



40
DAYS of
PRAYER

at
Lighthouse
2026

Read Matthew 13:53-58

“And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.” Matthew 13:58

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. It is the account of Jesus going to His hometown to teach. When people heard Him, they were astonished. However, their astonishment did not lead them to respond to His teaching in obedience and faith. Their lives could have been radically changed for the better. Their community could have been radically changed. However, no positive changes occurred in the people or the town of Nazareth. Why? Scripture gives the reason, “Because of their unbelief.”

Unbelief shuts the door on the transformational power of Jesus. Faith opens the floodgates to that same power. In contrast to this passage are countless others where Jesus worked miracles in response to the faith present in the lives of people. (Consider reading Matthew 9:2; 9:22; 15:28; Mark 10:52; Luke 8:48)

Consider: When Jesus looks at my life what does He find? A robust faith or unbelief? Do I believe Jesus can work in our church? Do I believe He will? Am I praying for Jesus to bring renewal and revival to our church?

Please PRAY

If our unbelief is a roadblock to Jesus working in our church, confess the sin of unbelief. Ask God to strengthen our faith in Him. (Mark 9:24)

Read Jeremiah 32:17-44

"Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you." Jeremiah 32:17

Sometimes we forget how powerful God is. We forget the great things He has done in the past. We often allow the immensity of our own problems and challenges to overshadow His greatness. Our view of God diminishes Him to an anemic, powerless God.

In order to build a case for the greatness and power of God, Jeremiah reminds us of what God has done in the past. He reminds us that God "made the heavens and the earth." What a display of power! God spoke and the world came into existence. Only God could do that. Creation itself is a testimony to the truth that God can do anything.

Creation was just the beginning of God's mighty display of power. Jeremiah reminds us that this same God led His people out of Egypt with signs and wonders (verse 21). Scripture reminds us that this same God sent Jesus to be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, die on a cross for our sins, and be raised to life on the third day. Only God could do that! The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is a reminder that God's power is limitless.

Consider: Have I forgotten God's ability to do great things? Recall the many great things God has done as recorded in Scripture. Do I remember the great things He has done in my life? Or the great things He has done in our church?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to do a work in our church that only He can get credit for.

Read Luke 18:9-14

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:14

Pride is a subtle sin. It is not always easy to detect in our own lives. Jesus understood this, so He gave us a picture of what pride and humility look like through the two characters in this parable. The Pharisee is an example of how pride behaves. The tax collector is an example of how humility behaves.

Pride refuses to admit it has a need. Not once did the Pharisee admit he had a need. Humility, on the other hand, readily admits it has a need. The tax collector pounded his chest and admitted he needed forgiveness as a sinner.

Pride has an eagle eye for other people's sins. The Pharisee said, “I thank you that I am not like those other people who are greedy, unrighteous adulterers.” Humility sees its own sin. The tax collector declared, “God, turn your wrath from me, a sinner.”

Consider: The main concern for pride is “what do other people think of me?” The Pharisee prayed about himself stating, “I fast twice a week, I give a tenth of everything I get.” Humility's main concern is “what does God think about me?”

Please PRAY

God please reveal any areas of unhealthy pride in my life and show me Your way to true humility.

Read Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Matthew 5:8

Have you noticed how people like to watch the snow fall and accumulate on the ground? However, once the snow has fallen it begins to lose that pure white color because of dirt. After that beautiful snow falls on the roads and vehicles begin to move about, the snow changes to an odd brown.

Jesus teaches that the pure in heart are blessed. To see God is an awesome promise.

When was the last time you "saw God?" We can never see the wonder of God's presence until we have a pure heart. Satan doesn't mind if we have a little pureness as long as we have a lot of the world's dirt. As a result, our spiritually pure heart looks more like old snow. I see in this part of God's Word that pureness of heart has a great promise, which is that we will see God. To see God in the midst of our evil world causes our heart to be purer. As you read this verse today, is your heart pure? Are you focused on seeing the God of a pure heart? Has your pureness towards God been mixing with some of this world's color?

Consider: Our church needs people with a pure heart to see God working in our church. Pray for the members of our church to have a pure heart.

Please PRAY

God, show me today areas in my heart that are not pure, giving me the strength to turn those parts over to you for cleanup. Give me the passion to keep my heart pure.

Read Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts” Psalm 139:23

It's one thing to pray for a larger house, a newer car, a different assignment, or a salary increase. It's another thing to ask the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to search our hearts and test our thoughts. The Bible reveals God as omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. He knows us better than we know ourselves. Nothing catches our Father off guard.

Health experts tell us that annual physical exams are wise and necessary. Early detection is key to physical health and personal longevity. Spiritual health requires periodic exams, too. Therefore, we make a decision and set a date to get away from the obligations and responsibilities of ministry. We desire solitude with the One who can reveal the most intimate things about us. During the moments of solitude, especially as we are prayerfully reading His Word, we ask the Lord to search our hearts and attitudes.

Consider: Is Jesus still our first love? Are we guilty of simply going through the motions of church? Do we love the people around us? Are we flirting with temptation? Do we show an attitude of humility or pride? Our solitude and transparency with God may lead to personal revitalization.

When was my last spiritual examination?

Please **PRAY**

God, search our hearts and attitudes. May we be people of open hearts and open Bibles to what you are changing in our lives.

Read John 3:30

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:30

Church involvement isn't immune from dangers. The enemy loves to see pastors, members, and Christian leaders disobey God, divide churches, and destroy ministries. One tool the enemy uses is pride. As Proverbs 16:18 reads, “Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall.” John's heart was in the right place. He desired to see people focus on the Son of God and the Savior of the world. John wanted the watching world to remember Jesus' name, not his.

Trouble comes when Christians fail to follow John's example. It is wrong for anyone to seek credit for the church's advancement and growth. God longs for His Son to increase and for His servants to decrease. Jesus increases when He becomes the “thread” of every conversation, meeting, and Bible study, when He receives the glory and honor due to God alone, when His grace is embraced and given, and when He is followed with heartfelt devotion and surrender.

Consider: Am I following John's example? Is the spotlight of ministry shining on me or on Jesus, the author of our faith?

Please **PRAY**

If Jesus is increasing, praise the Father. If we're increasing, may we repent and experience a new beginning.

Read Matthew 13:1-9

"Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Matthew 13:8

Jesus addressed a large crowd of people, telling a parable to talk about a person's heart. As the farmer scattered seed, it fell along the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil. Jesus desires for His followers to have hearts (soil) that yield a harvest.

Consider: What is the present condition of our heart? In Jesus' parable, He talks about four kinds of soil (hearts):

A calloused heart. This person lacks spiritual expectations, goes through the motions, and relates to God with a selfish agenda.

A shallow heart. This person is immature in the faith and busy in ministry. It's possible to be a mile wide and an inch deep.

A distracted heart. This person battles the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.

A productive heart. This person lives his or her life to fulfill God's mission. In order to plant a garden, the ground (soil) must first be broken. If you desire to yield a spiritual harvest, brokenness is often what God uses.

Am I willing to be broken for God's glory? What is currently breaking my heart and spirit? What kind of soil am I?

Please **PRAY**

Ask the Lord today to show us the real condition of our heart.

Read Matthew 7:7-12

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

The Bible is clear that God answers the fervent prayers of His people according to His will, and we know it is His will for His church to be revitalized and healthy. Perhaps revival tarries because we give up on prayer too soon.

We should never give up in prayer as we ask God to move in our church. We should pray regularly and intensely until the answer comes. The verbs “ask, seek, and knock” are expressed in a form that denotes continuous action. Jesus is literally saying, “Ask, and keep on asking. Seek, and keep on seeking. Knock, and keep on knocking.”

Consider: Do I regularly pray with intensity for the movement of God in our church? What is next for our church? How can we be more intentional and fervent in our prayers? We should not quit praying until the answer comes. Ask, seek, and knock!

Please **PRAY**

Begin our journey of ongoing, fervent prayer for the movement of God in our church today. God will answer in His time.

Read 1 Samuel 12:20-22

"And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself." 1 Samuel 12:20-22

Every year there is a change to the value of many things: houses, retirement accounts, salaries, etc. Changes like these can also be long lasting effects on the companies and individuals. Value changes. What would it be like if something of great value never changed? The value of something that is priceless remains priceless throughout all eternity. We have a priceless Savior!

These verses in 1 Samuel remind us that even during times when we have sinned against the Lord, we must not turn from Him. The name of the Lord has great value for us. One of the ways we see the value of the Lord is He won't forsake His people. Not that we have that much value, but because His name and reputation are that valuable.

Consider: Do I see the value of the name of the Lord? Does my life reflect how much value I see in the Lord?

Please **PRAY**

Pray today that the value of God's name would be seen in our lives so that a world may see Him. Pray that our church will reflect the value of the name of the Lord.

Read Galatians 5:22-26

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

As followers of Jesus we must daily yield to the control of the Holy Spirit. Verse 25 encourages us to “live by the Spirit” and “follow the Spirit.” Tangible evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of our life is spiritual fruit.

Just as an apple is the outward evidence of the inner reality of an apple tree, so the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the outward evidence that the Holy Spirit is controlling our lives.

When the Holy Spirit is in control, our lives will be characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. God’s plan is to produce all of these qualities in us as we yield to Him. When the Holy Spirit is **not** in control of our lives we are unloving, joyless, restless, impatient, unkind, and out of control.

Consider: If the person who knows you best used the qualities in verses 22 and 23 as a checklist, what words would they choose to describe you? Would they describe you as a loving person? A person characterized by joy? Would they refer to you as a patient person? A kind person?

Please **PRAY**

Lord, help me yield today to the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. Help me produce the fruit of your Spirit.

Read Luke 22:39-46

“saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

Luke 22:42

Jesus was fully God and fully man. In this passage we see the humanity of Jesus as He struggles with the will of the Father in light of His imminent suffering and death. Jesus realized that in a few short hours He would bear the weight of the world's sin in His body. God's Word puts it this way: “He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).”

As Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He prayed with such intensity that His “sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44). On the one hand He wanted the Father to remove the cup of suffering. On the other hand He realized that suffering and death were necessary for the salvation of precious souls and the fulfillment of the Father's plan. Therefore, He prayed, “Not my will but Yours be done.”

Above all Jesus wanted the will of the Father to be done.

Please **PRAY**

Pray today that we all would be willing to lay down our own plans, preferences and our own agenda for our church in order that the plan of God might be carried out. Pray as Jesus did, “Not my will but Yours be done.”

Read Romans 8:5

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.” Romans 8:5

Even with today's streaming services, it can often be difficult to find something to watch. There can still be several buttons on the remote. Sometimes while watching it can still be easy to accidentally hit the wrong button and the remote won't control what you need. It often takes a moment to understand that a wrong button has been pressed.

The text in Romans 8:5 reminds us that by nature we are controlled by sinful desires. It also tells us that those controlled by the Spirit respond in a spiritual way. In a normal day as things happen around us, how we respond shows what controls us. Is it going to be our sinful nature or our spiritual nature?

We must choose which will control us.

Consider: How would our life be different if we sought to be controlled by the Holy Spirit? What about our church? Over these next weeks, ask God to speak to us and guide us to re-energize our spiritual life and our church.

Please PRAY

*Pray God will show where we need to submit to Him.
Pray that He will guide our church and leaders.*

Read Ephesians 4:25-32

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:32

One thing we all have in common is that we have all been hurt by other people. Others have said or done things that have hurt us. Sometimes we've been hurt by what someone failed to say or do. The issue in life is not “will we be hurt” but “how will we respond when others hurt us?”

The Scripture passage for today cites several responses that often accompany the hurts we encounter: anger (verse 26), bitterness, wrath, malice (verse 31). When we identify these things in our hearts we are challenged to remove or put away these things. In place of these responses we're called to forgive.

Forgiveness is the way God relates to us. Forgiveness is the way God encourages us to relate to each other. Forgiveness means we treat the people in the future as if they haven't hurt us in the past. Forgiveness involves refusing to relate to people out of anger and bitterness. Forgiveness means to extend grace to the people who hurt us.

Consider: Have we harbored anger, bitterness, wrath, or malice toward someone in our church or someone who left our church? Take time today to confess a sinful response to that person. Seek God's grace to forgive that person.

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to identify the presence of unforgiveness in our hearts. Confess the sin of unforgiveness. Ask God to produce in our lives a humility that honors Him.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2

“and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also..” 2 Timothy 2:2

One of the common needs pastors and church members voice is the need for more leaders. These concerned people say we need people to lead children's programs, to work with youth, to do outreach, to give financially and on and on. But where will these leaders come from unless they move into your area or transfer to your church from another congregation?

Paul gives Timothy the answer: Raise them up. Christian leaders are made, not born, and 2 Timothy 2:2 tells how to make one. Mature Christian leaders are to teach and train faithful people who can become leaders who then teach and train others.

Consider: Am I willing to personally train another person in our church to become a leader or would I be willing to be trained to eventually lead in some way in our church?

Please **PRAY**

Please pray today that God will give our congregation a vision and a plan for developing new leaders from within the church family.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

“Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.” 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Many problems in a church can be overcome by love. Love often causes dissensions to be settled. Love prompts a church to serve the poor. Love moves us to do missions and evangelism. Love even leads us to give more financially, work with children, paint the nursery walls, or build a new building. Love is the greatest motivator to church service of all types. But what if we just don't have that much love?

First Thessalonians 4:9 gives hope to those of us who come up a little short in the love department. It reveals that God can teach us to love. Love is not so much an emotion to be experienced, but an action to be taken. The greatest act of love in history was Christ on the Cross. The good news for us is that the One who called Jesus to the cross can teach us to love people in our own congregation. Love really does change everything and is a real key to church growth.

Consider: Ask God today to increase your love for a person, or group of people in your church, for which you do not feel much love.

Please **PRAY**

Consider praying a prayer like this if you are struggling to love:

Dear God, I do not feel much love for _____ (fill in the blank). I'm asking, and counting on, You to teach me to love them the way You love them. Thank You for hearing my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Read Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

We see so much unrest in our world even to the point of conflict. When conflict erupts, hate wins. Sides are drawn and people are placed into two or more groups. When conflict permeates a society, trust is broken and lives are affected for years.

In the church today we see the same thing; people chose sides and conflict impacts the church. When conflict happens inside the church, Satan is the only winner. Most church conflict has little to do with biblical issues and more to do with individual choices.

Jesus teaches us that peacemakers are needed. Those with the gift of peacemaking find ways to squish conflict and help the church find peace. The actions of a few can cause the church to lose its witness in the community. Conflict in churches divides family, friends, and neighborhoods. Conflict brings bondage, but peace gives freedom.

Consider: Do I strive for peace in our church? What do I do when there seems to be conflict?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to help you identify ways for you to become a peacemaker in our church.

Read Mark 10:42-45

“and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” Mark 10:44

In one of the churches I've been a member of there was a lady named Ruth who was a remarkable servant. Not many people knew her name and simply called her the “tea lady.” She served drinks at every church fellowship. Ruth's smile was remarkable and her heart to serve others was equally remarkable.

In churches today, there are many who are labeled people of influence. There are also folks that talk a lot without any real direction. The church is made up of many different types of individuals with varying characteristics, but few like Ruth who love to serve others.

Jesus tells us that many want to control others, but He has called us to be “ministers” or “servants.” Our church needs servants. Servants that will give their time to impact people. The value of servanthood is critical as we seek church growth. Ruth's smile and her work just to pour a drink made a huge impact on the lives she encountered, because she was willing to serve.

Please PRAY

What ways do you serve others in our church? Pray asking God to show you ways you can serve the body of Christ. Ask God to give you the best understanding of where to serve. Also pray that our church understands their best place to serve as the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11

“As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” Nehemiah 1:4

Brokenness is often what God uses to reveal vision. Nehemiah serves as an example of a leader who was broken over a city and its people. Enemies destroyed the wall around Jerusalem, leaving the city in a vulnerable position. The people were in great trouble and disgrace. Nehemiah sought God's heart and followed His leadership. He was available for God to use.

Church growth requires bold, courageous leadership. Nehemiah painted a clear picture of what leadership looks like in our day.

(1) *Nehemiah asked questions.* He wanted to know about the city and its people. What questions do we need to ask? Are the people committed to sharing Jesus and developing believers in the faith?

(2) *Nehemiah accepted reality.* He heard the news that the wall was broken down, and the people were in trouble. What realities do we need to accept?

(3) *Nehemiah acted.* He cried, prayed, fasted, and surrendered. What do we need to do now that will lead to growth in our church?

Please **PRAY**

Am I challenged to help our church grow for the glory of God? God desires to use each of us.

Read Matthew 5:13-14

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.” Matthew 5:13

As followers of Jesus we have potential to influence. We have potential to influence others for good. When lived for Christ, our lives can encourage others to glorify God (Matthew 5:16). We have potential to influence others in a negative way (Luke 17:1-3). To influence others for Christ is to be “salt.” To influence others in negative ways is to be “salt that has lost its taste.”

When we face the extremes of warm summers and cold winters, we understand the importance of a thermostat. When a room is hot we adjust the thermostat and it works in connection with the air conditioner to adjust temperature. We could say that the thermostat influences the room.

We can place a thermometer in that same room and the thermometer would be influenced by the room's temperature. If the room was warm, the thermometer would adjust to the surrounding temperature. As the salt of the earth we are called to influence for Christ not to be influenced by our surroundings.

Please **PRAY**

Is our daily life and witness more like a thermometer or a thermostat? Pray that God will give us strength and wisdom to be a good influence for Him.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:16-20

"For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power." 1 Corinthians 4:20

What is powering your church? This question triggers different answers. Some may say prayer, some great preaching; others a loving church family, one or two might even say electricity. Yet some churches have plugged into sources that will never power a church.

The Word of God tells us that the Kingdom of God is not powered by words. We can use words to motivate people, but words without action are of no lasting value. Talk is cheap.

One of God's greatest attributes is His omnipotence: He is all-powerful. For our church to grow we must plug into the power that comes from God!

Throughout His Word we find God using supernatural power to sustain His people, and He still does! Are we trusting His power to change people?

Consider: How much "God power" is our church currently using? God is the power source of our church. God wants His children to plug into the power of His Word. Am I spending time in His Word daily? God wants His children to spend time in prayer. Am I spending time daily talking with Him and listening to Him?

Please **PRAY**

If not already, make a commitment to be in His Word and pray daily. We will see a great power from God envelop our church toward growth.

Read *Ezekiel 37:1-14*

“Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live” Ezekiel 37:5

Parched and bleached by the sun, the brittle bones scattered across the valley presented a vision that summoned two words to the prophet's mind: death and discouragement. The only thing more discouraging than the vision itself was the fact that God's own people were represented by these abandoned bones. They had died, and their revival required significant intervention by God.

This vision challenged Ezekiel's faith. God asked him an unthinkable question, “Son of man, can these bones live?” He replied, “Lord God, only You know.” Ezekiel's response revealed his thought, “If these dried bones live again, it will require a miracle from You, God.”

In the vision, God did what only He can do. As Ezekiel preached, the bones came together, wrapped by muscle and skin, and those corpses rose to life. The dry bones lived! Likewise, Israel was revived and restored.

There is a lesson there we need to learn. What are we trusting God to do for our church?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to increase our faith as we continue to pray for growth in our church.

Read Matthew 6:9-15

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

In this passage Jesus teaches us how to pray. Each portion of His teaching gives us an important aspect of prayer. Verse 10 reminds us that God has a plan for our church. Our church is part of God's kingdom. His desire is that His kingdom goes into neighborhoods, communities, cities, and ultimately the world with the gospel. When we pray, "Your kingdom come," we are praying for God to work in and through our church to extend His kingdom.

When God views our church, He sees its potential. In the mind of God, He sees what it can and should become in the future. He loves our church so much He doesn't want it to remain where it is today.

When we pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" we are asking God to reveal to us what He envisions for us. Through prayer and biblical truth we discern next steps. The voice we need to hear above all others is the voice of God through His Word and prayer.

Please PRAY

Ask God to reveal to us what He desires for the future of our church. Prayerfully consider this question: How should we faithfully carry out the Great Commission in our context?

Read Joshua 5:13-15

“And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?”” Joshua 5:14

When Joshua, preparing for the heat of battle, saw a human figure with sword drawn, he went to the man and asked if he was for them or against them. The man answered that he was neither for them nor against them, but instead the Captain of the Lord's army. Joshua bowed down and worshipped Him appropriately.

During any growth effort, it's possible for us to begin to sinfully choose sides in the church. We distinguish between those who are for our vision and those who are against it. A better route is to make sure we're lined up with the Lord's will. We know that we are with God when our desires for His church match His will in Scripture, and when our actions and attitudes reflect Christ-like character.

Consider: Based on the above criteria, am I working for God's vision for the church?

Please **PRAY**

Pray that God will help us align with His vision for our church. Pray that we would reach the community where He has placed us.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:12-14

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Excitement and optimism ruled the day. After seven years of construction, the Temple was built and dedicated. God's presence was manifested in an unusual way. Fire fell from heaven to consume the sacrifice and God's glory filled the Temple.

Later, God appeared to Solomon at night and told him that every day would not be like the day of dedication. There would be days when, in an effort to draw His errant people back to Himself, God would send drought and pestilence.

At such a time, God told Solomon His people were to pursue four things that would bring healing: humility, prayer, repentance, and seeking God's face.

Consider: In many churches, there are indicators that spiritual growth is needed. Is my life pursuing God and spiritual growth with the keys of humility, prayer, repentance, and seeking God?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to help us to walk humbly with Him, prayerfully dependent on Him, diligently seeking His face, and honestly repenting of sin that hinders fellowship with Him.

Read Revelation 2:1-7

“But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.” Revelation 2:4

The final line of the refrain from my favorite hymns is, “Oh, how I love Jesus, because He first loved me.” When sung from a true heart, it is a beautiful offering of worship to our Lord. Our love for Jesus should not only be hailed in our worship, it should be the motivating factor for everything we claim to do for Him.

The church at Ephesus outwardly appeared to be a wonderful congregation. Jesus Himself pointed out their hard work, faithful endurance, worthy walk, and doctrinal integrity. The problem was that these works were performed out of duty, rather than out of love for the Savior. Though they did not know it, the Ephesian Christians needed revival. They were running the risk of losing their light for the Lord.

Many believers are wearing themselves out with a manic schedule of church programming while seeing few results. In their harried lifestyle of Christian activities they do not spend time cultivating their love for Jesus. They need a revival of the heart. They need to heed the words of Christ, “Remember then how far you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first” (Rev. 2:5a).

Consider: Is our love for Jesus the motivation for our work for Him?

Please **PRAY**

Tell Jesus how much you love Him. If needed, repent for allowing your love for Him to grow cold.

Read Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

A bank statement, a day planner, a church calendar, or a hospital stay often reveals our priorities. Misplaced priorities generally lead to hurt and confusion in our lives, marriages, families, and churches. Jesus gave His followers a simple promise. If believers would make the Father’s Kingdom a priority, then other items will fall into place.

Seeking God first says that we’re dependent on Him, that we’re desperate for Him, and that we’re dedicated to Him. It’s worth noting that this is a great way to live and serve in ministry. The daily responsibilities of life, the challenge to raise godly children in an ungodly world, a fresh vision for the church, and the ability to live on less than we make can testify that we need to see our decisions from God’s perspective.

As you consider your life, marriage, family, and church, are you seeking God first? What decisions are you facing at this moment?

Please **PRAY**

Take Jesus’ challenge and seek the Father’s Kingdom first. Ask God to help us see our life and ministry from His perspective.

Read Romans 15:1-3

“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” Romans 15:2

A church is a family made up of people who belong to God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Each person in the church has an opinion about what he or she would like to see happening or not happening within the body. Trouble arises when those opinions clash and some get their way, while others do not.

Romans 15:2 tells us to make it our aim to please others in the church. Trouble decreases when the members seek to join together around a mission and vision rather than each one pursuing his or her own preferences. One way to consider the needs of others is to ask them what they'd like to see happen in the church and why they wish to see this particular ministry or program come about. Peace in the family is enhanced when we lovingly consider the needs and desires of other members.

Consider: In what ways am I seeking to promote the interests of others in your church?

Please **PRAY**

Consider praying today that God will give us opportunities to listen to the desires and wishes of someone in our church. Pray that God will enable us to hear what's really important to them.

Read Psalm 133:1-3

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” Psalm 133:1

Few things are more discouraging or distasteful than a heated church argument over a trivial issue. In the moment when tensions are high and voices raised, no issue seems trivial. Later, when relationships have been severed and people have left the church over issues related to taste and not substance, those meetings leave unpleasant feelings for all involved.

Consider, on the other hand, the beauty and pleasing atmosphere created in the vision of Psalm 133. When a congregation is unified around knowing and serving God in the fulfillment of His purpose and vision for the church it's a beautiful thing. Not only is God pleased with appropriate church unity, but the people of God are pleased and enabled to experience more of the Holy Spirit's power in their work for the Lord.

Consider: As we move into church growth, in what ways am I seeking to promote unity in our church? And is there anyone in our church family with whom I need to seek biblical reconciliation?

Please **PRAY**

Pray today that God will help us be a people of peace in our congregation? Consider praying that God will give us a peace-making, conciliatory spirit to aid our church as it moves forward.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:3-4

“For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?”

1 Corinthians 3:4

How many church events and leaders have been compared to the past? These comparisons are seldom helpful and make life difficult for the current church congregation to follow the calling of God. While every church member should be encouraged to honor the past, it's a mistake to think any past approach to ministry and church leadership is the only approach God can use.

The Corinthian church was divided because of different leadership personalities God had used in the past. Members picked sides to the exclusion of the people who preferred the other leaders. Paul pointed out their error and challenged them to put away carnal favoritism. We would do well to honor past leaders while also submitting to Christ-like leadership God has for us now.

Consider: What is one thing you can do this week to honor a leader at our church?

Please **PRAY**

This would be a good day to pray for our leaders. Pray that God will fill them with the Holy Spirit, restoring the joy of their salvation, affirming them to focus on the mission at hand.

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25

The job of a cheerleader is to support the team and call the fans to action. Fans at a basketball game can really make a difference as they cheer their team to fight for victory. In church, while each of us has a part on the team, we also have a part like that of a fan. Sometimes we’re in the game, other times we’re in the stands cheering for those working hard for Christ’s mission.

We cheer each other on when we affirm the way God is using one of our brothers or sisters in the work of ministry. We cheer our team when we “Amen!” the truth brought out by our pastor. We cheer the team when we participate joyfully in worship and greeting guests. We spur the team to greater service when we shout a hardy approval at the positive actions of people serving. The positive attitude of one person can make a real difference as that individual vocalizes his or her support of the team in the hallways and gatherings.

Consider: What’s coming up or happening now in the life of our church for which I can offer my vocal support?

Please **PRAY**

Pray today that God will show us ways we can support our church vocally with encouraging words as we move toward spiritual growth.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:7

There are two essential truths that should be magnified as a church desires to move forward in church growth: First, every person has a part. First Corinthians 12 teaches that God gives a spiritual gift to every member of His church. God indwells us through His Holy Spirit and empowers us to serve the body in some important way.

Second, one person really can make a difference. Many of us feel hopeless about growth because we think the entire congregation will never get on board. While buy-in and unity matters, it is also true that one person can make a huge difference as he or she serves God whole-heartedly. One person who'll witness, pray, give, serve, love, and live for Christ will inspire and impact others as well. Instead of waiting for others to join in, resolve to be one person who will make a difference.

Consider: Will you surrender yourself afresh today to Jesus in hopes of being used to help us grow?

Please **PRAY**

Pray and ask God for personal direction in how to live your Christian service to the fullest in the place where He has put you to serve and grow in our church family.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:6-12

“Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:12

Paul is here speaking to young Christians in Corinth. There's some desire to have certain spiritual gifts. Paul reminds the people that spiritual gifts are used to build up the church.

The Bible teaches that God gives all Christians spiritual gifts to be used for the building up of the entire body.

Have you determined your spiritual gift(s)?

The other problem related to spiritual gifts in the church is the lack of people using their gift(s). If you know your spiritual gifts, then how are you using them? If God gives these gifts, He expects us to use them!

A growing church is one full of members using their spiritual gifts to build up the body of the church and reach the community for Christ.

Please **PRAY**

Pray today for God to show you your spiritual gifts and how He wants you to use them to build up His church!

Read John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” John 13:34

In the upper room, Jesus gave some final instructions to His apostles whom He would soon leave. He began that final lecture by challenging His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. That He addressed this issue first in the upper room speaks to the importance of it.

Love and unity in the church are critical to growth. Jesus stated that all people would know we are His disciples by our love for one another. Some of our churches are stagnant or in decline due to their lack of genuine love for one another. A watching world wonders if it can be loved by a group of people who do not seem to love one another.

In *The Mark of the Christian*, Francis Schaffer states that the love of Christ in the lives of believers is what sets them apart from the world. He concludes that the world has a right to judge the authenticity of Christ's claims to be the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, by what they see in the lives of His followers.

Consider: Is Jesus the One who can change lives? Are the lives of His followers different than those of the world? Do they truly love one another in difficult times? Do I live in unity and love with other Christians?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to help us love our brothers and sisters in Christ as He has loved us.

Read Acts 11:19-30

“And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.” Acts 11:21

The church in Antioch was healthy and strong. News about the church reached Jerusalem. It's a fact that people talk about the church (good or bad). Barnabas reported that he saw the “grace of God” when he arrived in Antioch.

Consider: What are people saying about our church? As people attend our church, do they see the grace of God at work?

What signs distinguish a healthy church? A healthy church:

1. **Expects commitment.** Hard times do not stop the witness of believers.
2. **Shares Jesus.** Believers didn't talk only about the economy, sports, or Hollywood. Jesus is the subject of their conversations.
3. **Welcomes change.** The church in Antioch saw the Lord change lives, marriages, and families. The church's message must never change. However, methods need to change as the Lord leads.
4. **Serves together.** Barnabas needed Saul's help to teach the believers in Antioch. Healthy churches embrace a “team” approach to ministry.
5. **Disciples believers.** Barnabas and Saul taught a great number of believers for one year. Healthy churches evangelize and disciple.

6. Practices generosity. A worldwide famine convicted the early believers to give. Generosity is a must in a healthy church.

7. Trusts leaders. The Antioch church trusted Barnabas and Saul. Leadership trust is essential in healthy churches.

Consider: Am I helping our church to be more healthy or unhealthy?

Please **PRAY**

Ask God to bless our church with health.

Read Acts 6:1-7

“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”. Acts 6:7

Some churches avoid voting on issues of importance in the church because they believe votes divide people and give opportunities for problems to occur. These churches do have plenty of evidence to back up their practice. Many church splits have happened because half of the congregation wanted to go one direction while the other half wanted to go another.

In Acts 6:1-7, there was a different mindset toward congregational decisions and outcomes. The church needed help with its ministry to the congregation's widows. Leadership proposed a solution and the proposal found favor with the congregation (Acts 6:5). The result was a unified church that continued to reach out with the gospel and make more disciples.

Consider: How can I aid in agreement and vision regarding our church?

Please **PRAY**

Please pray that God will give wisdom to our church leaders regarding a plan for church growth and that their plan will find favor throughout the congregation.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:24-25

“the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.” 1 Corinthians 14:25

What would you say is the most important thing about our church?

For many people the answer would be, “This church meets my spiritual, emotional, or relational needs.” As you think about our church, who are some of the people that have or are making a difference in your life? What are some of the ministries of our church that deepen your relationship with the Lord?

In the text we read today, we find a wonderful response to the question “What do you say is important to this church?” First, an unbeliever discovers the truth about a Savior, next accepts Jesus, and finally shouts, “God is really among you!” How great if this could be said about every church in our land.

Consider: Is God at the center of my life, my ministry, and reason for going to church?

Please **PRAY**

Pray for God to show how He is moving in our church. Ask God to help us reflect His presence to a lost world.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Matthew 28:18

In military circles, when a high-ranking officer speaks, people listen and follow directions. Our Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ, has spoken and called His church to action. The Great Commission is not optional or suggestive. Jesus expects His followers to obey His marching orders. Our marching orders begin at home and extend to the ends of the earth. The Great Commission is the mission mandate for every church, regardless of the church's structure, size, or style.

In the act of going, Jesus hasn't called His people to merely record decisions. He has commanded them to make disciples. A disciple is a learner and follower of Christ. Our Commander-in-Chief refuses to send His followers into the mission field alone. He promises to always be with us.

You and I have been called to attention and given an assignment that can change lives.

Consider: How am I intentional about making disciples? What's my strategy for reaching the nations?

Please **PRAY**

God, may I be a person who makes disciples for You. Help me to grow and share the good news with those around me, and then help them grow in knowledge of You.

Read Revelation 3:14-22

“So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:16

When was the last time you felt sick at your stomach? Feeling nauseated is uncomfortable. Jesus challenged the Laodicean church on several points. The church's real condition left Him nauseated. A lukewarm church makes Jesus sick to His stomach. What led the Laodicean church to be lukewarm? God's people thought they were self-sufficient. Jesus wasn't really needed on a day-to-day basis.

Generally not in words, but at least in actions, many churches rely on their structures, staff, and strategies rather than on Jesus. However, there's hope for a lukewarm church. Jesus gives His people an opportunity to repent and change directions.

Consider: How are we dependent on the presence and power of Jesus Christ?

Please PRAY

Lord, help me to depend on your presence and power. Lead us to encourage others to rely on You. May I seek fellowship with you!

Read Revelation 3:1-6

“Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Revelation 3:2

After Jesus had evaluated the church at Sardis and given his assessment, He then gave them a divine action plan. Christ said to strengthen the things which remain. It sounds as if there were some things in the church that were good and pleasing to God but needed attention before they lost their vitality.

Most churches have one or more areas of strength. Some congregations are great mission churches which go on mission trips and give money to missions. Others are really good at welcoming outsiders and making them feel loved and valued without feeling judged. Some are great worshipping congregations where folks are invited into the presence of God through singing and preaching.

Consider: Am I able to identify one or more areas of strength for our congregation?

Please **PRAY**

Pray today that God would reveal to us those areas where our congregation is strong? Ask God to help us build on that area(s) of strength for His glory and the good of the church.

Read Revelation 3:7-13

"I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name." Revelation 3:8

Our church is evaluated every week. The first-time guests who visit have an opinion about our church. The senior adults who attend have convictions about the life and ministry of our congregation. The young families have some thoughts as well as the youth. The community in which our church is located also has something that comes to mind when they think of our church.

These opinions are varied and may have some merit. The opinion, or rather judgment, that matters most is the one offered by Jesus, the Head of the church. Jesus has some thoughts concerning our congregation, and the road to growth begins with seeking Jesus' view of our church.

Please PRAY

Pray today that God will help our congregation understand how He views it and what He wishes to see happen for our church to move into new life and ministry and be an influence for Christ in our community.

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**Kentucky Baptist Convention
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13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive
Louisville, Kentucky 40223
502-489-3338

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