



DAY 1 Tune In



John 10:22-30: Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Have you ever been searching for a radio station only to be frustrated by finding static rather than music? You then focus to fine tune the dial again, and suddenly you hear a clear signal. The fact is, the signal always existed on the airwaves; the only difference is that now you have adjusted your tuner to the right frequency.

In our hectic lives, there are so many signals bombarding our senses that it can become difficult to distinguish God's voice from the deafening "static noise" of life. Fasting enables us to tune out the world's distractions and tune in to God. As we fast, we deny our flesh. When we deny our flesh, we become more in tune to the Holy Spirit and can hear God's voice more clearly. If you truly listen for God's voice, you will hear it. When you hear it, it will build faith within you.

If you desire to tune out the static of life and really tune into the voice of God, come to Him first and foremost with ears that are willing to listen and a heart that is ready to obey what he says. (Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 66:2) The more we practice being in His presence, the clearer and more recognizable His voice becomes.

- In this time of fasting, what is your mind tuned to?
- What distractions do you need to remove so that you can focus on God?
- Prepare your heart to hear the voice of God, and ask God to help you remove distractions that keep you from focusing on Him and hearing Him clearly.

additional reading:

Psalm 34:18

Isaiah 66:2

Isaiah 64:8

prayer: Lord, help me to tune in to You. As distractions and temptations come, give me strength to turn to You. Teach me. Give me eyes and ears to hear Your voice. Open my heart to Your Word. As I'm challenged in the days ahead, please give me what I need to humble myself and honor You. Help me to take time to be holy, to spend time with You in secret, to trust in Your Word. You are the potter. I am the clay. Mold me and make me according to Your will. Thank You for being a God who I can trust. You are so faithful to me. I am Yours.

Journal:

DAY 2. Unwavering in Faith

James 1:2-7: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

What do you expect when you pray? When we pray with earnest expectation, we are exercising our faith. The earnest prayers of people walking in step with God can produce powerful results, and the most earnest prayers come from us recognizing our need for God.

There can be a natural tendency to shrink back when praying for the seemingly impossible, but we must remember that nothing is impossible with God. If we know the promises that God has given us, and understand His character and the principles by which He works, we can pray with confidence and trust Him for the answer. The Kings James Version of the Bible refers to it as being "*unwavering in your faith*." What has caused you to waver in your expectation with God? James reminds us that faith and wavering are actually contradictory – he says "nothing wavering". Know that God never wavers in His love for you. You can trust Him completely.

- What are you trusting God for in this season?
- How can you line up your expectations with the Word of God when you pray?
- Find promises in His Word that answer your need and write them down today.

additional reading:

Matthew 17:20:

Romans 8:28:

Romans 12:2: prayer: Lord, please help me to stand firm in my faith as I walk with You. You are my strong tower. I know I can trust in You. Guard and renew my mind, body, soul and spirit in Christ Jesus according to Your will. May each one line up with the Word of God. May my life be filled with faith and expectation that You are working all things for good. Give me faith to move mountains, knowing that You have promised to do the impossible so that You may be glorified. May my life, thoughts and expectations reflect Yours, my King and my God.

Journal:

DAY 3. Spiritual Food

Psalm 34:8: Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who take refuge in Him.

Your Bible, God's Word, is life-giving, spiritual food. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He said, *"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4). Psalm 19 says this about God's words: *"They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb."* Proverbs 4:22 says, *"For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."* God's Word is life changing, miracle working, alive, holy, true, perfect, empowering, encouraging, trustworthy and healing. It guides us, gives wisdom, judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, is a mighty weapon and is to be treasured! Jesus was the Word made flesh, our bread of life. When we open the scriptures, we begin to know Him better.

In John 4, we read about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. When Jesus met her, His disciples had gone into town to get food. When they returned with the food, they found Jesus' hunger satisfied. They were confused by this, wondering if He had eaten while they were gone. But Jesus said, *"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* Jesus was sustained spiritually by doing His Father's will. He then told them in John 6:27, *"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*

We are spiritually nourished by feeding on God's Word and by doing His will. Ask God to open your spiritual eyes and ears to receive His Word as life-giving and sustaining. Drink deeply from His Word. Listen for His voice. Obey His promptings. Trust Him to sustain you as you pray and fast. Believe that God's Word is *"sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb."* He will do more than you can imagine.

- How can you create time to be in God's Word?
- Do you believe that it will nourish you and bring life to you?
- Ask God to meet you personally through this time as you seek Him. He desires to teach you. He delights in you.

additional reading:

John 6:35:

John 6:63:

Matthew 24:35:

John 1:1,14

Psalm 19:7-10:

Ephesians 6: 10,11,17

Hebrews 4:12:

prayer: Lord, give me a spiritual hunger that I have never known. Increase my thirst for righteousness, for purity, for holiness, for You! Break the power of sin and worldly habits that keep me from You. Pour Your cleansing, living water through me and make me a vessel that You can use to refresh others. Make me an instrument of Your healing and compassion. Use me in Your service. Help me to remember the brevity of my life and to store up treasures in Heaven.

Journal:

DAY 4. Cultivating Spiritual Hunger

Mark 1:12-13: Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Even Jesus disconnected from the world to fast and pray. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. They also describe other times Jesus pulled away from the demands of the crowds, His ministry and even His closest friends to pray.

There are times that we, too, need to pull away from the things of the world and focus on God. "The things of the world" can certainly include more than just food. In fact, in our world, it is more likely to be television, movies, Facebook, Twitter, cell phones and internet that keep us "tuned in" to the world. None

of these things are wrong in and of themselves, but they are avenues for a mental and spiritual "crowd" to gather around us and drown out the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit.

Fasting is a means of disconnecting from the distractions of daily life and consciously choosing to bring God into greater focus. Giving up physical nourishment is the first step in engaging that process. If you think about it, though, we nourish our souls as well as our bodies. We do so through reading, talking, socializing, playing and leisure. When we fill our souls up with all those things, we don't feel a hunger for God.

During this time of fasting, we may feel physical hunger, but let's be intentional about cultivating spiritual hunger as well. Let's draw away from the crowds, and lay aside for a season the activities we use to nourish our souls. Instead let's allow ourselves to enter a state of spiritual hunger – a hunger for righteousness. Jesus said that being spiritually hungry is a blessed state, because we can be sure of being filled with food that truly satisfies our deepest needs. (Matthew 5:6)

During this time, you will find that being still before the Lord will set you in a place of increased strength, peace and hunger for God.

- Are you disconnected from the things that nourish your body and soul?
- What do you need to deny yourself so that this can be a powerful time in your life?
- Take time to pray and read God's Word during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from. God will honor your heart and commitment.

additional reading:

Matthew 5:6

Matthew 6:19-21

2 Timothy 2:20-22

prayer: Lord, give me a spiritual hunger that I have never known. Increase my thirst for righteousness, for purity, for holiness, for You! Break the power of sin and worldly habits that keep me from You. Pour Your cleansing, living water through me and make me a vessel that You can use to refresh others. Make me an instrument of Your healing and compassion. Use me in Your service. Help me to remember the brevity of my life and to store up treasures in Heaven.

Journal:

DAY 5. Fasting with Prayer That Removes Unbelief

Matthew 17:18-21: And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, that if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

When we pray and fast, we don't do so to change God or His will. By praying and fasting, we are the ones changed. Coming into alignment with God helps us curb our doubts and fears. When we pray and fast, one thing that leaves is our unbelief. It is when we have faith to believe, that we can pray with confidence and know that "nothing will be impossible" as we live to bring glory to God.

Ask God to strengthen our hearts to fully believe Him and believe His word. It is okay to recognize and acknowledge if you struggle with unbelief. It's the first step in allowing God to strengthen your faith and bring you into alignment with His plan for your life.

- What is it that you need faith to believe God for?
- Align yourself with God's Word and will during this fast. Ask the Holy Spirit to free you from your unbelief.
- Pray with confidence, knowing "nothing will be impossible for you."

additional reading:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Mark 9:24

prayer: Lord, I confess my unbelief. I am weak, but You are strong. Increase my faith. Remind me of the relevance of Your Word for my life. I know it is powerful. Help me to use it to strengthen my spirit and to war against Satan and his efforts against me. Help me to take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. Make me an overcomer as I receive in faith the victory You have for me. I do believe. You are not finished with me yet. I praise You for Your grace and goodness to me.

Journal:

DAY 6. Reliance on God

Romans 7:18-20 (NLT): And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong, it is sin living in me that does it.

There's an internal war that often wages within each and every one of us. Paul describes this so well here in Romans 7 – we desire to do the right thing, but in our own efforts, we don't have the power to and we mess up.

The good news is that we don't have to rely on our own strength to make right decisions. We don't have to be dominated by our sinful nature and end up doing the things we don't want to do. But the only way we can live this kind of life is by yielding to the Holy Spirit and relying on the strength of Jesus Christ, not our own.

When we're facing struggles, we must rely on God's power alive within us through the Holy Spirit. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit resides in us and places in us the desire to do what is pleasing to God. (Hebrews 10:16) The Holy Spirit always wants to do what is right. He always wants to uphold the perfect will of God, pleasing the Father in every way. It is our job to lay down our stubborn fleshly will and yield to the will of God. In that moment, the Holy Spirit will

be there to help us in our time of need. Instead of trusting in our own strength, let's learn to yield to and become totally reliant upon the Holy Spirit.

- Are there areas in your life causing an internal struggle?
- Make a decision today that you will yield to the Holy Spirit and lean on His strength, not your own, to overcome obstacles of sin and selfishness in your life.
- Surrender and release those areas to God, knowing He will help you.

additional reading:

Hebrews 10:16:

Colossians 3:12-14

I Corinthians 13:2-13

Ephesians 4:22-32

prayer: Lord, give me the desire to please You in all things. I confess I want to do things my way. Forgive my stubbornness and pride. Help me to choose Your way. I humbly ask You for grace and a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit who lives in me. May my life reflect Your will for me. Help me to put away childish things and to put on love. Help me to stop actions that are harmful to me and others. Today I put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Give me grace to forgive as You have forgiven me. I love You.

Journal:

DAY 7. Fervent Prayer

James 5:16b: The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Fervency speaks of our level of intensity, passion and persistence. Many times, we can lose our passion in prayer or stop praying for certain things altogether because we lose heart or give up. But God invites us to keep them before Him and trust Him for an answer in His time. (Matthew 7:7-11)

The Old Testament prophet, Elijah, practiced a lifestyle of fervent, intense prayer and he witnessed incredible miracles in his lifetime as a result. In 1 Kings 17:17-24, we read of a woman whose only son became ill and died. When Elijah heard the news he quickly took action and did what he knew best – he fervently cried out to God. Elijah fully believed that God could bring the boy back to life, and he didn't pray just once. It is recorded that he prayed three times for the boy's soul to return to him. He prayed fervently, repeatedly and he wasn't going to give up. Verse 22 reads, "then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived."

God honored Elijah's obedience and fervent prayers and brought the boy to life. God hears your prayers as well and will bring an answer in His perfect timing. But don't be discouraged or disheartened if the answer is not exactly what you expected. Commit to praying to God with passion and persistence, trusting the answer will come in God's perfect way and in His perfect timing.

As we close out this first week, continue to pray fervently for the main areas of concern in your life. Trust God to bring an answer as you journal your thoughts and inspirations through this time.

additional reading:

Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 6:9-13

Ezra 8:23

Psalms 141:2

Matthew 21:22

Acts 2:42

Romans 12:12

Ephesians 6:18

Philippians 4:6

Colossians 4:2

1 Peter 3:12

prayer: Lord, teach me to pray. You have given me the gift of partnering with You in prayer. Stir my heart to prayer and give me ears to listen as You speak to me in the quiet places of my heart. Increase my faith as I trust You for the answers to my prayers. Thank You for hearing me. I seek Your face and humbly, persistently ask that You will do a mighty work in my life. Use my prayers to bless and encourage others. Teach me to praise You in my prayers. You are worthy of my praise.

Journal:

DAY 8. Spoken Word

John 11:38-44: Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

The story of Lazarus' death and resurrection reflects the power of Jesus' spoken Word. He already knew in His heart the miracle that was about to take place, but His words spoke the miracle into existence.

While prayer is our declaration of our dependence on God, our spoken words can be the manifestation of what's happening in our hearts. There is power in our spoken words – whether they are used to build up or tear down. It is so important to keep our hearts filled with the truth from God's Word so that our words will produce good fruit.

As you seek God in prayer, ask Him for the words and discernment that may help someone today. Pray that your words would be encouraging, edifying and aligned with the truth of God's word. Building others up around us with our words allows us to be God's instrument – a vessel for His good work.

As God continues to fill us through this season of prayer and fasting, He wants to take what is now in our hearts and share it with others. How can you use the power of your spoken words to speak God's truth in the lives of others?

additional reading:

Isaiah 50:4

Ephesians 4:29

Matthew 12:33-37

Proverbs 18: 21:

Proverbs 12:18

prayer: Father, Thank You that Your Word is life and power to me and to others. Your Word brings hope to things that appear to have no hope. May Your words take root in my heart so that I can bring life, power and encouragement to others who are weary. Place a deep hunger in my heart for Your words so that I can memorize and recall Your words when needed. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Journal:

DAY 9. Humble Yourself

Matthew 17:14-16: "And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

What a great example of humility – this man approached Jesus and knelt before Him in the midst of a crowd. As the father approached Jesus, he believed that Jesus would bring his son relief. But even in his belief, his approach was humble and submitted to what Christ would choose to do. Looking further into the story, we find the father was also persistent and resisted taking offense. Though the disciples were not able to help him, he set aside his temporary disappointment in their failure and continued to seek after Jesus – the solution to his circumstance, the source of relief through his trial.

Being humble before God is realizing our need of Him, submitting to His will, pursuing Him and being confident the outcome will occur in God's perfect timing.

Be encouraged that approaching God with a heart of humility will always position you to find relief in Jesus. Don't be ashamed to humble yourself before God, even in the midst of others looking on. Offenses and disappointment may come but continue in your pursuit of Jesus. You may not get relief right away but know that God is never late and His solution is always perfect.

Prayer is a posture of humility. Humble yourself before the Lord each day and bring your cares to Him. You may want to consider how you present your body to the Lord in prayer. Getting down on our hands and knees or stretching out on our faces on the floor puts us in positions of humility that can help us focus. He wants to meet you where you are and answer your every need. Is there discouragement in your heart today? Write it down and release it to our perfect God.

additional reading:

Isaiah 66:2

Colossians 3:12-14

James 4: 6-10

prayer: Lord, I bow before You realizing You are sovereign, almighty, and all powerful. I thank You that in Your greatness You still love and care for me. Your ways and thoughts are so much higher than mine, and I acknowledge my need for You. May I have a meek and humble spirit like Jesus. Remove pride from my life, for I confess I am nothing without You. I submit my life to You once again. I pray You remove disappointment and discouragement from me as I trust in You and Your perfect will. Help me to be humble and gentle to those around me. Thank You for working in my heart. I love You.

Journal:

DAY 10. Clean House

Romans 8:5-6: 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, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Have you ever looked up at your ceiling fan blades or in the deep recesses of your couch cushions and noticed the filth that builds up over time? Even though we might clean on a regular basis, there are times when we need to go... a little deeper. We realize that what appeared to be clean on the surface was in all actuality, quite filthy.

The same thing can happen spiritually. As we go about our daily lives, there are things that can build up over time. Even if we regularly worship, pray and read our Bible, the different pressures and cares of this world can quietly build up, and end up consuming our lives. Without even realizing it, we can lose our peace, our joy, and our passion for the things of God. Our service to God, which used to fill us with life and excitement, becomes a duty that we must fulfill.

Fasting is the deep cleaning that helps us take our mind off of the things of this world and instead have a refreshed focus on the things of the Spirit. It is an incredibly effective way to get into the nooks and crannies of our soul and bring all those dusty old habits, broken mindsets and rusty attitudes out into the light of God's truth. In fasting and prayer, our service to God returns to something we want to do rather than something we have to do.

As you pray and fast today, ask God to show you any areas where you could use a refreshed spiritual focus. Like David, in Psalm 51:10-12, pray that God will cleanse your heart, renew your spirit, and restore the joy of your salvation. Pray with confidence, knowing that He wants to fill you with His life and peace.

additional reading:

Psalm 51

Philippians 4:8-9

prayer: Lord, at times I grow tired and lukewarm in my love and service for You. Forgive me for allowing the distractions of the world to take my focus off of You. Please renew the joy of my salvation and give me a fresh passion for You. I want to love You more than life. Thank You that You never grow weary and that Your passion for me is always secure.

Journal:

DAY 11. What's Your Assignment?

Luke 4:1-2, 14-15: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry...Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him.

Fasting and prayer are helpful to receiving a clear vision of God's specific path for our lives. Many times following a season of prayer and fasting we can have a more defined understanding of the part that we play in the body of Christ and a greater sense of our particular spiritual gifting's. (1 Corinthians 12)

This chapter in the Gospel of Luke describes the circumstances surrounding the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Notice that He went into the desert "full of the Holy Spirit." However, He returned to Galilee, "in the power of the Holy Spirit." Being full of the Spirit is knowing God and his character; walking in the power of the Spirit is when we know that we have the God-given strength and authority in our lives to walk out His will.

The power of the Spirit is essential for us to accomplish the assignment God has for our lives. God could be leading you to fast so that you can receive His specific instructions for your life. He will empower you, not just to know Him, but to walk in His power to accomplish what He has called you to do.

- Are there areas of your life that need more clarity?
- Are you walking in the power of the Spirit and living in God's purpose for your life? Write down those things God is speaking to you.
- As you continue your fast, pray that God continually reveals His purpose and gives you ever increasing clarity and strength to walk it out.

additional reading:

Psalms 37:3-7

Isaiah 48:17-18

Romans 1:1-2

prayer: Holy Spirit, thank You that Your power lives within me. I want to live more in Your power, so I ask that You come into my soul and fill me again. I do not want any sin in my life to block You, so I ask You cleanse my heart. I know You have a purpose for my life, but I don't always know what that is. I ask for a clear calling and discernment as I desire to live out the assignment You have given me. Thank You that when You call me to something, You also completely equip me. I pray that You alone will work through me and that others will see You in me. Thank You for choosing me and giving me a purpose. May my life shine brightly for You!

Journal:

DAY 12. Don't Worry - Pray Instead

Philippians 4:6-7 (MSG): Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

Worry seems to be an inescapable fact of modern life. No doubt there is plenty to worry about: our future, the economy, global warming, war, disease ... the list could go on forever! Sometimes it might seem that worry has even replaced Jesus as the focal point of our lives. Jesus Himself admonished us several times not to worry. And the great apostle, Paul, tell us in the passage above that there is an antidote to worry...prayer.

When we worry about something, we are spending energy on it, wondering what might happen, rehearsing the "if only's" and "what if's" in our mind. Why not take that same energy and refocus it on prayer instead? When we worry, we are simply talking to ourselves about our fears, but when we pray, we are taking those fears to God. We can't control the future, but in the words of Anne Graham Lotz, God is already there! He knows exactly what is going to happen and He promises to be with us every step of the journey.

As we continue this season of prayer and fasting, let's make an effort to convert our worry into prayer. As Paul says in the verse above, "let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers," and you will find that the peace of God will guard your heart.

- Are there things that you consistently worry about?
- As you go through your day today, recapture each worried thought and send it up to God as a prayer. See how dramatically your outlook improves when the peace of God is activated through prayer!

additional reading:

Proverbs 3:1-6

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Isaiah 41:10-13

prayer: Lord, You know how often my mind goes to worry and not to trusting You. May my thoughts be quicker to turn into prayers to You, my Almighty God, because You know the plans You have for me, and they are plans to prosper me and not to harm me. Thank You for Your peace that surpasses all understanding as I place my confidence in You and believe You are at work in my life.

Journal:

DAY 13. Praying Boldly

1 Kings 18:36 (KJV): And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant..."

The sacrifice referenced above was a declaration that Elijah was a servant of the Most High God. Elijah belonged to God, and he represented God to the people. However, Elijah's boldness was not a result of who he was; it was the result of knowing God!.

As children of God under the new covenant of Jesus, we don't have to be timid or fearful when coming to God in prayer. We can approach God boldly. The Amplified Bible puts it like this:

Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it]. Hebrews 4:16

It's hard to imagine taking a fearless, confident, bold attitude when coming before God in prayer. Yet this is exactly what we are admonished to do! God has already settled the issue of our access to Him, but we can be assured, our access is not because of our own righteousness. It's because of what Jesus did on the cross. We can come to the throne in such outrageous boldness because Jesus was outrageously righteous! When we pray, we come to God in the authority of Jesus' name, and we can be confident that we will find grace, mercy and perfectly-timed help.

- Do you approach God with timidity of confidence?
- Seek God boldly today knowing you are fully forgiven and Jesus has made you righteous. When you approach God in prayer, seek a fresh revelation of who He is in your life.

additional reading:

Matthew 9:18-26

Ephesians 3:16-21

prayer: Father, I thank You that I can approach You boldly and with confidence because I am righteous through Christ. Lord, please give me a boldness in asking from You. Nothing is too difficult for You, and I pray for a renewed revelation of who You are today. You hold all things in Your hands and have a perfect plan for my life. Thank You. I love You.

Journal:

DAY 14. Alignment with Heaven

Matthew 6:10 (KJV): "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

We have all heard the phrase, "just like heaven on earth." When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, in Matthew 6:9-13, He provided some insight into what "heaven on earth" might look like. In reality, heaven is a place where God's will reigns supreme. If we want to have a taste of heaven on earth, then our prayer should be like Jesus': "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done..." The purest motivation for our prayers is that God will be glorified and that His will would reign supreme in our lives, just like it does in heaven.

On a more personal level, we can pray that His will be unhindered in our own lives. Rather than imposing His will upon us, God gives us the choice to surrender to it with trust and gladness. As we yield to the Lordship of Christ over every area of our lives, we come into agreement with Him. We experience alignment with heaven and position ourselves to taste a little bit of heaven here on earth. His will then becomes what we desire and the thing we most seek after. We enter into the incredible adventure of participating in God's plan to move His kingdom forward on the earth. This is where we find the most fulfilling and joyous life, but it all starts with one, personal "yes, Lord" on our part.

- What does God's will "on earth as it is in heaven" look like in your life?
- Do the desires of your heart line up with the will of God?

As we seek God together, let's pray as Jesus taught us, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

additional reading:

Isaiah 58:1-12

James 1:27

prayer: Father, Your word is very clear about what Your will is. You desire for us to reach out to the lonely, oppressed, marginalized and lost. You have great compassion on them and desire us to be Your hands and feet. Please help my will to line up with Yours. Please enable me to care about others being lost more than I care about the comforts or problems in my life. May Your kingdom come, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And may I be willing to bring Your kingdom to earth by the way I treat others around me. Please open my eyes to who You want me to bless today.

Journal:

DAY 15. Confession

Psalm 51 (NLT): Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds; they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner; yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the heart, so you can teach me to be wise in my inmost being. Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me, now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to sinners, and they will return to you. Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that I may praise you. You would not be pleased with sacrifices, or I would bring them. If I brought you a burnt offering, you would not accept it. The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise. Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with worthy sacrifices and with our whole burnt offerings; and bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Consider the things that come between you and God, and starting with the words below, hold them up to God as a confession. Confession causes us to face our nature, and can be a frightful thing, but it is also a bridge to God. Sincere confession is always followed by God's drawing near in forgiveness.

Holy and merciful Father: We confess to You... that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed; by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have grieved Your Holy Spirit. Father, I confess ...

As the scripture says, *"If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong"* (1 John 1.9). Now is the time to search our hearts and to be fully known by God. As we focus on the cross and resurrection, we need to be honest with God, hiding nothing. Remember as well that there is no darkness too deep for God: His own Son suffered death on a cross under a greater burden than any have known before or after Him – He descended deeper into the darkness. There is no depth to which we may sink, where He has not been, or where we will be out of reach of the mercy of God.

Suggestion: For fasting from various media, continue the practices from last week and add to them if you can. Cut back on, or eliminate, TV, the radio, the internet, the computer, etc. And finally, whenever you have free time because you have given something up, be sure to give the time to God.

- Have you acknowledged your sinfulness to our Most Holy God?
- Have you repented and turned from your ways?
- Please spend time asking God to reveal the sins you need to confess. Name the sins and take ownership of them. After listening for His Spirit to reveal your sins repent and turn from those sins.
- After you are finished, please close with this prayer.

prayer: Father, I often find myself buried under the weight of my own dark thoughts, and so fearful of these thoughts that I cannot even face them. But Lord, You promise that because of what Jesus did, I am not to be punished according to my sin. With this promise and the hope of freedom, God help me to face my own heart: shine Your light inside of me. I want to be known by You. Help me to let You in.

Journal:

DAY 16. Pride and Humility

Our godliness can often be measured by the line between our pride and humility. Scripture tells us that God has placed a spirit of "fierce desires" in us. Pride can ignite these God-given desires into an occasion for doing wrong. Humility, on the other hand, makes room for God, who tempers and directs our desires, and guides us to lasting fulfillment.

Scripture tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (a more humiliating event could not have been imagined). So we practice humility as a way to follow Jesus, and to cast off all our ineffective, prideful attempts at self-promotion, self-salvation and self-satisfaction.

When we remember that Jesus' death is our only hope, and that all our efforts to save ourselves are at best short-term solutions and doomed to fail, we weep for our condition. But we also need to remember that humiliation and remorse, both appropriate responses to God, are temporary. Through Christ's resurrection, the humble are lifted up, and those who mourn are comforted with an everlasting comfort.

James 4:1-10: What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

John 16.19-22

Psalms 23

- In what area of your life or in what relationship do you need to ask God to grant you humility?
- Is there someone you need to humbly approach and ask for forgiveness?
- Is there an area you need to surrender to God and no longer seek your will, but to trust in Him for His will to be done?

prayer: God grant me the ability to see myself as You see me. Yet protect me from what I find in my own heart, for surely it is more awful than I can bear. Forgive me, and carry my burden of grief when I see my failings. And God, don't let me take credit for the good things You have given me. In Your mercy help me to see the pride in my own heart. Heal and renew my spirit; refine the passion of my heart; and help me to walk in humility.

Journal:

DAY 17. Passion for God

The day Jesus entered Jerusalem before His death and resurrection is known as Palm Sunday. This marks the beginning of the week of Christ's passion. The word 'passion' comes from a Latin word which means 'suffering'. The suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross has always been referred to as The Passion. There is even a movie by that name. In modern times, we have come to apply the word passion to mean any kind of strong feeling, or commitment, even though it more properly it describes a suffering for some worthwhile thing. In many ways we have lost this sense of the word, in part perhaps, because there is so little of this kind of passion left in the western world. We ascribe the word passion to how we feel about sports teams, music, or our political views. Would you be willing to suffer for those things?

How different is the passion of Jesus: directed by God and willingly accepted. Jesus actively chose His path and the sufferings that followed. In Jesus we see not only the full depth of God's passion for us and the suffering that was a necessary part of it, but also the full depth of one perfect human's passion for God (in Jesus): obedience that led to death. How do we respond to God's call to follow Him?

Are we passionate? Or passive? To walk with Jesus, who said, "*take up your cross and follow me,*" we must accept God's direction and choose to follow the path laid out for us. This is a path of certain passion (suffering), but also certain hope because of the victory we have through Christ's resurrection.

Matthew 10.24-32, 38-39 (TEV): (Jesus teaches his disciples) "No pupil is greater than his teacher; no slave is greater than his master. So a pupil should be satisfied to become like his teacher, and a slave like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul, the members of the family will be called even worse names! So do not be afraid of people. Whatever is now covered up will be uncovered, and every secret will be made known. What I am telling you in the dark you must repeat in broad daylight, and what you have heard in private you must announce from the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, even the hairs

of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows! Those who declare publicly that they belong to me, I will do the same for them before my Father in heaven. "Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples. Those who try to gain their own life will lose it; but those who lose their life for my sake will gain it."

Psalm 130 (READ)

- How are you passionate in your love for the Lord?
- In what areas do you actively choose God's ways and desire to live for Him?
- Or, do you passively follow Him?
- In what ways do others look at your life and see your passion and consuming love for Jesus?
- Ask God to enable you to passionately love and follow Him.

prayer: Lord, thank You for Your passionate love for me that You would die for me. And thank You for Your passionate love for the Father, that You would obey Him, even to death. Lord, I am so often harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd-how can I find my way unless You help me? Have mercy on me. Lead me Lord. Come, and give me the strength I need to follow You in doing the Father's will. Bless the time I give to You this week. Pour Your blessing over me. Give me a passionate love equal to Yours.

Journal:

DAY 18. The Suffering Christ

When we think of Jesus' death on the cross we also remember all those who were together with Him in the last days. Imagine being in the disciples' shoes during what was certainly the darkest period of their lives. Through the Scriptures we see Jesus' followers as they fall asleep, betray Him, deny, flee, despair and generally fail to "get it." Imagine what it would have been like for them to watch their friend, mentor, King, their Savior, be arrested, whipped, humiliated, stripped naked, crowned with thorns and hammered to a wooden cross. The week before Christ's death is often referred to as Holy Week and it's reasonable to ask, "*If this is Holy Week, what would an unholy week look like?*"

The horror of holy week is a stumbling block to the Jews, even for Jesus' own followers. They stumbled on the fact that this "King" was killed by the Romans when He was supposed to be conquering them! Instead of taking the throne, He was nailed to a tree, and forever cursed by it, they thought. But Jesus' way was not their way. He knew that by dying, the Jews could not only be saved from the perceived tyranny of any military power, but from a far worse tyranny, that of sin and evil. Jesus chose the path of suffering and death so that they-and we-could be free forever from the punishment due to us because of the evil in our hearts. He took our place on the cross. If we are able to "get" this truth, then suffering and death are no threat to us, whether at the hands of a Roman soldier, or in the hand of a just God. We don't need to fear death because of what Jesus did.

Because of Jesus' suffering, we also have an advocate when we suffer. No matter what we are going through, no matter how tough or terrorizing, one thing is sure: Jesus understands. He has endured far worse, for our sake. When we are tempted to look up out of the dark holes we find ourselves in, to search the heavens and call out to God-we may wonder, "Where is God and why won't he rescue me?" Consider for a moment that Jesus doesn't gaze down at you from some great throne in Heaven. No. He is beneath you, waiting for you to let go and fall back into His arms. Jesus has experienced the limit of suffering and He is able to meet you where you are.

There is no depth of despair to which we can ever descend that is lower than Jesus went when He died under the weight of a world full of evil. But no matter how low we have been, don't doubt that if we are found in Jesus when He ascends on Easter day, then we will rise with Him, and will have no reason to fear death again.

Isaiah 52.13-53.12

1 Peter 1:3-9

- Do you fully realize the blessings God has given you because of the offering of Christ?
- Have you claimed the gifts He has given you-- gifts of peace, forgiveness, and righteousness?
- Jesus Christ has made you righteous and accepted in God's eyes. Spend some time thanking Him again for His sacrifice and that your sins are completely forgiven, once and for all. (2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.")

prayer: Father, teach me Your way this week. Teach me how to leave my selfish, sinful ways at the foot of the cross, and teach me how Jesus my Savior is willing to bear those sins in His own body and be punished for them. Lord, how can I thank You for this great salvation? I worship You and Your amazing power: Jesus is greater than death, and could not be conquered. When He died, I know that my sins were destroyed: it happened "once for all time." And when You raised Him three days later, You taught us that we too could be raised. I confess my many sins Lord Jesus: I lay them down at the foot of the cross. I turn away from them and ask You to give me a new way of living in the world. Walk with me this week, Father. Teach me Your way.

Journal:

DAY 19. Love

On the Friday that Jesus died it might seem that the wrath of God has eclipsed the love of God. But it isn't so. Mercy triumphs over Judgment at Easter: love triumphs over wrath.

At the last supper Jesus washed the disciples' feet. He also gave them a new commandment, "*Love one another as I have loved You.*" But the disciples don't fully comprehend how deeply Jesus has loved them. After all they had been through, it took a king on His knees with a towel around His waist to prove to them the loving, servant heart of God (what if our president, or a king, were to wash the feet of a bunch of fishermen today? What if it were your feet?). But even so, Peter the disciple doesn't understand why Jesus would defile Himself in this way.

If that night Peter finds it hard to accept that Jesus His king would humiliate Himself by washing His followers' feet, he will be even more confounded the next day. For there will be another demonstration of how God loves on Good Friday, when the perfect love of God in Jesus faces the wrath of God against evil, and triumphs in the end. All for the love of us.

John 13.1-15 (NLT): Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He now showed the disciples the full extent of his love. It was time for supper, and the Devil had already enticed Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him. When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, why are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You don't understand now why I am doing it; someday you will." "No," Peter protested, "you will never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "But if I don't wash you, you won't belong to me." Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!" Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you are clean, but that isn't true of everyone here." For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean." After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because it is true. And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them. You know these things - now do them! That is the path of blessing. Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you. I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you; peace which the world cannot give, I give to you. By this shall the world know that you are my disciples: That you have love for one another. (BCP)

- Are you washed in the love of Jesus?
- Whose feet do you need to wash in humility and love?
- In what areas of your life and in what relationships do you need His Spirit of love and humility?
- How can you serve others, especially those you are the closest to? How can you grant another the peace He has freely given us?

prayer: Wash me clean Lord. I want to receive all You have for me. I am blessed and honored when You serve me; I am humbled by Your humility. Help me remember Your healing and cleansing. Don't let me forget my salvation. In darkness help me call on Your name. Jesus. In darkness, be the light of my heart; may I never be afraid. I am longing for Your sunrise, Jesus. In Your mercy, give me the gift of hope. And by Your love, help me to love others. Teach me Your way in the coming days. Help me to understand how You have loved me, and how You love me still.

Journal:

DAY 20. Darkness Falls

Darkness falls over the Earth on Good Friday. God's own Son goes to His death to save us from the darkness in our hearts. While He is walking out this terrifying mission, His followers seem to do everything they can to show how little we humans deserve the favor.

God is a God of Light: He can't tolerate darkness, and darkness cannot survive in His presence. We, who have dark hearts full of sin, should tremble at this fact, but Jesus, who was completely good, took on our sin and stood under the wrath of God.

On the cross, He was destroyed and cut off from His Father. It was to have been our fate. In the midst of humanity's own darkest hour, and in the face of His followers' cowardice, selfishness and laziness, God does not cut us off. In His awesome mercy, He sends His own Son into the darkness so that we might live in the light.

Take some time to meditate on the following scripture passage.

Mark 14.32-15:37(NLT): "Take this cup of suffering away from me."

And they came to an olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, "Sit here while I go and pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be filled with horror and deep distress. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and watch with me." He went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. "Abba, Father," he said, "Everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine." Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. "Simon!" he said to Peter. "Are you asleep? Couldn't you stay awake and watch with me even one hour? Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak." Then

Jesus left them again and prayed, repeating his pleadings. Again he returned to them and found them sleeping, for they just couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say. When he returned to them the third time, he said, "Still sleeping? Still resting? Enough! The time has come. I, the Son of Man, am betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. See, my betrayer is here!"

A kiss and a sword

And immediately, as he said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a mob that was armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent out by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders. Judas had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I go over and give him the kiss of greeting. Then you can take him away under guard." As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. "Teacher!" he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss. Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. But someone pulled out a sword and slashed off an ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus asked them, "Am I some dangerous criminal, that you come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what

the Scriptures say about me." Meanwhile, all his disciples deserted him and ran away. There was a young man following along behind, clothed only in a linen nightshirt. When the mob tried to grab him, they tore off his clothes, but he escaped and ran away naked.

False witnesses

Jesus was led to the high priest's home where the leading priests, other leaders, and teachers of religious law had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed far behind and then slipped inside the gates of the high priest's

courtyard. For a while he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire. Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find witnesses who would testify against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But their efforts were in vain. Many false witnesses spoke against him, but they contradicted each other. Finally, some men stood up to testify against him with this lie: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, made without human hands.'" But even then they didn't get their stories straight! Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" Jesus made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the blessed God?" Jesus said, "I am, and you will see me, the Son of Man, sitting at God's right hand in the place of power and coming back on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, "Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" And they all condemned him to death. Then some of them began to spit at him, and

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they blindfolded him and hit his face with their fists. "Who hit you that time, you prophet?" they jeered. And even the guards were hitting him as they led him away.

"I don't know this man ..."

Meanwhile, Peter was below in the courtyard. One of the servant girls who worked for the high priest noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and then said, "You were one of those with Jesus, the Nazarene." Peter denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster crowed. The servant girl saw him standing there and began telling the others, "That man is definitely one of them!" Peter denied it again. A little later some other bystanders began saying to Peter, "You must be one of them because you are from Galilee." Peter said, "I swear

by God, I don't know this man you're talking about." And immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Suddenly, Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and cried.

"Crucify Him!"

Very early in the morning the leading priests, other leaders, and teachers of religious law – the entire high council – met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say." Then the leading priests accused him of many crimes, and Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to say something? What about all these charges against you?" But Jesus said nothing, much to Pilate's surprise. Now it was the governor's custom to release one prisoner each year at Passover time – anyone the people requested.

One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, convicted along with others for murder during an insurrection. The mob began to crowd in toward Pilate, asking him to release a prisoner as usual. "Should I give you the King of the Jews?" Pilate asked. (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.) But at this point the leading priests stirred up the mob to demand

the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. "But if I release Barabbas," Pilate asked them, "what should I do with this man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?" But the crowd only roared the louder, "Crucify him!"

"Hail! King of the Jews!"

So Pilate, anxious to please the crowd, released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to crucify him. The soldiers took him into their headquarters and called out the entire battalion. They dressed him in a purple robe and made a crown of long, sharp thorns and put it on his head. Then they saluted, yelling, "Hail! King of the Jews!" And they beat him on the head with a stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified. A man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the country just then, and they forced him

to carry Jesus' cross. And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means Skull Hill). They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it. Then they nailed him to the cross. They gambled for his clothes, throwing dice to decide who would get them. It was nine o'clock in the morning when the crucifixion took place. A signboard was fastened to the cross above Jesus' head, announcing the charge against him. It read: "The King of the Jews." Two criminals were crucified with him, their crosses on either side of his. And the people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. "Ha! Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You can destroy the Temple and rebuild it

in three days, can you? Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!" The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!" Even the two criminals who were being crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

And darkness fell

At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. Then, at that time Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a stick so he could drink. "Leave him alone. Let's see whether Elijah will come and take him down!" he said. Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Please spend some time praying for the following:

- Our heavenly Father sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved; that all who believe in Him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with Him of everlasting life.
- Pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.
- Pray for the Church of Christ throughout the world;
- For its unity in witness and service
- For all ministers and the people whom they serve
- For all Christians in this community
- That God will confirm His Church in faith, increase it in love and preserve it in peace.
- Pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them; for all who serve the common good, that by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace.
- Pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind;
- For the hungry and the homeless, the destitute and the oppressed
- For the sick, the wounded and the crippled
- For those in loneliness, fear and anguish
For those who face temptation, doubt and despair
- For the sorrowful and bereaved
- For prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger
- That God in His mercy will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of His love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.
- Pray for all who have not received the Gospel of Christ;

- For those who have never heard the word of salvation
- For those who have lost their faith
- For those hardened by sin or indifference
- For the contemptuous and the scornful
- For those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of his disciples
- For those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others
- That God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

prayer:

O God of unchanging power and eternal light: Look favorably on Your whole church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the working of Your providence, carry out Your plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, things which had grown old are being made new, and that the weak and weary are being made strong. Though sometimes it is hidden to our eyes, these things are being done by the One through whom all things were made, Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Grant us patience, faith, courage, and hope worthy of eternity.

Journal:

DAY 21. Victory in Christ!

The darkness of Good Friday ends with a flame of light on Easter Sunday. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Matthew 28.1-10; 16-20 (TEV): After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men. The angel spoke to the women. "You must not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!" Remember what I have told you." So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Peace be with you." They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. "Do not be afraid," Jesus said to them.

... The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

Ezekiel 36.24-28: (READ)

prayers for the resurrection: Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout salvation for the victory of our mighty King! Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King. Rejoice and be glad now, Oh Church, and in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people. It is truly right and good, always and everywhere, with our whole heart and mind to praise You, the invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for He is the true Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by His blood delivered Your faithful people. This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life. This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave. How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God, is your mercy and loving-kindness to us, that to redeem a slave, You gave a Son. How holy is this night, when wickedness is put to flight, and sin is washed away. It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn. It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord. How blessed is this day, when earth and heaven are joined and humankind is reconciled to God! May the light of Jesus shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find His light ever burning in our hearts -He who gives His light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Has this season of prayer and fasting strengthened your relationship with Christ? How?

- Please take the time to write a letter to Jesus about your love for Him and any new revelations He has revealed to you. Also include new commitments you are making.
- How will you live more passionately for Him because of His ultimate sacrifice?
- Commitments might include acts of regular prayer, service to others, and personal disciplines in spending more time with Him.

Put your letter in an envelope with two dates: today's date and six months from now. Place the envelope in your Bible and open it in six months.

prayer: Write your prayer!

Journal: