

breathe

A Six-Week Lenten Devotional

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how to use this guide

This digital devotional is built to be a companion as we walk through the weeks of Lent. Within these pages, you will find weekly readings, short devotional videos from our staff, and reflection questions to guide you as you prayer throughout the weeks ahead.

Here are a few tips to make the most of this guide:

- You will also need your Bible to read from. For those of you new to reading the Bible, it can be a bit intimidating. Don't be afraid to use the table of contents to find a particular book or even use a Bible app to look something up.
- You probably won't need more than 10-15 minutes to complete each day's reading and questions. If you have more than 15 minutes, however, that gives you extra time to think more deeply about the questions and pray.
- Consider having a journal or notebook available to help you remain focused and to keep track of what the Lord is revealing during your reading and prayer times.
- Pray. Pray. Pray. Six weeks is a long commitment. Ask the Lord to meet you daily. Ask for creativity when the fast becomes monotonous.

faq's

Q: I have never fasted before. Why should I fast?

A: Biblical fasting is an intentional act of abstaining from something (most often food or a type of food) for a specific period of time for the purpose of focusing more on the Lord. As a church, we are asking the Lord to lead us into a new season of flourishing.

Q: How can I participate?

A: Starting on Wednesday, February 14, and ending on Thursday, March 28, we are inviting the church to join this journey of fasting. Fasting often exposes our misshapen cravings—our longing for comfort and peace connected to things like food, drink, entertainment, and social media. Here are a few ways you can structure your food-based fast:

Option 1 (Varied Weeks)

Week One and Two: A commitment to fast from all food except water, juice, and other broths.

Week Three and Four: A commitment to fast from all meals, except the incorporation of one meal into the schedule during days (ex: fasting all day until 6 PM).

Week Five and Six: A commitment to fast for one meal out of the day, with an intentional time of focused prayer during the time period normally spent eating.

Option 2 (All Meals)

This will be a commitment to fast from all food except for water, juice, and other broths for the duration of this fasting season.

Option 3 (Some Meals/Altered Diet)

This will be a commitment to fast for a significant portion of your day, incorporating only 1-2 meals into your schedule (ex. fasting all day until 6:00 PM). Or, due to medical and other considerations, it may be necessary to participate by altering your diet for the duration of the fast. (This may be with vegetables only, or something known as the Daniel Fast.)

In lieu of fasting from food, please feel free to fast other things such as television or social media, as the Lord leads you.

Q: What can I expect when I fast?

A: Fasting uniquely places our physical, emotional, and spiritual capacities under the same burden. This means that the effects of fasting will affect each of these areas. As a disclaimer, if you have a medical condition, please contact your physician before attempting to fast. Here are some common effects fasting may have on you:

Physical

Changing your food intake, especially completely abstaining from meals, will challenge your body. It is likely that you will feel fatigued and intensified hunger. Headaches are another common symptom.

Emotional

Eating is connected to our emotions, so we should not be surprised that fasting will expose some negative emotions. Be prepared for heightened emotional sensitivity and responses like anger and irritability.

Spiritual

Fasting is an earnest act of submission to and dependence on the Lord. In a positive way, it positions us to be more sensitive to the conviction and leading of the Spirit. Times of fasting are often marked by repentance.

Also, be mindful of the schemes of the enemy—you will experience heightened temptation and discouragement if you aren't clearly seeing answers to your devotion and prayer.

Q: How do I prepare?

A: Again, please be sure to consult your physician before participating. Here are a few tips to prepare.

1. Choose the type of fasting- varied, complete, or some meals/alterd (see How can I participate? to learn more).
2. Invite someone to be your prayer partner. Set a consistent rhythm for accountability with this person.
3. Ask the Lord to reveal any sin that may be hindering you during the fast. Confess and repent those things to him.
4. Have a plan for how you will spend the time which is normally reserved for eating.
5. You may want to consider how you will respond in situations when an invitation to an event or meal would hinder your fast.

Q: What should I be praying for?

A: As we approach Easter, we are trusting the Lord to help understand and experience the power of renewal. Each week's reading will address a different aspect of renewal in our lives and provide questions and a prayer direction.

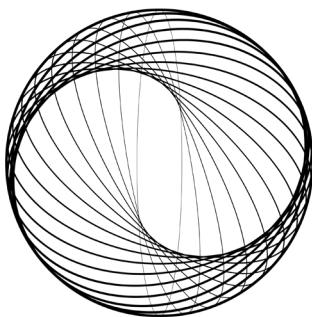
foreword

I am lying on my chiropractor's table. He has just asked me if I want to try this new adjustment where he uses a towel to relieve my mid and lower back pressure. He then proceeds to wrap a towel around my neck and asks me to place my hands beneath me.

At this point, all of the social media snippets I had read, trying to convince me that chiropractic care is a farce, started to sound much more plausible. As he steadied himself and positioned my head from the modality, he paused and said, "Don't forget to breathe."

What a strange thing to say before you attempt to pull someone's head with great force away from their body! But it made me think about how often breathing is essential to any task that requires force. Maybe it is not that strange after all. Perhaps he knew it would be my natural inclination, our natural inclination, to hold my breath during what I was about to endure.

When I think about our world, plenty of things pull at us, attempting to persuade us to hold our breath. Just spend a few moments reading headlines; it will take your breath away. Even as we prepare for the Easter season as a church, our heightened expectation for God's work among us will only intensify the spiritual challenges we will face. This fast through the Lent season is a reminder: before we invite our friends, throw our Block Party, or celebrate the resurrection, don't forget to breathe.



week 1: personal renewal

week 1: personal renewal

In the rush of life's demands, it's easy to lose sight of the deeper call to renewal that echoes throughout the Christian journey. But what does it truly mean to experience personal renewal, particularly in the light of scriptural wisdom?

In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Paul presents a profound framework for understanding this transformation: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

Paul's words are a tender balm to weary souls. Amidst persecution, he encourages believers not to falter or become discouraged, for our inner self is continually made new despite exterior decay or struggles. This passage cuts to the heart of the Christian narrative: rebirth and transformation lie at the core of our faith, guiding us from hardship to hope, from transient pain to eternal joy.

Understanding Personal Renewal

Personal renewal in the Christian context goes beyond mere self-improvement. It's a divine transformation, wherein we grow more into the likeness of Christ as we lay down our old selves. It's about being filled daily with the Holy Spirit's power, letting our character and life be influenced by a profound intimacy with God.

The journey of personal renewal brings forth abundant fruit. As our inner selves are revitalized, we find the strength to face life's tumult with a sense of peace.

Our viewpoint on trials shifts from dread to anticipation of the growth they'll nurture. In God's hands, every challenge shapes us more into His image, deepening our faith and reliance on His unchanging nature.

Consider these gentle steps to nurture your personal renewal throughout this fast:

1. Daily quiet time and prayer: Start your day by reconnecting with the Source of all Hope. Let His words anchor you and His peace fill you.
2. Engaging in Bible study and reflection: Dive into the Scriptures. Make it a group endeavor or a solitary reflective practice to meditate on God's truth.
3. Seek guidance from mentors or spiritual leaders: Share your journey with someone farther along the path. There's no need to navigate the terrain alone.
4. Practicing gratitude and reflection: Count your blessings, name them one by one, and find the wonder in the ordinary moments God gives us.

Conclusion

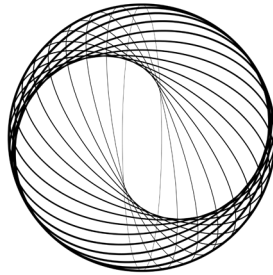
Dear friends, may we always draw near to the eternal promise of personal renewal found in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Together, let's shed the weight of who we were and step into the lightness of who we are becoming in Christ.

Could there be a better moment than now to begin anew? Embrace this journey passionately, and let the transformative power of God do its work in you. Remember, through His grace, we are continually reshaped, refined, and renewed.

You are not alone in this walk. We're in this together. Pursue personal renewal; it's your divine invitation to freedom, purpose, and joy.

daily questions for reflection

1. Read Mark 10:46-52.
 - Imagine you are Bartimeus and Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you?”
 - How would you answer? (Physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally, etc.)
2. Spend some time praying over these things.
3. What parts of your life are you hoping the Lord renews today?
4. What does it look like to pray for these things today?
5. What do you need to surrender for the Lord to bring renewal?
6. Who can you share these hopes with?



week 2: renewal in relationships

Week 2: Renewal in Relationships

Relationship is a theme that pervades the pages of the Bible, illustrating the profound connections between human beings and the deep intimacy humans can have with God. One parable that poignantly touches on the concept of renewal in relationships is found in Luke 15:11-32 — the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This story reveals not just the possibility of rekindling relationships that have gone astray but also uncovers the heart of God toward us, His wayward children.

As Christians, we often find ourselves reflecting upon our relationships and looking for guidance within the scriptures. The tale told by Jesus about a father and his two sons offers a treasure trove of insight into restoration, love, and the true essence of friendship. Let's journey through this parable together and discover what it means for our lives and the relationships we cherish.

The Parable: A Distilled View

Luke 15:11-32 tells us a story of a man who had two sons. The younger son demands his share of the inheritance while his father is still alive, essentially a brusque dismissal of the relationship. After squandering his wealth in 'reckless living', he finds himself destitute and decides to return to his father to ask for forgiveness and work as a servant. Instead of condemnation, he is met with his father's open arms and celebration of his return.

The elder brother, who stayed and worked faithfully at his father's side, becomes resentful of the attention and grace given to his prodigal sibling.

Yet, the father reminds him that all that is the father's is his too and that it's time to celebrate the return of his lost brother because he was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.

Unpacking Relationship and Renewal

Here are several key takeaways:

1. Friendship Requires Release

Sometimes, to experience renewal, we must first let go. The father releases the younger son, allowing him to exercise his free will. It is not until the son realizes the value of his father's companionship that renewal becomes possible.

2. Renewal Begins with Repentance

The son's realization leads to repentance, a pivotal step towards renewing the broken friendship. It's a humbling experience that requires acknowledgment of wrongdoing and a genuine desire to mend the bond.

3. True Relationship Celebrates Return

The warm reception that the father gives his younger son is one of the most moving aspects of this story. True friendship welcomes back and celebrates the return, acknowledging the significance of reconciliation over past wrongs.

4. Envy Can Hinder Relationship

The reaction of the elder brother showcases how envy can corrode friendships. The challenge is to rejoice in each other's blessings and rediscover the joy in someone else's renewal without begrudging them their 'feast'.

5. God's Example of Constant Friendship

Above all, the father figure is an archetype of God's unchanging friendship with us. It's a heartening reminder that no matter how far we stray, the path to renewal is always open, and we will be welcomed back with more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7).

Conclusion

The narrative of the prodigal son extends beyond familial relationships and deeply into the friendships we forge in this life. It illustrates the dynamic nature of relationships and provides a blueprint for reconciliation and renewal. Whether we see ourselves as the younger or the elder son at any point in our friendships, the parable shows us that there is room for growth, forgiveness, and celebration.

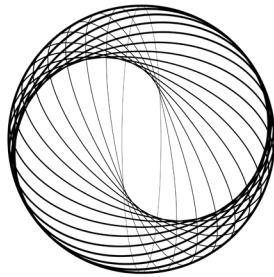
May this age-old story inspire us to look upon our friendships with renewed perspective. Let it guide us to be better friends who cherish return and restoration, who forgive with open hearts, and who follow the divine example of constant, unconditional love. For, in the end, our friendships are a reflection of the greatest relationship we have — with our Father in heaven.

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” — Romans 12:9-10

In faith and friendship, let us walk together, side by side, along the road to renewal.

daily questions for reflection

1. Read Col 1:9-12, Ephesians 3:14-21, James 5:16
 - What do you notice about what the writers are praying for?
 - How does the way you pray for others compare to these?
2. What are some ways you would like to see renewal in your family?
3. Who are some members of your family with whom the Lord is calling you to reconciliation and/or deeper intimacy?
4. Answer Q 2 & 3 in regards to friendship outside of your biological family.
5. What do you need to surrender/repent from for the Lord to bring renewal into these relationships?
6. Pray for these relationships this week especially listening for how the Lord might be inviting you to respond.



week 3: renewal in the church

Week 3: Renewal in the Church

In the heart of every church lies the potential for revival and renewal, a renewal that not only refashions its structure but also revives the spirit of its community. As faithful followers of Christ, we yearn to see our community flourish—brimming with love, sincerity, harmony, and passionate service. At the core of this aspiration, we find profound guidance in Paul's epistle to the Romans, particularly in the twelfth chapter, verses 9 through 21.

Romans 12:9-21 forms a mosaic of moral exhortations, encapsulating the essence of Christian conduct within the body of Christ—the Church. This scripture is not just an ancient text; it serves as a divine manual for transformation, speaking directly into the lifeblood of our congregation today. Let's journey together through these verses, unpacking their timeless wisdom and envisioning a church renewed by its truths.

Renewing Love and Sincerity

“Love must be sincere...” (Romans 12:9a, NIV).

Sincerity in love—a call that resounds through the ages—is the very hallmark of a renewed church. Are we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, modeling this pure affection towards one another? Let each one of us ask ourselves, “Is my love free from pretense? Am I serving others with a genuine heart?” Imagine the impact of such authentic love permeating our sanctuaries, transforming every handshake, every shared meal, every community group meeting into a living testimony of Christ's love.

Renewing Relationships

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18, NIV).

In an era where discord seems to be the norm, Paul whispers a radical notion into our consciousness—pursue peace with everyone. Harmonious relationships are the bedrock of a strong community, requiring patience, humility, and divine grace. As church leaders and members, we must reflect: Are we catalysts for peace or contributors to conflict? Let’s commit to building bridges and healing divides, fostering a sanctuary where every soul finds solace and kinship.

Renewing Attitudes

“Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position...” (Romans 12:16b, NIV).

God’s kingdom defies the world’s hierarchical norms, celebrating servanthood above status. A renewed church is a community where attitudes of superiority are dethroned, and servant-heartedness is esteemed. How beautiful is the church that kneels as one, from the pulpit to the pew, to serve without distinction? It is in this posture of humility we truly reflect the majesty of Christ.

Renewing Responses to Evil

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil...” (Romans 12:17a, NIV).

Our response to evil is the litmus test of our commitment to Christ’s teachings. It’s easy to succumb to the human desire for retribution, but Paul challenges us to a higher standard—one that repays evil with goodness.

Renewing Community

“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13, NIV).

Hospitality and sharing are not mere social graces but spiritual imperatives. They are tangible expressions of God’s love through us. What if our churches became havens of radical generosity where no need went unmet? Let’s usher in a wave of renewal by welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, and embracing the lonely. This is the family God delights in—one that extends its table ever wider.

Application to Church Renewal

With the vision of a biblically renewed church burning bright in our hearts, let us now anchor our aspirations in inspiration with actionable convictions. We are invited to:

- Cultivate a habit of daily, heartfelt prayer for our fellow believers.
- Intentionally reach out to reconcile strained relationships.
- Create inclusive spaces where every voice is heard and valued.
- Engage in community outreach with compassion and eagerness.
- Equip and empower others to use their gifts to edify for the edification of the church.

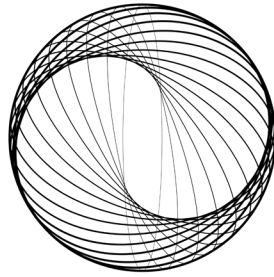
This is not a checklist but a calling. Each act of love, each gesture of generosity, each word of encouragement plants seeds for a harvest of righteousness within our communities.

Conclusion

Dear ones, the pathway to church renewal is clear—laid out through scripture and illuminated by God’s unending grace. Your presence within your local church is no accident. You are a chosen instrument, handpicked to be an agent of revival. Together, let’s heed Paul’s exhortations in Romans 12, embracing a renewal that radiates from our gatherings to the ends of the earth, shining as a beacon of hope and unity in Christ.

daily questions for reflection

1. Reflect on Romans 12:9-21 this week. What area spoke to you most regarding church renewal?
2. How have you already seen or experienced this type of renewal in our church?
3. In what ways is the Lord asking you to participate more in the renewal of our church?
4. What do you need to surrender in order to do thus?
5. What is one idea you have for helping our church become more like Jesus? (be as creative as possible)
6. Take time to pray for our church and the vision ahead; oh how we long to do what He has called us to do!



**week 4: renewal
in families**

week 4: renewal in families

In the fast-paced rhythm of modern life, the tapestry of the family can sometimes fray around the edges. Whether through misunderstandings, distance, or the silent passing of time without connection, we all yearn for a family experience that resembles a vibrant, tightly-woven quilt—one that comforts and covers all members with warmth and love. As followers of Christ, this longing is not only natural, but it's also a call to action—a divine whisper urging us to seek renewal and deeper communion within our own families.

As you read and reflect, remember that family relationships are often complicated. There might not be a clear next step or happy ending in the next few weeks. Our prayer is that as you reflect on the story of Ruth, the Lord might lead you to a new place of healing and hope however small the step.

Pursuing Deeper Relationships

Cultivating Love and Understanding

The family of God united is like a lighthouse—standing firm against the crashing waves and providing support/guidance in times of trial. Our earthly families can also be like this but are often not. True, abiding relationship grows in the fertile soil of time and intentional presence. Like Ruth, who devotedly stayed by Naomi's side, our presence—our choice to remain present in our family members' lives—speaks volumes of the love we bear.

Investing Time and Effort

Quality time is the currency of relationships. It's the long, afternoon walks, the unhurried dinners, and the late-night talks that knit hearts together. As Ruth gleaned in the fields to support Naomi, we, too, must invest our time and effort into cultivating the relationships we value most. It's in these investments that the returns of love and unity are gathered.

Reconciliation with Estranged Family Members

Learning from Ruth and Naomi

The story of Ruth and Naomi is a testament to the beauty of redemption and restoration. Their journey from loss to joy, from emptiness to fullness, mirrors the path of reconciliation we may need to tread with our own estranged family members. Entering into another's grief, as Ruth entered Naomi's, fosters a space for healing and reconnection.

Pathways to Reconciliation

Embracing forgiveness and extending grace may be challenging, but these are the first, bold steps toward family renewal. Open your heart, reach out, bridge the gaps with love and humility, knowing each gesture can serve as a stepping-stone to restoring broken bonds. Remember, it's not the speed of reconciliation but the sincerity that counts.

Praying for Unbelieving Family Members

The Transformative Power of Prayer

Do not underestimate what faithful prayer can do. It is the silent seed planted in the most resistant soil, the hopeful light in the darkest room.

Heartfelt Strategies for Prayer

Pray with expectancy, with unwavering faith, as if you are watching dawn breach the night sky, certain of the sun's arrival. Intercede for your family, not alone, but with others, building a community of prayer warriors. And through your own life, let the love of Jesus shine brightly as a testament to His love and faithfulness.

The Importance of Loving Deeply

Embracing Agape Love

Agape—the selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. This is the love we are called to, the love that covers a multitude of wrongs and paints the mundane with splashes of divine grace. As Ruth's love for Naomi was steadfast, so our love for our families should emulate the relentless, pursuing love of our Father.

Loving in the Practical

Love is more than a sentiment; it is action. It can look like a prepared meal, a helping hand, an attentive ear, or a spoken affirmation. Seek daily, simple ways to show this profound love within your family, nurturing a culture where each member thrives, valued and secure in their sacred space of belonging.

Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, as we draw inspiration from the story of Ruth, may we be motivated to forge paths of renewal within our own families. To foster deeper connections, to reconcile where there is division, to pray without ceasing for those yet to believe, and above all, to love with the exceeding love of Christ.

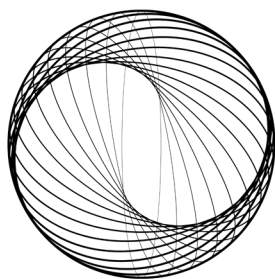
We're in this together, each of us an essential thread in God's magnificent tapestry. So let's weave with intention, patience, and endless hope.

Now, as we close this chapter, let us not forget that God is the ultimate craftsman of renewal and that through Him, all things are made new. May you feel encouraged to let His transformative power work through you and your family. Embrace this journey wholeheartedly, for the beautiful story of your family's renewal is yet to be written.

daily questions for reflection

This might be a good week to have some intentional prayer times as a family at the dinner table, before bed, etc. A different person in the family could lead the time each night. If you and your family are willing, consider including someone you know who doesn't have biological family support.

1. Reflect on some of the family dynamics we see in the scriptures:
 - Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37-50)
 - Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)
 - Hannah, Eli, and Peninnah (1 Samuel 1-2)
2. What is a relationship in your family that needs redemption? How so?
3. How is the Lord inviting you to pursue reconciliation and renewal within your family?
 - Do you need to ask for forgiveness?
 - Do you need to communicate hurt?
 - Do you need to establish better/healthier boundaries?
4. What are you longing for the Lord to do in your family?
5. Who is someone in your life who does not have biological family support that your family can care for more intentionally?



**week 5: renewal
in our country**

Week 5: Renewal in Our Country

In a time where division often takes the spotlight, the call for renewal within our country rings with a deeper urgency. As we approach an election year, our gaze is not just on the practicalities of politics but on the richer tapestry of what renewal genuinely means for our community.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, we are reminded to offer “prayers, intercession and thanksgiving for all people— for kings and all those in authority.” This instruction paves a path for earnestly seeking unity, diligently praying for our leaders, and taking practical steps toward social responsibility. Let’s explore how we can, as a collective body of faith, respond to this call together.

Unity in Diversity

Within the walls of our churches and beyond, our congregation is as vibrant and varied as a patchwork quilt. We each hold our own perspectives, including political ones. Yet, rather than sewing division, these differences can enrich the fabric of our community.

We stand united on a foundation of shared values—love, compassion, service. It’s here on this common ground that we can engage in respectful dialogue, understanding that each of us is created in the image of God. To communicate effectively, we must listen before we speak, value other perspectives, and cultivate empathy for one another’s experiences.

Prayer for Our Leaders

Our faith tradition holds a deep respect for the power of prayer, and so we lift our leaders before the Lord, asking for heavenly wisdom, guidance, and discernment to guide their decisions. It is not our place to judge, but to offer our petitions with hearts filled with compassion and empathy, trusting that the Almighty works through all circumstances.

Caring for the Poor and the Orphan

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed,” (Psalm 82:3). The biblical call to care for the marginalized is clear. But what does this look like in our day-to-day lives? It’s through acts both big and small—whether that’s volunteering at a local shelter, providing mentorship, or advocating for policy changes that offer hope and support to those who need it most.

This call to action summons us not to mere words but to genuine embodiment of God’s love for all. In this season, we engage with local organizations and initiatives, knowing that when we uplift the least of these, we see a picture of the kingdom of God right here on Earth.

Staying United as a Church

Navigating through political discussions and differences within our church community can be like steering a ship through stormy seas. Yet, even when waves of conflicting opinions rise high, we are called to promote an environment where empathy and understanding are our anchors, and grace and love serve as our compass.

Our unity is not based on uniformity of thought but on our shared faith and the mission to embody Christ’s love to the world.

We stay united not by avoiding tough conversations but by engaging in them with tenderness, respect, and a willingness to listen.

Conclusion

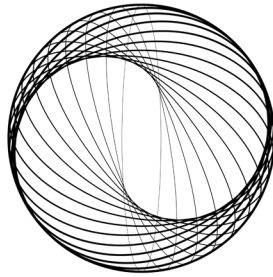
In this pivotal moment, let us be proactive in seeking renewal—not just within the hallowed halls of government but within the everyday actions of our own lives. This renewal stems from a commitment to unity despite differences, dedicated prayer for our leaders, and a heartfelt embrace of our social responsibilities.

Together, as the body of Christ, we have the extraordinary opportunity to be a beacon of hope, a haven of peace, and a wellspring of transformation. So, let us step forward with courage and faith, infused with a divine love that transcends all boundaries. It's your voice, your hands, and your heart that can shape the future of our nation under God.

May we go forth with the conviction to pray earnestly, care deeply, and love without reserve. Let us not be idle bystanders but active participants in the story of renewal that God is writing across this land.

daily questions for reflection

1. Reflect on Ephesians 4:1-16. What does it actually look like for us to pursue unity as a church?
2. 2024 is an election year. There is a lot of potential for disunity in the church. It is easy to be unified with people that you agree with but more difficult with everyone else.
 - What emotions come up as you consider this reality?
 - What do you long to see in our church this year?
 - How is the Lord asking YOU to pursue unity?
 - What do you need to surrender in order to pursue unity with believers that you don't necessarily agree with?
3. If you don't already know them, look up some of the names of your local leaders (mayors, council people, etc) and pray for them. Do the same for our state and national leaders.



**week 6: renewal
in the world**

Week 6: Renewal in the World

The world we know is a vast mosaic of cultures, people groups, and nations, each with their unique dreams, struggles, and stories. As followers of Christ, we are beckoned to look beyond our hi borders and heed a divine call for global discipleship and renewal. In Matthew 28:18-20, we discover a commission that transcends national lines and personal comforts. This blog post seeks to unpack the profound implications of these verses, urging the Christian community to extend their hands in fellowship to every corner of the globe.

Understanding Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus's parting instructions to His disciples were clear and encompassing: go and make disciples of all nations. These words echo with authority and compassion, serving as a timeless mandate for believers. But what does this mean for us today?

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” - Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

This passage, often referred to as the Great Commission, underscores the universality of Christ's mission. It is a reminder that the message of salvation and renewal is not exclusive to any single people group but is offered to all humankind.

The Call to Care for Other People Groups

A genuine concern for global peoples is inseparable from the Christian faith. By broadening our view and caring for individuals outside of our immediate context, we mirror the inclusive heart of God. Here are some ways we can actualize this compassion:

- **Pray Intentionally:** Make it a practice to pray for different nations, leaders, and the global church. Let their needs shape your petitions and your worldview.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about diverse cultures and the issues they face. Knowledge leads to empathy, which can spark meaningful action.
- **Support Mission Efforts:** Through giving, volunteering, or other forms of support, contribute to the work of those serving internationally.

Becoming a Church for All Peoples

Embracing diversity within our church walls fosters a slice of heaven on earth—a community where every tribe and tongue gathers to worship. To nurture this environment, consider the following actions:

- **Cultural Engagement:** Incorporate different cultural expressions in worship and community life.
- **Language Accessibility:** Provide resources in various languages or offer translation services to accommodate non-native speakers.
- **Community Outreach:** Partner with local organizations or international groups that bridge cultural gaps and address the needs of people groups worldwide.

Renewal Through Global Collaboration

Remarkable growth and transformation occur when churches unite for a common cause beyond their vicinities.

By sharing resources, knowledge, and the love of Christ, we contribute to the revival of communities across the planet.

Reflect on stories from missionaries or international church plants. They often share how collaboration has led to innovative solutions to complex problems and how different cultures have enriched their ministry and faith.

Conclusion

Let us, as a global Christian community, embrace the call to step out in faith, seeking to be stewards of hope and renewal worldwide. May we live out our days as passionate advocates for every nation, tribe, people, and language, envisioning a church truly reflective of the kingdom of God.

Matthew 28:18-20 invites us to widen our gaze and open our arms, pledging our prayers, our resources, and our love to the global narrative of salvation. In doing so, we join hands with fellow believers to partake in God's transformative work, from our neighborhoods to the nations.

Let's step forward together, committing to a spirit of unity and renewal that knows no borders, for in Christ, we find our deepest identity—not as citizens of one nation, but as children of the world. So let us continue to strive towards building a more diverse, inclusive and united church that reflects the heart of our Savior. May we never forget the call to make disciples of all nations and bring renewal to the world through loving collaboration and faithful obedience. The journey may not be easy, but with Christ at the center, it is one filled with purpose, hope, and eternal.

daily questions for reflection

1. Reflect Revelation 7. How do you see God's heart for the nations in this passage?
2. Reflect on Isaiah 42. How do you see God's heart for the nations in this passage?
3. Reflect on Matthew 28:18-20. How do you see God's heart for the nations in this passage?
4. Personal inventory: When you think of the global church, how do you imagine it?
5. Take time everyday this week and ask the Lord to give you His heart for the nations. At the end of the week consider:
 - How have your emotions changed?
6. How is the Lord inviting you to invest more in reaching the whole world for Jesus?

What's Next?

We are so grateful to be on this journey with you. Here are a few additional resources to empower you to continue to pursue renewal in the days ahead.

Additional Resources | Books

- *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* by Richard Lovelace
- *When Prayer Is A Struggle* by Kevin Halloran
- *Reappearing Church* by Mark Sayers



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