken by sin that needs forgiveness and restoration? Are you "fleeing" the pressures of life with substances? Friend, sin will not remain hidden, and you can't escape the consequences of unforgiven sin. Before you go any further in 21 days of prayer, repent today and ask God to forgive your sin.

(2) God providentially places Moses in three families, each vital to God's plan. The people God places in your life may be instrumental to His plans for you. As you begin this new year, how can you be intentional in the relationships God has placed in your life? Ask God to surround you with people who will push you toward God, not away from God.

(3) The preparation of Moses's life took a long time. As we think about the Israelites' plight under their Egyptian taskmasters, it is hard to reconcile that Moses will not be raised up to lead them for forty years. Yet, God is maturing Moses. He is teaching Moses to trust Him, live simply, follow God's leadership, and not act in haste. God is also preparing you. How can you grow in your trust in Him? God has a destiny for your life; will you trust Him (even if it takes 40 years) to prepare you?

Friday, January 12

God Remembered

I pray that 21 Days of Prayer is already bearing fruit in your life. Maybe a decision is now clear, a frustration lessened, or you feel closer to the Lord through this consistent time in the Bible. Some of you, however, find yourselves in a place of desperation. You need to hear from God, and you are begging God to move. Friend, today is for you!

As we close Exodus 2, Scripture says, "After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor; they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. And God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God saw the Israelites, and God knew."

We hear the Pharaoh has died and instinctively breathe a sigh of relief. Indeed, things will get better for the Israelite people. Yet, Scripture instead says, "They groaned because of their difficult labor." The Israelites are desperate. In fact, the words used in Scripture to describe their cries reflect painful agony, intense grief, and bitter distress. Tony Evans says of suffering, "Hardship forces us to turn our focus upward, to cry out for help." The Apostle Paul speaks of this in Romans 8:26 when Scripture says, "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." The Israelites cry out to God, and God hears their cries.

The time has come for God to enact His plan for their deliverance. "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel, and God knew." God is going to deliver His people from bondage. He is going to advance their salvation through their physical exit from Egypt. Not only does He have a personal plan for Moses, but Moses is also to be an instrument in His larger plan for the salvation of His chosen people.

Friends, God responds to our cries. He hears our prayers. God remembers His covenant; He remembers His promise. As He told Abraham in Genesis 15, He is set to deliver His people after 400 years of bondage. As hard as this may be to grasp, God's plans will be fulfilled in His time. Just as He saw the Israelites, He sees us. Just as He heard their cries, He hears our prayers, our cries of desperation. AND just as He remembered them, He remembers us. He is faithful! He will act on behalf of His people and fulfill His promises and plans for His glory. This is certain truth. God sent Jesus to be our Savior and the ultimate fulfillment of His covenant. From beginning to end, our salvation depends on His remembrance of His covenant; if we are believers in Christ, we are part of this eternal covenant. We can rest in the truth that we belong to Him!

Saturday, January 13

Week in Review

Take some time to pause and reflect on each devotional from this past week.

What have you learned about God?

What has the Lord revealed to you?

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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).

Sunday, January 14

Seven Prayers for Church

Today, we invite you to pray for your church and prepare 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 services today.
4. Pray for the preaching of God's Word and that those who preach it will be filled with 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).

Monday, January 15

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light. -- Matthew 17:1-2 (CSB)

What an incredible moment for Peter, James, and John. They get to truly experience all the glory of Jesus. For a brief moment on earth, the complete deity of Jesus shows through His human figure. At that same moment, Moses and Elijah show up and start having a conversation with them. It is one of those moments with the Lord that you want to camp out in. You do not want to leave. You want to stay as long as the Lord allows. And then they hear God. Think about it! They have seen the glory of Jesus. They are hanging with religious heroes, and then God speaks and reveals the truth of who Jesus Christ is. Like, what a moment! What an experience.

But they had to be willing to climb a high mountain to get there. The mountains of Israel are steep. It took effort and energy to get to this moment. When they started facing the mountain, they had no clue what was in store at the top. They only knew that Jesus had led them to face the mountain. In the Bible, God uses mountains over and over to reveal Himself to people and to show off His glory.

In the 21 Days of Prayer, we have been lifting up the number one burden in our lives every single day. You could categorize it as a mountain you are facing. That mountain may be an opportunity. It may be a hardship. Either way, God has brought you this mountain. He wants to show you His glory. But you have to climb the mountain if you want to experience the glory. God wants to meet with you on the mountain. He wants to lead you on the mountain. He wants to build your faith and trust in Him on the mountain. But you have to follow Him up!

As you pray for the mountain you are facing, tell God you will follow Him where He leads. You are willing to climb the mountain. Tell Him you want to see His glory!

Tuesday, January 16

Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord's presence." At that moment, the Lord passed by. -- 1 Kings 19:11 (CSB)

There is something about the Lord's presence. It changes things. The Lord's presence positions us for a chance to experience the glory of God. But not necessarily the way we think. We often look for God in the big, in the "Oh Wow" moments. But God often does His greatest work in our lives in small moments in His presence, just the two of us.

Elijah experienced this in the Old Testament. He had a big moment with God on Mt. Carmel, where the fire fell from the sky, and he was victorious over 450 prophets of Baal. That same day, he predicted a drought to end, and it did! It was a big day in the prophet's life and ministry, but just a day or two later, Elijah was running for His life from the wicked Jezebel. He is scared and he is depressed. He is ready to give up on life and his calling. He was sleeping in a cave on Mt. Horeb when the Lord told him to stand in the Lord's presence. So Elijah goes to the mouth of the cave, and he experiences a mighty cliff-shattering wind, a powerful earthquake, and a great fire. But the Lord was not in any of those. But isn't that the way we want to experience the presence of the Lord? We want stuff to shake. And when God was not in it, many of us would have given up in that moment.

But Elijah knew that God had told him that He would show up. He commanded him to stand in His presence. So after the wind, earthquake, and fire, God whispered! God showed up! It wasn't in the big, but it was in the small, the still-small voice of the Lord. And it changed everything. Being in God's presence gave Elijah strength and courage. The presence of God gave Elijah direction and a future. The presence of the Lord changed everything.

What do you need God to do in your life? How do you need God to show up? Psalm 16:11 reminds us that there is fullness of joy in the presence of God. Be encouraged today that you need the presence of God in your life. The greatest thing we need is God.

In this final week of 21 Days of Prayer, we are asking God to move in our top burden. Would you pray and ask the Lord to let you encounter His presence today? Ask Him to show up in your life and ask His presence to change you.

Wednesday, January 17

Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. -- Genesis 22:13 (CSB)

We have a habit in our lives to focus on the provision instead of the provider. Sometimes, that happens while we are praying for God to move in a situation. We can become so absorbed in the burden that it receives more of our attention than God. Also, there are occasions when God shows us His glory and provides His blessing. In those moments, the temptation to become more focused and concerned with His provision gets the best of us. Abraham experienced this in the book of Genesis. God had promised Abraham to have a super large family. The problem was that Abraham's wife was barren until she was 90 years old. Over that time, Abraham got focused on the promise instead of the promise-maker and tried to do things his own way. Those actions led to hurt and frustration. They resulted in conflict and confusion.

It is important to be reminded that getting God is greater than getting anything God might give us. Experiencing the glory of God is greater than receiving the gifts of God. Do not let your desire for God to meet this burden in your life cause you to miss God. Focus on Him. Focus on His glory. He will move in your life. After many years, Abraham learned that lesson. God had blessed him with a son. But God tested Abraham to see if he loved the provision more than the provider. And Abraham was a man of faith. He trusted God and believed God. And because he was focused on God and not God's gift, God allowed him to experience even more provision.

If God showed up in your greatest burden, would you worship Him or the answer to your prayer? During these 21 Days of Prayer, be careful that you don't get more focused on the provision than you do the provider.

As you pray today for your burden, tell God you want Him more than you want the answer to your burden. Tell Him that you trust His timing and His provision.

Thursday, January 18

Then I said: Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies. -- Isaiah 6:5 (CSB)

We all have ideas about what experiencing the glory of the Lord would be like. We have notions of how we will respond and what the moment will feel like. But we really don't know. Isaiah has a moment with the Lord that we all long to experience. He gets an incredible vision of the Lord and the throne room of heaven. He sees the majesty of God and the Seraphim worshipping the Lord, declaring His holiness and glory. What a moment! We all want to be in that worship service. We want to experience when the glory of God shows up. We long to sense God's closeness. We want to get caught up joining the Seraphim singing holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

But Isaiah's response was different. He did join their singing. He did not raise his hands or even fall to the ground. He realized his sin. He saw the glory of God, and his response was, "Woe is me." He realized he could not praise the Lord because his lips were unclean. The glory of God will reveal the depravity of our own hearts. Isaiah encounters the Lord, and it drove him to repentance. He realized his own unworthiness to stand in that place and the need for his sin to be forgiven. When we truly see the glory of God, it will remind us to do the same thing.

Even after salvation, the Christian life is marked by repentance. We all still have a propensity to follow sin. Repentance is a 180-degree turn from sin and back to Christ. So, we are those who are continually returning to the Lord. It is not getting saved again but continuing to walk close to Him instead of away from Him.

When was the last time you had real moments of repentance? As we get close to the end of the 21 Days of Prayer, if you have not taken time to repent of things that are capturing your heart's attention more than Jesus, why don't you do that today?

Friday, January 19

The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!" -- Matthew 8:27 (CSB)

We tend to forget how incredible Jesus really is. And often, it is our circumstances that blind us. It is not that He has not revealed Himself to us in glorious ways, but whatever we are facing seems overwhelming and overpowering. We get focused on the problem instead of the person. We allow the situation to become bigger than Jesus. As we work through 21 Days of Prayer, that may be how you see your burden right now. It is big and may have caused you to downplay your view of Jesus. Maybe you have lost your amazement of Jesus for anxiety from the storm.

In Matthew 8, Jesus and the disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee when a violent storm arises. The language in the Bible makes it sound as though the storm is attacking Jesus and the disciples. That is the way we feel about life sometimes. It is just attacking us. It is trying to pull us down. That is the way the disciples felt. These fishermen are fearing for their lives. As they hysterically bailing water, they believe this is the end.

But Jesus is asleep. The storm is attacking them, the disciples are losing their minds, and Jesus is sleeping. We have all been there. We wonder if God sees. We wonder if God cares. We wonder if we are important to Him. We become so focused on the storm that we forget the power of the one in the boat with us.

The promise of God is not the absence of storms; the promise of God is that He will be in the boat with you! As you face this burden you have been lifting up for the last couple of weeks, remember that if you believe in Jesus Christ, He is in the boat with you. No matter the burden. No matter how great the storm. The one in your boat controls the wind and the seas. And He is greater than your problem. We need to stop telling our God how big our burdens are and start telling ourselves how big our God is!

As you pray today for your top burden, spend time declaring to the Lord His greatness and His power. Tell Him you believe He is greater than the winds, the waves, and your burden.

Saturday, January 20

Week in Review

Take some time to pause and reflect on each devotional from this past week.

What have you learned about God?

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).

Sunday, January 21

Seven Prayers for Church

Today, we invite you to pray for your church and prepare 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 services today.
4. Pray for the preaching of God's Word and that those who preach it will be filled with 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).