

ONE HEART

50 Days of Prayer for Reconciliation

16 JUNE 2024 - 4 AUGUST 2024



ONE HEART

50 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR ONENESS AND RECONCILIATION

We are so glad you have decided to join in these 50 days of prayer towards Reconciliation and Oneness. This guide is not limited to racial reconciliation but reconciliation across the board (i.e. family, denomination, marriage etc.) and it can be used in contexts across the globe. We know that the Holy Spirit will work mightily on the hearts of all those who choose to journey with this guide.

One of the last prayers Jesus Christ prayed while He walked this earth as a human being is recorded in John 17:20b - 22 (NIV) "... *I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us.*" Jesus also said in John 13, that if we love one another the world will know that we are His disciples. To truly love one another we need to intentionally reach out to one another. The Word says that if we know our brother has something against us, we need to go and make right. It is time to acknowledge, repent and make right the sins of the past or in some cases to forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:13).

The unity Jesus prayed for is very difficult to achieve because Christians all over the world are so fractured and divided. What must encourage us, however, is that if He prayed it, it must be possible. Time and time again I have seen how God's Spirit breaks through all the divisions, as we surrender to Him, die to self, and choose love. It is only when we do that, that we see how the Love that covers a multitude of sins starts flowing through us to bring healing and wholeness. It is a daily decision. May we become less, so that He can become more; so that we can be One with Him and one another; so that the world may know that we are truly His disciples.

We believe the time is right for the Church to take the lead and assist our countries to heal. As Christians we owe the world a testimony. Let us move from fear, hatred and distrust to rebuilding the ruined walls, as in Nehemiah's time, helping each other to overcome the past and walking in faith, believing that the King of Kings is still empowering us. Let us celebrate our shared identity in Christ. Let us rejoice in our achievements attained by the grace of God, while expecting future accomplishments in line with our potential and the possibilities presented ... as we serve one another to the benefit of all.

We cannot change, transform or heal ourselves. Only the Triune God can do that. But then we need to spend time with Him and allow Him to speak to us. In light of the need for healing and reconciliation and for our hearts to be prepared, this 50-Days of Prayer was initiated. The 50 Days will start on 16 June 2024 and end on 4 August. Please join us in this process of humbling ourselves before God so that God Himself can heal and reconcile us with Him and with one another.

WHY THE JUNE 16 START? On 16 June 1976, deep pain, anguish and division took root over the nation of South Africa- when innocent blood of school children was shed during the 1976 Soweto Riots. In our nation's calendar June 16 is a day that symbolises and personifies past oppression, division, conflict, violence, distrust and agony. It is the reason we chose the 48th commemoration of that day to start our 50 Day Prayer Journey to pray for Reconciliation in our broken nation.

"... if they pray to me and repent and turn away from the evil they have been doing, then I will hear them in heaven, forgive their sins, and make their land prosperous again" **2 Chronicles 7:14 GNB**

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

The intention of this Prayer Guide is to allow you to spend time with God and to interact with Him concerning the prayer Christ prayed in John 17, "Father make them one". It is written for Christians who accept the authority of the Word of God, who have the desire to see the Kingdom of God established in their nations and who are willing to play their role in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

The 50 Days focus on the different aspects of becoming one. First becoming one with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Secondly, becoming one with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Jesus Christ, the Church. Thirdly, our role as peacemakers in the world around us. Daily prayer points focus first on our own individual lives (**ME**), then on the Church (**US**), and then on the world (**THEM**). Please read the devotion prayerfully, humbly and with an open heart.

As you pray through the different topics, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth concerning your own heart; to bring conviction and to enable you to ask for forgiveness or extend forgiveness as is necessary; and to empower you to reconcile and bring healing and restoration to others. If at any time emotions should surface during your time of prayer, try to identify these emotions, and ask the Lord to show you the incident(s) that caused you to have these emotions. This is usually the place where healing can take place through confession or forgiveness. If you are reminded of specific people who were involved in these incidents and you have the opportunity to personally speak to them to ask for forgiveness or to forgive, please try to do so at the first opportunity in a face-to-face meeting or via telephone.

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." **John 17:20-21 ESV**

We recognize that the path to reconciliation often involves navigating through feelings of anger and pain. It's essential to acknowledge and validate these emotions without rushing past them. This journey requires ample listening and sharing, which is why we suggest undertaking it alongside a prayer partner or within a supportive group setting. True reconciliation is built on genuine relationships and the cultivation of love for one another. It's a communal process that necessitates confronting our blind spots and fostering mutual accountability. This guide is designed for daily introspection and can also be utilized within church communities. We've included corporate prayers for Sunday services, and we eagerly anticipate churches coming together to pray through these resources and we would love to hear from you. Additionally, we encourage families to engage in prayer together, fostering intergenerational dialogue and understanding.

OTHER TOOLS:

PODCASTS: As part of this journey we decided to capture stories of reconciliation both in South Africa and in other contexts where reconciliation doesn't make sense (but for Jesus). These have been captured in podcast format in partnership with [The Follower Podcast](#). These will be available weekly on Mondays starting on 17 June, wherever you get your podcasts.

SCRIPTURE MEMORISATION: We are encouraging you to memorise John 17 as part of this journey. Here's a link for some ideas to help you [Memorize the Bible](#).

FASTING: Prayer and Fasting go hand in hand [Beginner's Guide to Fasting](#)

"Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." - Andrew Murray

WEEK 1 | DAY 1 | 16 JUNE 2024 | SUNDAY

FATHER LET THEM BE ONE

SCRIPTURE READING

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." **John 17:20-21 ESV**

This was Jesus' prayer for His disciples the night before He was betrayed. It is still His prayer today. In these 50 days of prayer for reconciliation, we would like to encourage you to memorise the whole chapter of John 17, to pray it daily and to ask that Jesus' prayer would be fulfilled in you and through you.

Today is Youth Day. South Africa remembers the bravery of children in the struggle against Apartheid. Today is also Father's Day, where fathers all over the world are valued and appreciated by their family. However, there are also many children and adults that never knew their fathers. Before we pray about the conflict in families and in the nations, we need to first thank God our Father that we were reconciled to Him and may call Him our Father.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Pray John 17:1-17 aloud. Then bow before the Lord and ask Him to set you apart for these 50 days of prayer.

US: Pray John 17:1-17 corporately in your congregation and trust our heavenly Father that He will answer the prayer of His Son Jesus Christ, and of us, His children, to make us one.

THEM: Pray that the unbelievers in our nation will hear the good news that God loves them and made a way through Jesus Christ so that they can be reconciled with God.

CORPORATE PRAYER

Read John 17 aloud as congregation.

TO BE PRAYED BY FATHERS

Heavenly Father, we bow before You. Your purpose with marriage is to bring forth godly offspring. Please help us to fulfil Your purposes (Mal.2:15). As fathers we confess that in so many cases we have not been faithful to the marriage covenant. We confess that too often success, our own desires, chasing after money and honour, and selfishness caused us to neglect our children. We confess that so often we treated our wives and children in a way that caused them hurt and humiliation. We confess that we have failed as fathers to the extent that our children could not come to the fullest experience and understanding of Your fatherhood. Please forgive us. Please turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers in our generation, so that the curse can be removed from our nations. (Luke 1:17; Mal.4:6). We bless our children and families, just as Isaac and Jacob blessed their children (Gen.27;49). In Your Name we proclaim over our children: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace!" (Num.6:24-26). May our children honour and respect their fathers and mothers, and may they live long in the land You give them (Ex.20:12). May they accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and grow up to be men and women of God, living obedient and righteous lives. To the glory of your Name. Amen.

The most valuable possession you can own is an open heart. The most powerful weapon you can be is an instrument of peace. — Carlos Santana

DAY 2 | 17 JUNE 2024 | MONDAY

BE RECONCILED TO GOD

SCRIPTURE READING

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." **2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NIV**

The amazing message from the Scriptures is this: to bring about reconciliation is not our task. It is God's! He is the great Reconciler. What none of us could do, He has done. Firstly, He has reconciled us to Himself. He has removed our sins, our guilt, everything that separated us from Him, while we were still sinners! It cost him dearly – the death of his Son on the cross. Old things have passed away, and we have become new. The second thing God has done was to reconcile us to one another, to eradicate all the hatred and animosity, the lack of love and the sinfulness dividing us. Because God has stretched his arms out to us, we can embrace one another. God has paid us the greatest compliment imaginable – He has invited us to become his co-workers on earth. He has given us the power and responsibility to be ambassadors for his reconciliation.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Romans 5:6-10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:1-5.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Can you confidently call Him your Father? Do you know that He had forgiven your sins? Take a couple of minutes to thank Him for reconciling you to Himself.

US: Pray for your congregation to set aside time to reflect again on this basic foundational principle of our faith: God has reconciled every member of His church to Himself.

THEM: Pray that the gospel of reconciliation will infiltrate every sphere of society, that it will echo in every hall of parliament, in every cell in prison, in every household, school and university, in every courtroom and every hospital ward. Pray that the desire for reconciliation will become the cry of every heart in our nation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"If ever a person had room to complain of injustice, it was Jesus. He was the only innocent man ever to be punished by God. If we stagger at the wrath of God, let us stagger at the cross. Here is where our astonishment should be focused. If we have cause for moral outrage, let it be directed at Golgotha." – R.C. Sproul

DAY 3 | 18 JUNE 2024 | TUESDAY

PRINCE OF PEACE

SCRIPTURE READING

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6
NKJV

Our God is the God of peace. Jesus is the supreme Peacemaker. He came to establish peace; His message explained peace; His death purchased peace; and His resurrected presence enables peace. The messianic predictions were that He would be the "Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6). The angels announced his birth by singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He is pleased with." (Luk.2:14). Jesus' persistent word of pardon to sinners was, "Go in peace!" Just before He was crucified, Jesus conferred His peace on his disciples, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful" (Joh.14:27). When the Lord returned after the resurrection, his first word to the disciples was, "Peace to you!" (Luk.24:36).

Jesus' mission was to bring the peace of God, and to initiate the healing relationship of peace with God. He paid an enormous price for us to experience peace. The word "peacemaker" is applied by the apostle Paul to what God has done through Christ so that we could be at peace with God. Through Christ God was pleased "... to reconcile everything to Himself by making peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20). Furthermore, the apostle Paul informed us that Jesus "... might create in Himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace" (Eph.2:15). Once the peace of God rules in a believer's heart, he is enabled to live in peace with all people, and to proclaim the gospel of peace (Phil.4:7; Col.3:15; Eph.6:15).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Heb. 13:20; Isa.9:6; Luk.2:14; Joh. 14:27; Luk.24:36; Col. 1:20; Eph.2:15; Phil.4:7; Col.3:15; Eph.6:15.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Is your heart at peace with God? Do you live in peace with all other people? Open your heart today for the Prince of Peace and receive from Him the peace He promised to His disciples, the peace He brokered with God on the cross, and the peace that enables you to make peace with your enemies.

US: Biblical peace-making is the way Christians live out the gospel and glorify God by resolving conflict and reconciling relationships. Pray for your congregation to play an active role in peace-making among individual members, and also in your community.

THEM: Peace-making is a divine work and can only be done by those who have the peace of God ruling in their hearts. Pray for Christians in conflict situations to be divinely used by God to broker peace between enemies, and also to boldly proclaim the gospel of peace.

Remember to memorise John 17.

*"Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love."
-- Francis of Assisi*

DAY 4 | 19 JUNE 2024 | WEDNESDAY

RECONCILED AND UNITED BY THE CROSS

SCRIPTURE READING

"For Christ Himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body He broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with Himself, in this way making peace. By his death on the cross Christ destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross He united both races into one body and brought them back to God." **Ephesians 2:14-16 GNB**

There was no natural affinity between Jew and Gentile. The source of contention between Jew and Gentile was the fact that the Gentiles did not keep the law. The enmity of which the apostle speaks was mutual among the Jews and Gentiles. The former detested the Gentiles and could hardly allow them to be called human; the latter viewed the Jews with contempt, because their religious rites and ceremonies were different from those of all the other nations of the earth. The separation was intensified by the law that was designed to set Israel apart from the world. But since Jesus fulfilled the law on our behalf, and since He bore the penalty for our failure to keep the law, we are reconciled through His work on the cross - putting to death the source of enmity. The law as a source of righteousness was no longer an issue.

Before Christ's death, the Gentiles were in a desperate place. They were strangers to the covenants of God, having no hope of forgiveness of sins and being without God. They also did not have the access to God that the Jews enjoyed. The cross of Christ changed it all. Now, both Gentiles and Jews had only one access to God, Christ. Both had to be born again to become children of God. Forgiveness was only by the blood of Christ, not by the blood of any other sacrifice. In the acceptance of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles became one with Christ, one new creation, one new body, having one God, one Lord, and one Father. Everything became new. The Cross of Jesus Christ had removed all enmity and reconciled all of humanity, once and for all.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:
Eph.2:14-16; 2 Cor.5:17; Col.3:10; Gal.2:20.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Spend some time in waiting before God. Worship Him in expectation that He will fill your heart with peace and love. Trust Him to bring about a transformation that will empower you to become an instrument of reconciliation.

US: Pray for every Christian in your nation to be similarly transformed into instruments of reconciliation. Pray for those you know by name. Pray especially for the believers in churches near you that are from other denominations. Pray that they too will be filled with the peace and love of God, and with a desire to be reconciled.

THEM: Pray for every citizen in your nation, that they will be affected by the ministry of reconciliation that will flow forth from the hearts of all God's children who are praying and working for peace and reconciliation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"We used to hate and destroy one another and refused to associate with people of another race or country. Now, because of Christ, we live together with such people and pray for our enemies."-- Justin Martyr

DAY 5 | 20 JUNE 2024 | THURSDAY

THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE

SCRIPTURE READING

"So also one man's obedience opened the door for many to be made perfectly right with God and acceptable to Him... But if you choose to love and obey God, He will lead you into perfect righteousness."

Romans 5:19; 6:16 TPT

Obedience is at the core of our salvation. As in Adam we were made sinners, in Christ we are made righteous. The one thing by which a creature can glorify God, or enjoy His favour and blessing, is obedience. The one cause of the power sin has got in the world, and the ruin it has produced, is disobedience. The one work a Saviour was needed for was to remove this disobedience. The one bond of union between Christ and His followers, the one mark of resemblance, is obedience. The Son's unreserved surrender to the Father's will was met by the Father's unceasing and undeserved bestowment of His power working in Him. Let us, like the Son, believe that God works all in us, and we shall have the courage to yield ourselves to an unreserved obedience—an obedience unto death. – Andrew Murray. School of Obedience.

Let us ask ourselves this question: Are we willing to be completely obedient to the Father in our pursuit of oneness in the body of Christ? Am I willing to surrender to Him my will, my future, my all? Andrew Murray explores the love behind God's demands and the grace that makes it possible for us to obey. The blessing of complete obedience is your intimate connection with a loving, protective heavenly Father who desires more than anything to give you a rich and fulfilling life.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Rom.5:19; 6:16; Luk.6:46; Heb.5:8-9; Joh.13:34; 1Joh.4:20-21; 1 Sam.15:21-22.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Pray this prayer: "Heavenly Father, I confess today that I have not always been obedient to your Word and commandments. Please forgive me. I want to walk in obedience. Please empower me with your Holy Spirit, so that I can do that. Thank You for the example of Jesus who learned obedience through what He suffered! May the suffering of so many people in our nation not be in vain. Here am I. Make me a peacemaker. Amen!

US: Pray that the hearts of Christians who hear and read the Word of God will be empowered to be obedient and that Christians will again love and cherish the Bible as the Word of God. Pray that Christians will respond to God's call to work towards reconciliation in your nation.

THEM: Pray that those who suffered pain because of injustice, rejection, violence, hatred, malice, misunderstanding, persecution, and many other things, still choose to be obedient to the word and through their obedience also bring salvation to your nation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"When obedience to God contradicts what I think will give me pleasure, let me ask myself if I love Him." ~ Elisabeth Elliot

DAY 6 | 21 JUNE 2024 | FRIDAY

RESPECT AND HONOUR

SCRIPTURE READING

"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." **Matthew 5:13-16 NIV**

The Bible teaches us that the main reason for our existence is to glorify God in everything we do and everything we think and say. In Matthew 5, Jesus taught that treating fellow humans with respect and honour, causes the Father in heaven to be glorified. To pray and work for reconciliation, requires sacrifice and time. Sometimes we will be scorned and dishonoured by others, but we need to keep in mind that we work for God's glory. We want to honour Jesus and the reconciliation He accomplished for us. Let us keep our eyes on Him and lift His name high in our nations.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Matthew 5

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Ask the Lord to reveal situations where you have dishonoured God and dishonoured people. Confess these things before God and receive His forgiveness.

US: Like Daniel (Dan.9:7-10) we can pray and confess the sins and neglects of previous generations. Ask the Lord to forgive the historic disrespect that your own family and people have shown towards other people and towards God.

THEM: Pray for the current situation in our nation where people tend to openly dishonour the elderly, the poor, the leaders, and their fellow human beings. Pray that God will restore honour and dignity in your nation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

CORPORATE PRAYER

Father God, I honour You today as my God. I honour Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I honour your Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God who dwells in me. Please forgive me when I have caused your Name to be dishonoured because of my attitudes and actions. Please forgive me when I have dishonoured people through racism, superior attitude, rejection, violence, cursing and other ways, even when I was just doing it in my heart. Please wash and cleanse my heart with the blood of Jesus. Please cleanse my lips with your fire. Give me a clean heart and empower me to respect and honour You and other people around me. I want to be salt and light! Amen!

*"Your life as a Christians should make non-believers question their disbelief in God."
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer.*

DAY 7 | 22 JUNE 2024 | SATURDAY**HUMILITY – OUR MOTTO****SCRIPTURE READING**

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;"***Philippians 2:3-6 NIV**

It is unfortunate that Christians sometimes come across as arrogant. "You think you know everything. You have all the answers. You regard yourselves as better than the rest of us," people say. The best response might be: "We are sorry that we appear to be arrogant and nit-picking. And it may be true that we are, sometimes. But we have no reason to be proud. Christians are no better than anyone else." Any person who seeks his own glory, who looks down on others, could hardly be an instrument of peace.

You may regard yourself as incompetent, not qualified to join in prayer for reconciliation in our country. You may believe that there are others who could do a better job. But remember, it is precisely the insignificant and the incompetent that are selected by the Lord to do his work – those who do not rely on their own strength. It is to the humble that God gives his grace!

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Phil.2:3-11; 2Chr.7:14; Zeph.2:3; Eph.4:2; 5:2; Jam.4:6-7.

PRAYER POINTERS

ME: Father, because of Your Great Goodness would You make known to me and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or my own corrupt nature; and that You would awaken in me the deepest depth and truth of that humility, which can make me capable of Your light and Holy Spirit." Reject every thought, but that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart, with such truth and earnestness, as people in pain wish to pray and be delivered from it. – Andrew Murray.
Humility.

US: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us as the Church of God in our nation to truly humble ourselves before Him, so that together we can hear from Him and find a solution for our troubled and traumatized nation. Pray that our hearts will be truly humble and broken and that no pride or prejudice will destroy our fragile unity that is beginning to form. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to trust God and to trust one another in this process of reconciliation.

THEM: Pray that as we engage with the people in our nation, that our humility will break down hardened hearts and prepare them to hear the gospel and accept Jesus Christ.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real." - Thomas Merton

WEEK 2 | DAY 8 | 23 JUNE 2024 | SUNDAY**RACISM****SCRIPTURE READING**

"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings." **Act. 17:26 NKJV**

All human beings are descendants from Adam and Eve, one bloodline. The Bible is very clear that God loves all humans equally and does not show favouritism or partiality (Deut.10:17; Act.10:34). There was no racial distinction until after the flood and the building of the tower of Babel. Everybody spoke the same language. However, because they did not believe in God, their oneness resulted in rebellion against God (Gen.11:1-8). God intervened and confused their language. It caused people to be scattered across the earth and to form distinct nations.

God began His work of redemption. He chose Abraham and separated him from his idolatrous background, and promised to make him a great nation in which all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen.12:1-3). It was the first indication that God wanted a people that was separated unto Himself. His choice was not based on race but on faith. This was God's pattern. In the Old Testament, people were divided between believers and unbelievers; between Israelites (who believed in God through revelation of Himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the nation of Israel, priests, prophets, and kings) and the pagan nations (who believed in their own gods). In the New Testament, all people can believe in God through Jesus Christ. As far as God is concerned, there are only two races on earth —those who have chosen to be a part of His family and those who haven't.

Racism as we know it is a purely human institution. It is the belief that humans are divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called "races"; with inherited physical traits of personality, intellect, morality, cultural and behavioural features; and that some races are genetically superior to others. The term is also applied to political, economic, or legal institutions and systems that engage in discrimination on the basis of race, or reinforce racial inequalities in wealth and income, education, healthcare, civil rights, and other areas. God makes no such distinction. - "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him." (Rom.10:12, NKJV)

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Acts 17:26-27; Deut. 10:17; Act. 10:34; Gen. 11:1-8; 12:1-3; Rom. 10:11-13.

CORPORATE PRAYER

Father God, we humble ourselves before You. We have sinned against You and against our fellow humans through racism. We turn from our wicked ways. We need your help to stand against the evil of racism. Please deliver us from this evil. We pray for a work of your Holy Spirit in our hearts, in our families and in our churches. Search our hearts, Lord, and convict us of our sin. Give us a new heart that will be one as You and your Son are one. Amen.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"The devil knows what he does in hindering the communion of believers; in doing this he hinders the progress of grace, bringing Christians into a declining, wasting state. – William Gurnall

DAY 9 | 24 JUNE 2024 | MONDAY

BE ONE!

SCRIPTURE READING

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh." Ezekial 11:19 NIV

The Israelites in the Old Testament struggled to stay faithful to God. They repeatedly strayed from God and participated in the detestable idolatrous practices of the surrounding nations. God was patient and sent prophet after prophet to call them to repentance. They did not repent. God had to execute judgment on them for the sake of His holy name. Their disobedience caused God's Name to be ridiculed by the pagan nations. In the midst of the judgment, He promised redemption. He would make a new covenant with them; do a heart transplant by removing the old stony heart and give them a new heart of flesh, an undivided, singular heart. He would also give them a new spirit. (Jer.31:31-34)

On that glorious day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God was poured out the new covenant began. Those who believed in the good news of Jesus Christ, were born again, filled by the Spirit of God, and received one heart, one soul (mind and emotions), one body by the one Spirit, filled with one hope, one faith, one baptism of the Spirit, having one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Act.4:31-32; 1Cor.12:13; Eph.4:4-6)

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Ezk.11:19; Jer.31:31-34; Act.4:31-32; 1Cor.12:13; Eph.4:4-6.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Have you ever contemplated the length, and the breadth, the height, and the depth of the salvation of God accomplished through His Son and the Holy Spirit? Submit yourself again to this heart transplant, trusting God to do you everything that He promised; to enable you to become one body, one heart, one mind, one soul, one faith with believers from any race, nation, colour, or background.

US: Pray that the denominational and doctrinal differences will be overcome by the work of the Holy Spirit in and amongst us. Pray that the Lord will bind us together in true unity and restoration. Pray that He will open our eyes to collectively see the pain and wounds around us. Ask that the Lord will root out pride from our hearts and replace it with the Holy Spirit's fruit of humility and compassion. Let us bow down with humble hearts filled with repentance.

THEM: Ask the Lord for forgiveness that our disobedience caused His name to be ridiculed by unbelievers. If you are aware of any people that were hurt or are disappointed in God because of your, or because of other Christians' behaviour, go to them to ask their forgiveness.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Reconciliation is the physical demonstration that God is at work in the world. Any fool can put people at odds. Only God – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all – can bring those opposed to one another together as sisters and brothers. When we lose reconciliation, we lose the purposes of Jesus." – Sean Palmer.

DAY 10 | 25 JUNE 2024 | TUESDAY

SAYING SORRY

SCRIPTURE READING

"... your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done." 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 NIV

There are several core principles for reconciliation. Without confession and repentance, reconciliation is not possible. Although the two words confession and repentance often go together, they are not the same. Maybe we were convicted of our sin after a sermon, at a Bible study, or a meaningful time of prayer. Perhaps a friend's rebuke or a time of self-examination convicted us of sin. In these moments, the Holy Spirit gives a heart-wrenching conviction of sin. Emotional brokenness and convincing regret quickly follow, and we're suddenly in agreement with God about our sin. This leads to confession. How many times have we seen this happen without genuine and lasting change? Why does genuine transformation still evade us? Confession may give us the impression that our work is done, failing to realise that it is just the beginning. This failure is why many people experience false transformation.

Repentance can be defined as feeling or expressing remorse about something. It is when an individual thinks about his past actions, evaluates them, and feels regret for the offenses that he has committed against other people, chooses to renounce the sin, turn away from the opposing thought, belief, or action that prompted the confession, and then walk the road of godly grief. Some of the biggest challenges to repentance are pride, minimizing or making excuses for our sin, or blame-shifting. To become a new person we must die to our pride and embrace the path of repentance through a genuine surrender to biblical truth and putting to death our sinful desires. When we are repentant, we can experience God's forgiveness, receive His grace for inner transformation, and our behaviour will change. Then only can we rebuild trust with others, even if it takes longer than we planned.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *2Cor. 7:9-11; 1Jn 1:9; Luk. 3:8; Act. 26:20; Psa. 51:2-5.*

PRAYER POINTS

ME: If you earnestly desire Christ-likeness, it will come through prayerfully depending on God in true confession and repentance. Allow Him to convict you through godly sorrow.

US: Pray that Christians will allow the conviction of sin to bring them to a place of repentance and honest confession of sins, so that the blood of Jesus can cleanse us, and empower us to become instruments of reconciliation and instruments of righteousness in our nation.

THEM: Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict people in your nation of things that they personally did wrong and what our fathers (and mothers) did that was displeasing in the Lord's sight.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"We will repeat this process—confession, prayer, repentance—over and over and over again. This is simply called Christianity. It is a hard, joyful, and life-long process of surrendering to God and pursuing the fruit of the Spirit. God has started a good work in us but He is not finished yet."

– Ty Gooch.

DAY 11 | 26 JUNE 2024 | WEDNESDAY**FATHER, FORGIVE THEM****SCRIPTURE READING**

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." **Matthew 6:12-15 NIV**

Forgiveness is another core principle for reconciliation. The core of Christianity is the belief that Christ died on the cross for our sins; and that God loved us so much that He gave his son so that our sins might be forgiven and our guilt might be atoned for. The Scriptures confirm this repeatedly: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This is where the Christian faith differs from other religions: we can constantly start anew. In his love and mercy, the Lord forgives us day by day and clasps us to his heart. But, Jesus taught us, as God forgives us, it is our duty to forgive those who have harmed us. This is a command he not only included in the Lord's Prayer, but often mentioned to his followers, and explained in parables (Matt. 18:21-35). This is an important lesson which we must learn in our own lives and in our communities.

Forgiving someone who hurt you is one of the most difficult things to do. In fact, it is humanly impossible. Forgiveness is a divine attribute of our God (Exo.34:6-7), clearly expressed by Jesus when He forgave his executors (Luk.21:34). The scary thought is that if we don't forgive others because of what they did to us, God will not forgive us. This was exactly what Jesus tried to explain to Peter when he asked how many times should he forgive a brother who sinned against him.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *Matt.6:12-15. 1Joh. 1:9-10; Matt. 18:21-35; Exo.34:6-7; Luk.21:34*

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Father God, You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger. With You there is forgiveness. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Father, I confess before You that I am sometimes slow to forgive. Father, I confess that in my humanity I do not want to forgive because I want justice and revenge on those who hurt me. Father, soften my heart so that I can forgive like Jesus did. I am willing and ready for You to lead me to forgive those who have sinned against me, and against my people.

US: Pray that God's Holy Spirit will work supernaturally in every denomination of the Church to prepare and soften the hearts of Christians to come to a place of willingness to forgive their former enemies and those who have hurt them. Let us pray for husbands, wives, children, teachers, students, elderly people – any who carry grudges, bitterness, and hatred, to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to bring healing and restoration in their hearts.

THEM: As deeply traumatized and wounded nations, many people have become hard and bitter. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us with true forgiveness and true reconciliation. Pray that God will grant us a season of forgiveness and reconciliation in our nations, that many people, even non-Christians, will want to work together for peace and reconciliation. Pray for a season of divine grace over us as nations to begin a process of true, lasting reconciliation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison." - Nelson Mandela

DAY 12 | 27 JUNE 2024 | THURSDAY**LOVE YOUR ENEMIES****SCRIPTURE READING**

"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."

Luke 6:35 ESV

One of the most difficult things a Christian will face is offering genuine forgiveness to those who have deeply hurt us. When Jesus commands us to love our enemies and offer our forgiveness to them it's hard for us to believe that He knew what He was talking about. Yet, he does understand, and he commands we forgive precisely because He understands. Jesus knows that even the deepest wounds can heal through his blood.

Corrie Ten Boom worked against the Nazis in World War Two hiding Jews in her home. When she was caught, she was sent to a concentration camp where she was stripped of her dignity, saw her father and her sister (Betsie) die, and suffered more at the hands of other people than we could possibly imagine. Here is her story. Let the Holy Spirit minister to you as you read it:

"It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower door in the processing centre at Ravensbrück concentration camp. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face. He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein.' He said. 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!' His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who preached so often to the people in Bloemendal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness. As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. "I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!" And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on his. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself."

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *Luk.6:35; Luk.6:27-28; Rom.5:5; Act.7:60.*

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Have you noticed the love & forgiveness are not ours? It is Jesus' love that we extend to the world with our forgiveness. Open your heart to the Holy Spirit to give to you such a love.

US: It is only among brothers and sisters in the Church that true reconciliation with former enemies is possible. Pray that the Church will set the example of this heart transformation so that unbelievers will have to acknowledge that is God is real, and that He loves them.

THEM: Pray that Christians will not only reconcile with their enemies, but that they will become ministers of reconciliation in their own communities and spheres of influence.

"There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness." - Josh Billings

DAY 13 | 28 JUNE 2024 | FRIDAY

REVENGE

SCRIPTURE READING

"Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good." **Romans 12:19-21 GNB**

Anger, hatred, bitterness, resentment and revenge, are part of a natural instinct and a normal response when someone wrongs you. No one wants to feel like they let a culprit "get away with it". Our natural sense of self-protection compels us to act in order to avoid feeling vulnerable as if there is nothing we can do to right the wrong. However, forgiving someone doesn't make you a pushover, and it's not about letting the other person "off the hook". Instead, forgiveness is about overcoming your anger and quelling your desire to punish the other person. Contemplating about how to "get pay back" has a negative impact on your physical, mental, and emotional health. Studies show that focusing on revenge increases stress, inhibits mental functions, and weakens the immune system; the negative emotions that you harbour do more harm to yourself than the person who offended you. Conversely, practicing forgiveness has been linked to lower blood pressure, reduced fatigue, and an improved quality of sleep. The problem for many of us is that sometimes we claim to forgive a person, but deep down the anger or resentment lingers. It causes bitterness to enter our hearts through unresolved anger, inability to grieve and wrong expectations. Bitterness is a poison that defiles people around you through gossip, slander, outbursts of anger, negativity, a critical spirit, division, sarcasm, insults, wrath, and meanness (Eph.4:31-32). The cure for bitterness is the grace of God enabling one to forgive and reconcile (Heb.12:14-15).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Rom. 12:19-21; Eph.4:31-32; Heb. 12:14-15.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Ask the Lord to help you to discern what specific person or situation it was that angered you. Then ask Him to help bring the situation into perspective. Give the person by name into the hand of the Lord. Ask the Lord to help you to come to a place of forgiveness. Remember that forgiveness is not to pardon a person's sin, but to help you to become free from the person or situation that has kept you emotionally in bondage. Speak forgiveness to the person who caused the pain.

US: Pray that the Lord will help the Church in your nation to be an instrument that can facilitate the removal of this root of hatred, bitterness, and revenge in the hearts of many people. Pray that the Lord would use us to shine His light of truth into the darkness and expose our long-standing racial inequity, our idolatry of culture and nationalism, and any form of injustice or oppression.

THEM: Pray that the Holy Spirit will minister deliverance and healing to thousands of angry people who do not yet know the freedom of forgiveness.

"I learned a long time ago that some people would rather die than forgive. It's a strange truth, but forgiveness is a painful and difficult process. It's not something that happens overnight. It's an evolution of the heart." - Sue Monk Kidd

DAY 14 | 29 JUNE 2024 | SATURDAY

PURSUING TRUTH

SCRIPTURE READING

"Justice is driven away, and right cannot come near. Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place there. There is so little honesty that those who stop doing evil find themselves the victims of crime." The LORD has seen this, and He is displeased that there is no justice. He is astonished to see that there is no one to help the oppressed. So, He will use his own power to rescue them and to win the victory." Isaiah 59:14-16 GNB

Since the Garden of Eden, there is a battle between light and darkness, good and evil, the truth and the lie. The god of this age has blinded the world against the truth, especially the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2Cor.4:4). Some of the densest blindfolds are culture, traditions, worldviews, and religious upbringing. We live in an era where any information is available at our fingertips on our phones. But how do we verify any information? Can the media be trusted? People have used media for centuries to influence and manipulate the minds and beliefs of people. Propaganda is a very useful technique to present the lie as if it is the truth, and through repeating it often enough, people will believe anything. It was so in the Garden of Eden, and it is so even in our time. With Photoshop® and recently with the development of Artificial Intelligence, any photo or video, can be manipulated. Fake news is evil. And to aggravate our inability to discern truth, is the fact that our hearts are totally untrustworthy (Jer.17:9). Self-deception is the error that led many Christians astray through the centuries of church history.

How do we find the truth? There is only one way: we need to know the One whose name is the Way, the Truth, and the Light. And we need to be filled with His gift to us, the Spirit of Truth. This is the only way that we can discern between darkness and light, good and evil, the truth and the lie. Now, more than ever, we need to know our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to know His ways, His intentions, His words, and warnings. We need new hearts, new spirits, new love, and our first allegiance must be, not to our culture, our people group, or our nation, but to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Let us today determine that we will search for the truth and find it, in our endeavour to become one.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Isa.59:14-16; Jer.17:9; Joh.4:23; Joh.8:32,44; Joh.14:6,17; Joh.17:17.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Bow low before the Lord Jesus Christ. Present to Him your heart. Ask Him to expose all lies and deception in your own heart, be it from your culture and traditions, or from your political alliance now and in the past, from your own fallen nature, or from an evil spirit. Ask Him for fill you with the Spirit of Truth and to guide you in this journey of reconciliation.

US: Pray for the church of Jesus Christ. Our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, is still praying for us, that the Father may make us one. Let us join Him in that prayer and submit ourselves to His authority, His guidance, and His desire for us know the truth, and to worship in spirit and truth.

THEM: The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has to be preached, taught, and lived. Let us pray that the unbelievers in our nations will come to know the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

"There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself - an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly." - Antisthenes

WEEK 3 | DAY 15 | 30 JUNE 2024 | SUNDAY**THE POWER OF THE WORD****SCRIPTURE READING**

"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." (Joh. 17:17, ESV); "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4:12-13 NKJV

God has given His Word as an instrument through which the Holy Spirit will bring the Church to final union with God and His purposes. The Word of God is the seed that produces spiritual fruit (Luke 8:11; 1Pet.1:23) and it is the sword of the Holy Spirit that is used against evil principalities and powers (Eph.6:17). Jesus commanded His followers to abide in His Word (John 8:31). The fruit of abiding in the Word of God is cleansing (Ps.119:9; John 15:3; Eph.5:26), revival (Ps.119:25), increase in faith (Rom.10:17); sanctification (John 17:17; Eph.5:26), deliverance (John 8:3; John 17:17) and a deep intimate relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:23). The Word of God must be engraved on our hearts through a divine operation.

CORPORATE PRAYER

In the beginning was the WORD and the WORD was with God and the WORD was God (John 1:1). By Your WORD the heavens were made (Ps.33:6). You uphold all things by the power of Your WORD (Heb.1:3). Forever, o LORD, Your WORD is settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). Your WORD is alive and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb.4:12). Your WORD is like a fire and a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces (Jeremiah 23:29). Your WORD is the SWORD of the Spirit (Eph.6:17). Every WORD that goes out of Your mouth will not return to You void but will accomplish what pleases You and prosper in the thing for which You send it (Isa.55:11).

Lord Jesus, open our minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Give us a Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know You (Eph.1:17). Your WORD is a lamp to our feet and light for our path (Ps.119:105). Direct our steps by Your WORD and let no iniquity have dominion over us (Ps.119:133). You have the WORDS of eternal life (John 6:68). We live from every WORD that comes from Your mouth (Deut.8:3; Matt.4:4). We have hidden Your WORD in our hearts that we might not sin against You (Ps.119:11). Cleanse us by Your WORD (John 15:3; Eph.5:26). It is Your WORD that heals us and delivers us from destruction (Ps.107:20)

The entirety of Your WORD is truth, all Your judgments endure forever and through Your Word we are sanctified (Ps.119:160; John 17:17). Your WORDS are pure, like silver tried in the furnace of the earth; purified seven times. (Ps.12:6; 2 Sam.22:31). Your law is perfect, converting the soul; Your testimony is sure, making wise the simple; Your statutes are right, rejoicing the heart; Your commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. By your words we are warned, and in keeping them there is great reward (Ps 19:7-11). Let Your WORD dwell richly in us so that we can teach and encourage others (Col.3:16) and overcome the evil one (1John 2:14). Establish Your Word in our cities and nations, let it grow mightily and prevail (Acts 19:20). "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the WORD of the LORD endures forever." (1 Pet 1:24,25).

DAY 16 | 1 JULY 2024 | MONDAY

THE ENEMY WITHOUT

SCRIPTURE READING

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." John 17:15 NIV

The devil's strategy is temptation. He tempts Eve in the Garden of Eden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the heart of mankind became evil (Gen.8:21). He tempted Job by making life very difficult for him (Job.1:9-11). He tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Mar.1:13). He tempted Judas to betray Jesus (Joh.13:12). He tempted Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit (Act.5:3). He constantly patrols the earth to seek whom he can deceive (1Pet.5:8). His aim is to cause humans to distrust and disobey God, and to lose their faith.

At the cross Jesus defeated the devil's power over death by removing the fear of death through His resurrection (Heb.2:14-15). This victory will one day be ours (1Cor.15:54-55). Jesus also came to destroy the works of the devil by redeeming us from sin. This way out was for humans to be born again (1Joh.3:8-10). When we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ, we are no longer under the dominion of darkness, but we have become children of God (Col.1:13). We are no longer slaves of sin but can now overcome sin (Rom.6:10-13) and every temptation of the devil.

Jesus disarmed the principalities and powers of darkness (Col.2:15) and levelled the battlefield so that church, clothed in the armour of God, are able to stand against the tricks and deceptions of the devil (Eph.6:11-18). Jesus gave us authority over all the power of the enemy by promising us that we will trample on snakes and scorpions, and that God Himself will crush Satan under our feet (Luk.10:19; Rom.16:20). The weapons we fight with are not merely human weapons, but are mighty to destroy strongholds, arguments and resistance against the Gospel. Paul mentions weapons such as the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the shoes of the gospel, the shield of faith, the Word of God, prayer, truthful speech and righteousness, love and the message of Christ crucified (2Cor.6:7; 1Thes.5:8; 1Cor.1:18-24). We are divinely protected as long as we do not give the devil a foothold.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Joh. 17:15; Heb.2:14-15; 1Cor. 15:54-55; 1Joh.3:8-10; Col. 1:13; Rom.6:10-13; 2Cor.6:7; 1Thes.5:8; 1Cor.1:18-24.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: The spiritual armour is not clothes we take off and put on every day. It is our faith in the complete work of Jesus Christ. We arm ourselves with His salvation, His righteousness, His truth, His Gospel, His shield, His Word and His Spirit. Arm yourself with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

US: Every demonic attack and deception weakens the church and removes her ability to be a witness for Jesus in a broken world. Pray for the church to pursue righteousness through a love of the truth, love of holiness and the fear of the Lord, and to firmly resist the devil.

THEM: The whole world is deceived by darkness. Their only solution is the message of Jesus Christ. Pray for the church to fulfil her mandate to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world.

"Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve."" - Matthew 4:10

DAY 17 | 2 JULY 2024 | TUESDAY**THE ENEMY WITHIN****SCRIPTURE READING**

"For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." **Mark 7:21-23 ESV**

With the fall of Adam, all mankind inherited a sinful nature. But the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a gamechanger. God's righteousness demanded His judgment. Jesus' death satisfied God's wrath. And God could now pardon human beings. When a person becomes born-again through faith in Jesus Christ, a seed is planted in His heart (1Joh.3:9-10; Tit.3:2-5). This seed is Christ in you. All believers begin their spiritual lives as new-born babies that need to grow and mature until Christ is formed in them (1Pet.2:1-5; Gal.4:19). The growth of this seed depends on how much undiluted Word of God the person receives in his heart. If the Word is absent, then the seed of Christ becomes dormant, and the evil and flesh rule in the heart. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and it convicts the person, and confronts the evil in the heart. We should be mindful of the battle waging in our hearts (Jam.4:1-3), surrendering ourselves to the work of the Spirit, confess our sins coming from the flesh, and, with the Holy Spirit's help, put the evil in our hearts to death (Rom.8:12-14).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Mar. 7:21-23; 1Joh. 3:9-10; Tit. 3:2-5; 1Pet. 2:1-5; Gal. 4:19; Jam. 4:1-3; Rom. 8:12-14.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: The undiluted milk of the Word of God comes directly from the Bible. Make a decision to daily read the Bible. Don't read just one verse. It is comparable to eating only one bite of bread. Learn to pray from the Bible, using God's own words. Pray the Psalms and other prayers in the Bible. Submit to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to put a guard at your heart and to convict you immediately of any sinful thought or action. (Scroll down for Bible apps and reading plans).

US: Pray for pastors, preachers, ministers and spiritual leaders in the church. Pray that the undiluted word of God will have a central place in church services again. Pray that the truth of the word of God will be the plumbline of church and in the lives of every member in the body of Christ. Pray that the church will once again walk in holiness and reverent fear of the Lord.

THEM: Pray for evangelists and street preachers to bring the word out of the four walls of the church into the streets. Pray for believers to be bold enough to share the word of God with their families, colleagues, friends and with strangers in their communities. Ask people if they have a Bible. If they don't, then buy one to give to them.

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/>; <https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/> ;
<https://www.e-sword.net> ; <https://www.olivetree.com> ; <https://www.blueletterbible.org/apps-tools.cfm>
<https://www.oneyearbibleonline.com/readingplan/oneyearbibleonline/readingplan.pdf>
<https://www.oneyearbibleonline.com/readingplan/oneyearchronologicalbibleonline/readingplan.pdf>

"The Word of God well understood and faithfully obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favourite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian." – A.W. Tozer

DAY 18 | 3 JULY 2024 | WEDNESDAY**THE BITTER ROOT****SCRIPTURE READING**

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Hebrews 12:14-15 NIV

The root of bitterness is caused by failing to receive God's grace, which then causes trouble or corruption in the church. Therefore, Christians should make every effort to live in peace with all people, pursue holiness, and look after each other diligently. The seed of bitterness is anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly. The soil of bitterness is a heart that harbours hostility and does not deal with hurt by the grace of God. When someone becomes bitter, the bitterness takes root in the heart and grows deeper. The world is full of people who have not dealt with old hurts. Holding on to the anger causes the seed to germinate. It leads to resentment, gossip, saying bad things about those who hurt you, feeling sorry for yourself. The root of bitterness is underground; it is easy to hide and camouflage. Seldom do you find anyone who will admit that they are a bitter person. They will either deny it or disguise it. Bitterness is like a slow poison, one negative thought leads to another, and soon we're tossing and turning at night, replaying hurtful interactions and making a new plan to get even. When your heart is bitter, God will not be real to you. Why? Because hatefulness and holiness do not dwell in the same heart. And without holiness you will not see the Lord (Heb.12:14).

One of the most well-known stories of bitterness in the Bible is of Cain and Abel. Cain becomes consumed by bitterness for his brother and God when he feels unjustly treated compared to his brother Abel. Cain resists God and kills his brother out of hatred and pity for himself. This is the condition of most people in the world. But Christians should be different. We have something that unbelievers do not have. We have been forgiven of our own sins; we were adopted by a loving, merciful Father; we were given an indwelling God whose power transforms us from the inside out; we were given divine gifts to minister healing and reconciliation to the world around us. Why don't we? We either have not experienced being forgiven, or know the love of God, or experienced transformation in our hearts. But it is never too late.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *Heb. 12:14-15*.

Here are some things that we can do and pray personally (ME), and as the church (US), so that we can help others (THEM). Read the following prayerfully and ask the Lord to bring about this transformation in your own life (ME) and in your church (US). Pray that the church will be able to minister effectively in the world God places us (THEM).

Trust the Sovereignty of God. Whatever trial you're facing today has been orchestrated by the hand of God. He allowed some suffering because He knows what He wants you to become – Christlike.

Extend God's grace. Instead of giving someone a taste of their own medicine; instead of slandering their reputation; and instead of harbouring bitterness and resentment, live out the gospel of grace by extending forgiveness. Just as Christ has freely forgiven us, so we need to forgive those who have sinned against us (Matthew 6:12). Practise to forgive consistently, and without conditions. Most of us think that forgiving someone excuses the person in the wrong, but

that is not the case. By forgiving, you are choosing to let go of past events and all the pent-up anger that you have related to them.

Hand over the desire for justice and revenge to God. Step out of your position as judge, jury, and executioner. Let it go and remind yourself that God is always righteous and always merciful. Stop spying on your enemy!

Stop talking about the past. There's always the temptation to dig up the past. That is the way of the world. We love to build monuments to remember our pain. Every time we do that we slide back into bitterness. If God would have done that to us, we would have lost our salvation. Change your expectations. God's promises wait in the present and the future.

Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart, even if it takes a long time. Open up your heart for healing, for love, and for the divine grace to even begin to love your enemies. If we don't do that, we will soon be consumed by the poison that leaves us in the pit of despair, as a church and as a nation. True freedom and joy are found by embracing the gospel of grace and extending it to the very people we're least inclined to love. The cure for bitterness is not found in getting even, but by giving grace—just as God in Christ has done for us.

Remember to memorise John 17.

Never trust your tongue when your heart is bitter. – Samuel Johnson.

DAY 19 | 4 JULY 2024 | THURSDAY DIFFERENT

SCRIPTURE READING

"But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. If you only love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:39,44,46,48 NIV

God's goal with every disciple of Jesus is Christlikeness in character and behaviour. Jesus said: "Everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher." (Luk.6:40). There are specific ways in which this transformation happens: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (Joh.13:35). (1) The one characteristic that a disciple of Jesus will be known by is love. Selfless love for those around you is one of the greatest testimonies that Christ is alive in the community of disciples. It is so unnatural compared to those around us in this world. (2) Disciples should not only love one another but deny themselves (Mat.16:24). A disciple of Jesus is to be unselfish and self-sacrificing, even to the point of enduring suffering on behalf of others. Deny self means to give up something that is completely legitimate, so that someone else, someone totally undeserving of such a sacrifice, can benefit from it. (3) Jesus told his disciples: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Mar.1:17). A disciple of Jesus is not following Jesus only for the pleasure of having Him as Lord. No, they are called with a purpose. All those Jesus called in this way, had to give up their secular jobs to become involved in kingdom employment. Being associated with Jesus demands that we change to become just like Him. Part of this transformation is to "forget those things that are in the past" (Phil.3:13), to deny your own accomplishments, your own ambitions, your own dreams, to forsake past behaviours, values, identities and relationships; to "reach forward to the goal of the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus." There is a cost involved in following Him. Sometimes it is necessary to painfully, "turn the other cheek."

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Mat.5:39-48; Luk.6:40; Rom.8:29; 2 Cor.3:18; Joh.13:35; Mar.1:17; Phil.3:8-14.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Pray Phil.3:8-14 in your own words.

US: Pray for the church of Jesus Christ to desire to become Christlike in all their character and behaviour. Pray for the process of transformation that includes self-denial, self-sacrifice and having one goal only – to fulfil Christ's commands to love, to deny, to follow Him.

THEM: Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send "fishers of men" into your neighbourhood, your community, your town or city, with the message of reconciliation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

The enemy always pushes us beyond our personal, inbred, preset limits concerning how far we'll go for God: "Here's how far I'm going to love, this is how many times I'll turn the other cheek." The test kills the limits of our humanity, until we're like Christ in everything. We're left with a choice: Become Christlike or gradually shrivel into superficial hypocrites: angry people who have stopped walking with God, who blame others for our bitterness. – Francis Frangipane.

DAY 20 | 5 JULY 2024 | FRIDAY

THE SCANDAL OF GRACE

In the book 'Uncomfortable', Brett McCracken tells of a profound scene in the Korean film 'Secret Sunshine', that captures the scandal of grace. The scene takes place in a prison, as protagonist Shin-ae goes to visit her son's murderer in prison. Shin-ae, a new convert to Christianity, wants to forgive him. Her friends tell her she doesn't have to see him face-to-face in order to forgive him. But she insists. She wants to see him in person and (truth be told) wants to witness the look on his face when she offers him the gift of forgiveness. And yet when she sits down to confront the prisoner on the other side of the glass, Shin-ae finds him unexpectedly happy, peaceful, even joyful. "You look better than I expected," she tells him before explaining that the peace, love, and "new life" she'd found in God had prompted her to forgive him. She's "so happy to feel God's love and grace" that she wanted to spread his love by coming to visit her son's murderer.

But then came the unexpected. The prisoner, the killer of her son, has also come to faith in Christ. "Since I came here, I have accepted God in my heart. The Lord has reached out to this sinner," he says. "Is that so?" replies Shin-ae, crestfallen and shaken. "It's good you have found God," she says, very tentatively. The convicted murderer continues: "Yes, I am so grateful. God reached out to a sinner like me. He made me kneel to repent my sins. And God has absolved me of them." And this is where Shin-ae begins to wilt. "God... has forgiven your sins?" she mutters in disbelief. "Yes," he replies, "and I have found inner peace... My repentance and absolution have brought me peace. Now I start and end each day with prayer. I always pray for you, Ms. Lee. I'll pray for you until I die."

This hits Shin-ae hard. When she leaves the prison, she collapses, overcome by the horror of an idea she had not considered: that God could beat her to the punch in forgiving her son's killer, offering this criminal the only real absolution he needed. Unfortunately, Shin-ae can't accept this seeming injustice. How can a law-abiding, good citizen like her and a convicted child-killer be on the same level in terms of God's grace? She can't take that and abandons God because of it. Grace seems too scandalous!

Note. The self-righteous ones hate grace. The sinner needs it!

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Luk. 15:11-32; Luk. 18:9-14.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Ask the Holy Spirit to expose and uproot every form of self-righteousness in your life.

US: Pray that the Church will become a living testimony of the transforming power of God's scandalous grace.

THEM: Pray that people who are trapped in the prisons of sin and hatred, will be set free when Christians can truly say: "We forgive you."

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Self-righteousness is the devil's masterpiece to make us think well of ourselves." – Thomas Adams.

DAY 21 | 6 JULY 2024 | SATURDAY**THE POWER OF A HUG****SCRIPTURE READING**

"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:8 ESV

Testimony of Pastor Jack Frost – Experiencing the Father's embrace. Outwardly, I was a Christian of moral integrity and godly character. I never had a moral failure and I was an aggressive pursuer of God, praying and reading the Bible for two or three hours a day and doing all the right religious things. But inwardly I lacked the ability to express love at home. I was joyless. I had no inner peace. I was driven by spiritual ambition because I had built my identity and value systems on position, power, and performance. My faithfulness, duty, and service were not a response of true love to God; they flowed instead from a desire for personal gain and reward. My children hardly spoke to me because they were afraid of upsetting or displeasing me. My pride produced a desire in them to rebel, and they began to seek the acceptance they yearned for by hanging around the wrong crowd. And worst of all, they wanted nothing to do with the angry, legalistic God I modelled to them.

I attended a conference on emotional healing in November 1995, thinking that it was my wife who had the real problem. Then someone from the platform began to pray. The words startled me: "Father God, take all the men in this room who were never held by their fathers. Hold them close right now. Give them the love their fathers did not know how to give." The presence of God's compassion and acceptance fell on me immediately. I did not understand what was happening, but it felt as if hot, liquid love was pouring into my soul. I began crying like a baby as I lay on the floor. I was completely undone. I felt as if God transported me back to a time when I was only ten years old. I suddenly saw vivid scenes of me as a child, hiding in a closet at night, fearful of the yelling and screaming I heard in my parents' room. I remembered the fear, the loneliness, and the sense of abandonment. I felt the deep, painful ache for my father's embrace— an embrace he was not able to give me during my childhood. As I lay on the floor weeping, Father God entered that dark closet of my childhood and held me in His arms. For 45 minutes, the Holy Spirit poured the love of God that the apostle Paul spoke of in Romans 5:5 through my mind, will, and emotions and washed away much of the guilt, shame, fear of failure and rejection, fear of intimacy, and the fear of love. My breakthrough finally came. My pride had been shattered. Until that moment, I had never realized how deeply in bondage I was, to striving and fear. You do not know what you are in bondage to, until you are free from it! I had heard all my Christian life that God loved me, but I had never lowered the walls of protection enough to receive personally a natural demonstration of His love and affection in some of my deepest areas of pain. The Father's love has brought restoration of intimacy to my marriage and family, it has changed my whole philosophy of ministry as well.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *1Joh.4:7-21.*

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Simply ask God the Father to give you a hug. You will be surprised as to how He answers your need for His love.

US: Pray that the church will not be afraid to demonstrate the Father's love by simple acts of loving one another.

THEM: Ask the Lord to show you someone today who just need a hug.

I have learned that there is more power in a good strong hug than in a thousand meaningful words." – Ann Hood

WEEK 4 | DAY 22 | 7 JULY 2024 | SUNDAY**TOGETHER AS ONE: FEARLESS, BOLD, CONFIDENT AND READY****SCRIPTURE READING**

"To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him." **Ephesians 3:8-12 ESV**

CORPORATE PRAYER

Heavenly Father, according to your eternal purpose, your manifold wisdom should be made known by the church to the principalities and powers of darkness (Eph.3:10). Thank You that through the blood of Jesus Christ, we have redemption and forgiveness of sin; You have delivered us from the power of darkness and have transferred us to the kingdom of your beloved Son (Col.1:13-14). We are more than conquerors because of Your love for us. For neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor any other created thing are able to separate us from the love of God (Rom.8:37-39). Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church, You have given us the authority over all the power of the enemy so that the spirits are subject to us (Luke 10:19-20). You have given us the command to go the nations with this good news, to open the eyes of unbelievers, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they too might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who believe in You (Luk.9:1-2; Mat.28:18,19; Act.26:17,18). The weapons that You have given us is not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2Cor.10:4,5). We stand in this evil day, having girded our waists with truth; protected by the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation; our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We take up our shields of faith with which we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, as we pray and resist the evil one (Eph.6:10-18; Jam.4:7; 1Pet.5:9). We will overcome because of the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony, and because we do not love our lives even if we have to die (Rev 12:11). Greater is He that is in us, than He that is in the world (1Joh.4:4).

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." – Martin Luther King Jr., "Strength to Love".

DAY 23 | 8 JULY 2024 | MONDAY**A NEW IDENTITY****SCRIPTURE READING**

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:27-28 NKJV

Ethnicity is defined as "large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background." These factors shape our identities as people, our faith, and our beliefs. From a common origin and biological kinship, complex ethnic groups developed over time. The history of Israel prove that no nation or culture are ethnically pure. Abraham was a Hebrew, originally of Semitic origin. By intermarriage, Abraham's offspring was a mixture of Hebrews, Egyptians, Canaanites and Moabites, a multi-ethnic group that was to become a mono-culture nation – Israel. How did it happen? Firstly, by circumcision. Secondly, by covenant. The covenant with YHVH separated Israel from all other nations. Through national idolatry both Israel and Judah broke their covenant with YHVH and He divorced Himself from them, announcing a new covenant that could not be broken.

Jesus inaugurated the new covenant at the Lord's Supper on Passover. But it was Pentecost that was the beginning of something new called the church, the expression of the new covenant with YHVH but through Jesus, not through Moses. The fledgling church in Jerusalem was a Jewish church consisting of Jews who accepted Jesus as the Jewish Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. They continued observing the Jewish feasts and Law, and worship at the temple. These Jews spoke Aramaic or Greek (Hellenistic Jews) in the church. No Jews at that time could speak their own native Hebrew language. Even the Old Testament was translated into either Aramaic or Greek. The first trouble in the church arose because Hellenistic Jewish widows were neglected. It prompted the ordination of the first deacons in the church. These deacons were all Hellenistic Jewish Christians. Among them was Phillip, the first Jewish Christian who planted a church among gentiles in Samaria. By divine revelation, Jesus revealed to Peter that Gentiles are to be included in the church. Hellenistic Jews carried the gospel with them to Antioch and elsewhere, and the Gentile church grew. The church in Jerusalem remained mainly Jewish. With the addition of Gentiles to the church, new problems arose, which prompted the first church council meeting in Jerusalem (Acts...), laying down the pattern for the church. Gentile Christians were not expected to convert to Judaism, but they were forbidden to eat blood, to worship idols and to commit sexual immorality. The central factor binding them all together was faith in Jesus as the Anointed One and growing understanding that the new covenant had usurped and incorporated the old covenant. Jesus' resurrection and the promise of their own resurrection, was the focal point of the gospel.

If anyone, from both Jewish and Gentile background, becomes a Christian, they undergo an identity transformation. They step over from the old covenant into the new covenant. They are born-again into a new spiritual family. They are redeemed (bought) out of their previous identity, their cultural heritage and their national identity, and sealed by the Holy Spirit and baptism. They become citizens of a new kingdom. Their first allegiance now is to Jesus Christ as Lord and to their new family who were all redeemed from their previous identities. They are uniquely equipped by the Holy Spirit to rise above nationalism, culture, language and tribal identity. They are part of a body where there is no distinction between being Jew or Greek or any other nationality, between

male and female, slave or free. They are all equal. Through the ages, the church battled to express this oneness. At times, they regressed back into Judaism (Hebrews), or paganism (syncretism), or even Christian nationalism in various forms expressed first as the Holy Roman Empire. Wars erupted between Christian because of tribal allegiances. The failure to become one has hurt the church in more ways that can be explained. There is a price to be paid to fulfil the prayer of Jesus in John 17. It is not going to be easy. But it is our time to believe that it is possible.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Gal.3:26-29; Eph.1:11-14; Rev.5:9; 1Pet.1:3-5; Rom.8:15; Col.2:11; Eph.2:19; 1Cor.9:20-23; 2Cor.5:14-21.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Pray that the Holy Spirit will transform you so that you can help other to change the way they think.

US: Ask the Lord to enable and empower us to live together as many different cultures to the honour and glory of His name, to help other change the way they think, and to encourage a new mind-set and culture of brotherly love and acceptance for one another.

THEM: Our nations are filled with many different races. Pray that the purpose the Lord has in making our nations this way will be fulfilled. Pray that every person in your nation will see and discover the beauty in other cultures and not cling only to their own culture. Pray that a new generation will arise, untainted by the past, who will want to be united in diversity, and who will value people of other cultures.

Remember to memorise John 17.

If we all give up hope and do nothing, then indeed there is no hope. It will be helped by all of us taking action of some sort. Cumulatively our small decisions, choices and actions, make a very big difference. – Jane Goodall.

DAY 24 | 9 JULY 2024 | TUESDAY**THE LANGUAGE WE USE.****SCRIPTURE READING**

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language... Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." **Act.2:4-6, 9-11 ESV**

The first language any child learns to speak is the mother tongue. In multi-ethnic societies, a child soon learns to speak other languages as well. A possible hindrance to the spread of the Gospel to new cultures was that the first Christians were mainly Jews, and spoke only Aramaic and Greek. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, He brought them a heavenly gift, the supernatural ability to speak in other languages. That gift enabled the disciples to share the Gospel in the heart language of Jews visiting Jerusalem from other parts of the Roman Empire. The same gift was given to the Romans in the house of Cornelius, an indication that the commission to share the Gospel was not limited to the Jewish Christians only. The confusion of languages by God at the building of the Tower of Babel was reversed. Language was no longer a hindrance for unity.

There are literally thousands of languages and dialects in the world. Expanding Empires had one thing in common - they forced people to speak their language. Most conquered people eventually lost their mother tongues. The Jews lost their Hebrew language in Persia, learning to speak Aramaic. When the Greeks conquered Persia, the people were again forced to speak another language, Greek. The Romans introduced Latin. Spain and Portugal introduced Spanish and Portuguese to South America. The British forced almost the whole world to speak English. The Soviet Union forced all conquered nations to speak Russian. The language of the conquerors was always seen as a curse. Languages became a division in the church. The Roman Catholic Church forbid the Bible to be translated into other languages, causing the ordinary Christians to be ignorant of the Word of God. Many false teachings could be forced on people, imprisoning them in ignorance and superstition. Language became a weapon to keep people in submission and ignorance. It is an insult to the Holy Spirit to use your mother language as a weapon against people of other languages. He can cause a language to extinct, and He can cause a language to become a blessing. Our behaviour and attitude will determine if our language is a blessing or curse.

God called faithful men and women to translate the Bible at the peril of losing their lives. The gift of the Holy Spirit began to triumph once more. There are 7300 known spoken languages in the world. 1255 languages have no part of the Bible translated. (Wycliffe Bible Translation). There are 17213 people groups in the world. 7280 people groups (42%) have not heard the Gospel in their own language.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Acts 2:4-11; Acts 4:31; Acts 6:1-3; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:1-6.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Am I using my mother language as a weapon against other people? Am I willing to befriend someone that speaks another language? Pray that the Holy Spirit will transform your own mindset concerning people of other races.

US: Is our church open for people of other languages to join in our services? Are we willing to switch to a common language for the sake of such people? Ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh baptism and for His gift of speaking in another language so that your church can reach out to the community around you.

THEM: For too long the church has withheld the Gospel from people because of the language barrier. Let us pray that our desire for oneness will spill over into the secular world of our nations.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." - Ludwig Wittgenstein

DAY 25 | 10 JULY 2024 | WEDNESDAY**HATE SPEECH****SCRIPTURE READING**

"The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be." James 3:6-10 NIV

Hate comes from the idea that certain people can or should have power and control over others. Hate starts from negative assumptions, images and beliefs about a certain group. These negative assumptions are called stereotypes. When there is a crisis, some people feel defensive and blame other people and groups. When someone sees a group as a threat, it might lead them to act or speak hatefully to members of that group. Hatred is often associated with intense feelings of anger, contempt, and disgust. Anger and hatred have a way of clouding our minds and distorting our judgements. Hate is not just an emotion. It is a state of being that involves choices, behaviours, and thoughts. Hate speech is derogatory language with the intention of threatening, humiliating, belittling, and dehumanising a person, thereby removing his dignity and equality. Jesus compared hate speech with murder (Mat.5:21-22; 1Joh.3:15). Hate speech, cursing and slandering, not only do not produce the righteousness of God, but it actually grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph.4:29-32; Jam.1:19). The cure of hate speech is to not repay hatred with hatred, or insult with insult, but to bless such a person (1Pet.3:9). Remove all filthy language from your vocabulary (Col.3:8; Pro.4:24).

Blaspheming Christ has become the norm. Saying "Christ!" or "Jesus!" as an exclamation or a curse word, is blasphemy, using the name of God in vain. Movie makers don't think twice to use it. Don't watch such a movie as you will be participating in the blaspheming. Even Christians use other blaspheming words like OMG and OMW. Other curse and swear words that are vulgar and crude reveal the condition of your heart. God's holiness demands a pure heart. We all need to decide whether we would like to honour or dishonour God.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Jam.3:6-10; Mat.5:21-22; 1Joh.3:15; Eph.4:29-32; Jam. 1:19; 1Pet.3:9; Prov.10:12.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: How often do you use hate speech, curse or swear? Do you truly honour God with your language? Bow before the Lord to repent and ask Him to forgive you and to cleanse your heart and lips. 1Pet.3:15.

US: Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict Christians for participating in hate speech, cursing and swearing. Ask the Lord to forgive us for our critical spirit and for the many ways that we curse other people in our thoughts and attitudes. Ask Him to help us to stop all negative talk and criticism and for the will to work together towards a solution for a multi-cultural, multi-racial society.

THEM: How will they know love unless they see it manifesting in the church. May the purity of the church be a testimony in a hateful, hurting world.

"Profanity is the effort of a feeble brain to express itself forcibly." - Spencer W. Kimball

DAY 26 | 11 JULY 2024 | THURSDAY

IDEOLOGIES AND WORLDVIEWS

SCRIPTURE READING

"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus."

Ephesians 4:17-21 NIV

A worldview is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that ground and influence all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing. One's worldview is also referred to as one's philosophy, philosophy of life, mindset, outlook on life, formula for life, ideology, faith, or even religion. An ideology is a set of opinions or beliefs of a group or an individual. Very often ideology refers to a set of political beliefs or a set of ideas that characterize a particular culture. Capitalism, communism, socialism, and Marxism are ideologies. The dominant ideology in a society is passed along through the society's major social institutions, such as the media, the family, education, and religion. As societies changed throughout history, so did the ideologies that justified systems of inequality. Ideology allows a nation to have a clear sense of shared purpose and identity. Many nations, such as the United States, do not have a shared religion, ethnicity, language, or place of origin; ideology is intended to fill this void and bring a sense of cohesion to a nation.

Religious ideology refers to the beliefs, values, and practices associated with a particular religion. It shapes people's worldview, moral values, and behaviors, and influences their attitudes towards various aspects of life, including politics. The emphasis of religion is on faith and worship. For the Christian, its appeal is to Christlikeness and its aim is the redemption or purification of the human spirit. For evangelicals Jesus Christ saves one from sin and nurtures one in love; for liberals Jesus Christ exemplifies the way of compassion, hospitality, and justice. Religion becomes an ideology when a group uses its faith to defend themselves against a political power that threatens that group. It politicises faith into either suppressing or persecute others. Religious theologies (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) can legitimise socio-political ideology and racist-national identity. White Christian Nationalist theology undergirded Apartheid in South Africa. It was unbiblical, heretical, evil. Theologies can kill. Revolutionary movements use religion to legitimise the use of weapons in a political war, and also result in unbiblical, evil behaviour. As we look at various contemporary ideologies, we will find that some arise outside of the church and invade and impact the mind of the church from without; others arise within the church, and influence and corrupt the understanding of the church from within. History shows ideological powers rise and fall. Sooner or later, God judges and disciplines them. The Bible does not hesitate to label human ideologies as 'false'. The rejection of the Word and the authority of God are expressed in a rejection of God. This rejection of God results in an increasing ignorance about Him and a substitution of human ideas about 'god' in the place of accurate knowledge about Him. The knowledge of God is distorted, diluted and altered so seriously that the true God can no longer be recognized. This escalation of ignorance and erroneous belief is summed up in Romans 1:18-32.

It is a fact that an ideology is settled in the mind of a person in the institution he is raised in – school, college, university, social group, etc. Youths become activists because of peer groups. Read so

many testimonies of young people that were completely oblivious of political issues until they came under the influence of politically active groups that targeted young people. It set them on a course for the rest of their lives.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Eph.4:17-21; Rom. 1:18-32; Rom. 12:1-2.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: *Father God, your word says that you know my thoughts even before I think them. I confess that my thoughts towards other people are not always honourable and beneficial. Please forgive me. Forgive me that even my thoughts can be evil and can influence my actions negatively. I pray that You would also renew my mind. Let your Word be like a sword that will discern my thoughts and help me to be transformed to have the mind of Christ. Destroy every stronghold that was built in my mind through ideologies. Help me to take every thought captive and make it obedient to You and to think about and meditate on the things that are true, honourable, just, pure and praiseworthy. To the glory of your Name! Amen!*

US: Pray for the transformation of how Christians think and process events. That we will have a positive and Biblical mind-set with a willingness to help find solutions for our problems and not to criticize and demean other people, or worse kill them through our unbiblical ideologies.

THEM: Pray for the media that plays such a vital role in the formation of our thought-patterns. Pray that role-models, leaders and celebrities in your nation will be raised up to have a positive, nation-building influence on our youth. Pray that the young generation will find constructive ways to help build their nations to be free from destructive mind-sets and old paradigms.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"For Jesus, there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated. There are only children, women and men to be loved." – Henri Nouwen.

DAY 27 | 12 JULY 2024 | FRIDAY

A LIFE WORTH LIVING.

Ludwig, Duke of Zinzendorf (1700-1760), was an ambitious young man. He was a good student, popular with his friends, well-connected, and a member of the German aristocracy. Then one day he found himself in a museum, gazing at a painting of Jesus on the cross. He could not tear himself away from it: the wounds, the face, the crown of thorns. And then the inscription carved on the frame caught his eye: "This He has done for you. What are you doing for Him?" Suddenly he had found meaning in his life. He dedicated everything he possessed, his youthful enthusiasm, his connections and his wealth to the Lord. He welcomed a group of religious refugees to his estate at Herrnhut, and together with them he founded a missionary society that through the years sent numerous missionaries to many parts of the world. The very first missionary to arrive in South Africa in 1737 was Georg Schmidt, one of Von Zinzendorf's colleagues, who came to proclaim the Good News to the Khoi people.

After having baptised his first converts in about 1742, Schmidt faced criticism from some clergymen in Stellenbosch who were of the opinion that only Reformed ministers could baptise. They also regarded him as not having been properly ordained. He suspended his duties and left the country on 5 March 1744, intending to return after pleading his cause in Amsterdam. However, he did not get the permission he had hoped for and never returned to the Cape. All was not lost however. One of the Khoi, Vehettge Magdalena, picked up the baton. Fifty years later missionaries from Herrnhut returned to find that she had planted a church. God is absolutely faithful to work out His plans. In 2022 a brave group of Christians from the Dutch Reformed and Moravian Church went to Genadendal for a day that is recorded in heaven. Ds. Nelis van Rensburg offered an apology with a lengthy confession of the sins of the DRC and Apartheid. Rev. Abrahams, President of the Moravian church said these unforgettable words: "We determined to forgive unconditionally!"

Von Zinzendorf, Schmidt, Ds van Rensburg and Rev Abrahams, are some of a great many Christians who have, through the ages, heeded Paul's words: "I beseech you therefore, brethren. By the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). If we follow Christ in our own country and at our own time, serving the cause of reconciliation, we will be joining the faithful who have followed him for countless generations. It is not an easy road to follow. Laying yourself on the altar means that you will be sacrificing everything for the Lord: your time, your enthusiasm, your comfort, your possessions, your safety, perhaps even your life. It is true that bridge-builders may be trampled on. But take heart. A bridge is meant to be walked over, isn't it? Remember: the cross is not only our badge or our logo. It is our manual, our guide to life.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Are you willing to lay down your life for the purpose of God in your generation? Present yourself before the throne of God, to become one of the world-changers today.

US: Ask the Lord to forgive us as Christians for our selfish ways and actions in the past and present. Pray for the Church of Jesus Christ in your nation to understand Jesus' attitude of humility and self-sacrifice, and for us to commit to and dedicate ourselves to follow His example. Pray for pastors, priests, reverends, elders and deacons, and for every ordinary Christian to give themselves freely to the strengthening and building of the Body of Christ in our nation.

THEM: Pray that people in your nation will respond to the call to reconciliation and join with one heart to transform their nation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!" – Moravian missionaries.

DAY 28 | 13 JULY 2024 | SATURDAY

EAGER TO MAINTAIN UNITY.

SCRIPTURE READING

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

Ephesians 4:1-6 ESV

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY CHURCH DENOMINATIONS TODAY?

There are more than 45,000 denominations globally according to the [Centre for the Study of Global Christianity](#) followers of Jesus span the globe. But the global body of more than 2 billion Christians is separated into thousands of denominations. Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Apostolic, Methodist — the list goes on. So why does Christianity have so many branches? A cursory look shows that differences in belief, power grabs and corruption all had a part to play.

We express our faith in a variety of ways based to our ethnic background. Denominations have been birthed from our ethnicities; the historical struggles of a nation or race of people contribute to our faith in God. Ensuing generations of that family will pass down stories and lessons about faith and prayer moving mountains and sustaining them through tough times. Seeds of faith will be planted and replanted through generations. How can so many church congregations produce so many different followers—all with differing ideas of faith—that all cloak themselves with the cape of "Christian"? Surely, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church must have a solution. In a multi-ethnic society, a multi-ethnic church that recognises our cultural differences, celebrates them, creates safe spaces to learn from one another, and accepts one another the same way Christ loves and accepts each of us can bring great healing. Jesus wants us to be one in our belief of him and in God the Father who sent him. So, in Him, through his gospel, in our love of our Father God, the church must strive to overcome our centuries of division. Jesus prayed that his followers "may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:22-23).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Eph.4:1-6; Joh.17:22-23; 2Cor.3:11; Rom.12:16-18; 1Cor.1:10; Phil.1:27; 2:1-3.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: We need to practise loving our neighbours. Examine whether you are “doing life” only with people who look like you. Don’t just strive to live a life that is reflective of whom Christ calls you to be, but actually live it out. Step into loving people who don’t look like you and don’t live in your neighbourhood, or don’t vote like you, or have the same background and alma mater as you. When you do this, then inviting a person to your church community will be a natural act and less of an unnatural recruitment. Those around you will begin to see the reflection of Christ in you, and because of you, they will seek to draw nearer to Him.

US: Pray that the Lord will help us in the Church to re-discover the truth of brotherly love, and that us as Christians we can find a way to overcome racism and to heal the division in the Church.

THEM: Pray that Christians will stop seeing unbelievers as a threat, but rather look at them as potential brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for those around you that do not know Jesus Christ as the Way the Truth and the Life. Pray for leaders to have wisdom and courage to lead us out of this stronghold of racism in our nations.

Remember to memorise John 17.

“The aggressive power of the gospel is in proportion to the genuine faith and piety and example of the believers. The church is to be the Lord’s light bearer to shine amid the moral darkness of a corrupt and sinful generation. There can be nothing in the world that is so dear to God as His church. Nothing is guarded by Him with such jealous care. Nothing offends God more than for the church to be in a disunited state, because it bears to the world a very bad testimony and example.” – Ellen G. White.

WEEK 5 | DAY 29 | 14 JULY 2024 | SUNDAY**DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY****SCRIPTURE READING**

"This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him." **Genesis 37:2-4 NIV**

If ever there was a dysfunctional family, this was it. Joseph was his father's obvious favourite. His brothers were jealous and hated him. Joseph's arrogant dreams provoked them even further. He seemed ignorant of their threats and happily went looking for them. They saw their opportunity to take revenge. Their hatred was so strong that they contemplated killing him. If anyone had a right to feel bitter, angry, and betrayed, it was Joseph. He had been stripped, thrown into a pit and left to die, then removed and sold into slavery—all by his very own brothers. Of all the relationships in the world, our familial ones should be the strongest; we are knit together through sharing the same home, experiences, memories and parents. Joseph likely felt inconceivable hurt. Yet, in the midst of horrific betrayal and pain, the Lord was with Joseph. As our children's read-aloud story Bible repeatedly says, "Was Joseph happy? No. But God was with Joseph." The Lord caused Joseph to gain favour in the eyes of Pharaoh, as he interpreted his dreams and predicted the seven-year famine. Eventually Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all of Egypt. It was during the famine that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt in search of food. Here was Joseph's chance to get even: He could have made them grovel. He could have made them starve. He could have humiliated them in front of an entire nation. Yet Joseph did none of these things. Instead of punishing them for their evil deeds, Joseph extended grace upon grace. He didn't want them to feel guilty for sending him to Egypt, but instead assured them it was God's plan. "And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:5). Three times he mentions the phrase "God sent me." Joseph is a sterling example of trusting the sovereignty of God in the face of trials. He didn't allow bitterness or anger to consume him, so he was able to freely forgive his brothers. Not only did he want to free them from any feelings of condemnation, he went on to provide food and land for his entire family (v. 11). – theopenbible.org

There is inconceivable hurt in dysfunctional families. It is impossible to heal unless the Holy Spirit becomes part of the family. He is the one that can bring healing, fight bitterness, give the grace to forgive and love again. There is a difference between seeking justice and living in bitterness. Is it possible to trust God with so much pain? Will His justice be enough? The only way to find out is to be in such a close personal relationship with Jesus that you feel safe and secure enough to trust Him with your pain.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying: *Gen.37; 39-45.*

CORPORATE PRAYER

Father God, thank You for the privilege that we may call You, our Father. Thank You for adopting us into your family, through your Son, Jesus Christ, and through the adoption through the Holy Spirit. Since all families have their origins in You, we ask You for healing and restoration to the families in our nation. We acknowledge and confess that most of the pain that families experience

is because of our own sinful ways. We confess that we have not lived according to Your standards in our marriages, in bringing up our children and in caring for those who are fatherless. We have ignored Your command that husbands are to love and care for their wives as Jesus cares for the Church, and that wives are to submit to and respect their husbands as the Church is to submit to Jesus. Through Your blood we can be healed and reconciled with each other. Help us to honour our bodies and take responsibility for those You have entrusted to us in our relationships. Let our marriages once again be a reflection of Your relationship with the Church, so that You will receive glory.

As children we confess our disobedience to our parents and that we do not honour them as You have commanded us to do. As fathers and mothers we have not set examples for our children as to godly lifestyles. We have caused them to stumble and provoked them to anger, and we have not given You glory by telling them about You, so they became rebellious and unfaithful to You. We need Your cleansing and healing, please come and wash our families with Your Word. You are a Father of the fatherless and a Defender of widows. You see the trouble and grief that we have caused ourselves because of our wicked ways. Please bring justice to us, save our children and break the stronghold of oppression. Let our children once again be an inheritance from the Lord and bring joy to our hearts. Lord Jesus, You invited the children to come to You, and promised that the Kingdom of God belong to such as these. Let this invitation reach the millions of children who are abandoned and lost without families. Be merciful to us so that we may declare Your power to the next generation, so that all the children who are still to be born will hear of You, and grow up to praise your Name.

We call upon you, Father, to restore the Church once again to the purpose You have created us for, to walk in love, and to be a fragrant offering and sacrifice to You. Thank You that through the Spirit of adoption we can all cry: "Abba, Father!" Amen.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"'Father' is the Christian name for God. Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption." J.I. Packer.

DAY 30 | 15 JULY 2024 | MONDAY

PEACEMAKER or PEACEKEEPER

SCRIPTURE READING

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." **Matthew 5:9 NIV**

Into a world that is ugly with violence and hate, Jesus sends us as peacemakers. We aren't given the choice of whether or not we would like to be peacemakers and we certainly aren't given the choice of what kind of world we would like to live in. Peacemaking is not the absence of conflict, avoidance of strife or the appeasement of parties. Peace in the Bible is never to be confused with pacifism and is always based on justice and righteousness.

The term "peacemakers" comes from the Greek verb that means "to do" or "to make." It mandates action and initiative. Someone has to drag the combatants to the table and give them a reason to put down their arms. Peace never happens by chance. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he exhorted, "If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone" (Rom. 12:18). The hallmark of a Christian is the ability to get along with other people. The testimony of a church is its ability to get along with other people. We have a God-given, scripturally directed responsibility to pursue peace. Jesus says that those who are peacemakers will be known and recognized as what they really are - the sons of God. A "son of God" is a statement of character. A son of God is one who not only carries on the family name but bears the family resemblance and reputation. Jesus is saying that as his followers become known as peacemakers, they will be recognized as the sons of God who share his name and share his mission. Our Lord is on a recruiting mission today. He's looking for a few volunteers to join God's Peace Corps. Will we take up the mantle of peacemaker? Every tiny step, every pure action, receives God's blessing! - Rick Ezell. www.lifeway.com.

Some 700 years ago a remarkable man was born. Although he was the son of an Italian cloth merchant and destined to be a knight, he forsook the path of wealth and fame, choosing instead to wear a ragged cloak tied with a rope borrowed from a scarecrow. He spent his days preaching and giving to others. He chose to live in utter poverty. History records that he was a noble, kind, humble, Christlike man - one of the greatest Christians who ever lived. We know him today as St. Francis of Assisi. Centuries after his death, someone translated one of his prayers into English. It was later set to music.

"Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace Where there is hatred, let me sow love Where there is injury, pardon, Where there is doubt, faith Where there is despair, hope Where there is darkness, light Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive It is in pardoning that we are pardoned It is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen."

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Mat. 5:9; Luk. 12:51-52; Eph.2:14; 1Cor.12:12-27.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Take the first step. Jesus said, "So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). You are to make the first move. "But," you say, "Why should I go to the person when they are the one that hurt me." Do you want the biblical answer? Because Jesus says so. Conflict is never resolved accidentally. That first step may be a letter, a phone call, or a visit. If someone has wronged you or you have wronged someone else, take action today. Your peace of mind and your Christian witness depends on your taking the first step.

US: Pray for the church, that we will become known as the peacemakers in our communities. Pray that our obedience to Jesus' call, will bear results in our nations that politics cannot achieve.

THEM: Identify the sources of contention in your nation. Begin to pray today that the Lord will give you an open door to become the peacemakers He designed us to be. First, by offering people peace with God. Then by mediating peace where conflict and war have devastated so many communities and nations.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14). If you're not a peacemaker, you won't go to heaven. – John Piper.

DAY 31 | 16 JULY 2024 | TUESDAY

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

SCRIPTURE READING

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." 1 Corinthians 13:7-10 ESV

"Mister Pentecost", David du Plessis, the South African born leader in the World Pentecostal Movement, once remarked: "It seems to me that the apostle Paul specifically had the churches in our time in mind when he wrote 1 Corinthians 13."

All the *Pentecostal and Charismatic* churches should remember: "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal".

For all the *Protestant churches* for whom faith and knowledge and theology and sound preaching is of so much importance, the message is: "If I have the gift of prophecy (preaching) and can fathom all mysteries, and all knowledge, and I have faith that can move mountains, but I have not love, I am nothing".

And for the *Roman Catholic Church* with its proud tradition of self-sacrifice and service, with its many monasteries across the world, Paul says: "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but I have not love, I gain nothing".

Uncle David, as thousands of South Africans have come to call him, hit the nail on its head! We have millions of believers belonging to many churches in our countries, and each of us, every denomination, has a unique contribution to make. We need one another's gifts and talents. But all of us need to remember: the greatest of all is love! Our love for the Lord and for one another – as well as the love that we extend to the world around us – will determine if we will ever reach our goal of reconciliation and peace.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

1Cor.13; 1Pet.4:8-12.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Decide today to open your heart for your fellow brothers and sisters from other denominations. Pray and seek to be filled with the love of Christ that will enable you to really love all people. Earnestly strive to make your love practical with acts of love, caring, compassion and to cover the sins of others.

US: Pray that the Lord will bless the process of reconciliation amongst the different Churches of your nation. Pray that the Church in your nation will demonstrate the love of the Lord in such a way that the world will know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

THEM: If there is one thing that the world out there need, then it is an expression of God's love. Not a soppy, superficial, self-indulgent, over-sentimental, sugar-coated love, but an unconditional, sacrificial, compassionate, patient love and kindness. Ask the Lord to empower Christians to honestly love the people in their nation.

"A bell is no bell until you ring it, A song is no song until you sing it, and love in your heart wasn't put there to stay. Love isn't love, until you give it away." – Oscar Hammerstein II

DAY 32 | 17 JULY 2024 | WEDNESDAY

RESPONSIBILITY FOR A GENERATION

SCRIPTURE READING

"And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,"
Act.17:6 ESV

There are countless testimonies of how ordinary men and women influenced a whole generation. Noah's faith secured the existence of the whole human race. Abraham's faith caused God to covenant with him and with all those who believe in the God of the Bible since then. Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and other great men left lasting legacies of empire building, destroying continents, and corrupting the minds of millions of people. From a purely historical perspective, the most influential man in all of history was actually a traveling preacher. His name was Jesus. H.G. Wells said: *I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very centre of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.*

Here are just 6 ways Jesus' legacy has changed the world for the better. - Tim Arndt.

1. Women's Rights. Throughout ancient history we see endless examples of women treated inhumanely. About 2,000 years ago, we see an incredible movement of women converting to Christianity. The early church was so saturated with women that it was often criticized as "a women's religion". Jesus treated women with dignity, respect, and a pure love that stood in stark contrast to society. While women were worth less than men in the Roman world, in Jesus' eyes they were equally valuable having been made in the image of God. Adultery were the norm in the Roman world, but Christianity demanded that a man be committed to his wife and love her sacrificially.
2. Human Rights. The idea that all humans should be treated with dignity was extremely rare before Christianity stepped onto the scene. Take slavery for example. While it is true that there were Christians who owned slaves in early America, it was Christians who championed freedom for slaves. The secular philosophers and leaders of the day said or did little to emancipate slaves. It was Christians like William Wilberforce who led the charge against slavery. Even in the civil rights movement of the 60's, the church was the centre of fighting against racism and segregation in society. To care for our fellow man is a very Christian idea rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus himself.
3. Humanitarian Aid. The apostle John says in 1 John 3:17: "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" Caring for the poor and needy has been a strong part of Christianity's legacy since the beginning. We often see Jesus healing the poor and the outcasts and in the early church they cared for orphans, widows, and the helpless.
4. Education. Literacy came as a result of Christianity. Nearly all of the first universities in England and America were started by Christians. Missionaries planted schools, translated the Bible into different languages, sometimes inventing a written script for those languages, and demanded that children be raised with an education.
5. Science. For much of history people saw the world as spirits, demons, and "gods" influencing the forces of nature. Christians believe there is one God who made both the world and everything in it (including us). Medieval Christians were the first to come to the understanding that since God made both the world and mankind, man should be able to experiment with

nature and understand it better. All the early scientists such as Newton were religious in one way or another. Francis Bacon, Galileo, Newton, Copernicus, Kepler, Pascal—all these men were inspired by their faith to do science.

6. Changed Lives. Perhaps the most poignant example of how Jesus has changed the world for the better comes through seeing personal testimonies. Churches are full of people who can tell you how Jesus changed their life. If you do not believe in Jesus, I highly encourage you to start listening to people's stories.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Act. 17:6; Mat. 12:14; Mar. 16:15; Joh. 3:16.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Never underestimate the power deposited in you through the Holy Spirit to be a world changer. Your world may be only your family, or your neighbourhood, or your city. Surrender yourself anew to God and answer to His call: "Here am I. Send me."

US: The church has been used for centuries to transform nations, even continents. Pray that the church in our generation will take responsibility for this generation we live in, to stop trusting politicians and world leaders to accomplish transformation and reconciliation. Pray that the church will enter into areas of conflict, war and oppression, to bring the solution Christ has given us.

THEM: Pray that the younger generation in your nation will be thoroughly evangelised. Most great men and women of God, responded to God's call for ministry at a young age. Pray that the Lord will raise up people in the older generation to bless and guide the younger generation with the development of gifts and talents, and the sharing of knowledge and experience. Pray for a generation that will prepare for the return of Jesus.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammad, and Napoleon; without science and learning, shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times." - 17th century historian Philip Schaff.

DAY 33 | 18 JULY 2024 | THURSDAY

CHRISTIANS AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURE READING

"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1 Corinthians 11:29 ESV); "that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." 1 Corinthians 12:25-27 ESV

"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1Cor.11:29, ESV); "that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1Cor.12:25-27, ESV)

1Cor.11:29 is a sobering verse. Paul has already warned Christians to examine themselves before taking part in the Lord's Supper to avoid doing so in an unworthy way (1Cor.11:28). The first view of this scripture refers to the symbolic parallel to Christ's body in the elements of the bread and cup and the warning that Christians should see them as different from other food. In other words, the Lord's Supper should not be treated like just another meal used to satisfy physical hunger. It must be approached with respect as something much more meaningful and important. Along with that, partaking in communion is "proclaiming" the death of Jesus (1Cor.11:26). If a person proclaims Jesus' death, but is disobedient to the gospel, that person is essentially daring God to judge them (Gal.6:6-7). The second interpretive view is that "discerning the body" means recognizing the relationship between Christ's body and the "body of Christ," known as the church. In other words, we must see Christ in our fellow Christians and treat them as we would treat Jesus when we come together (1Cor.10:16-17).

When Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, he was interrupted by the risen Jesus Christ, who accused Paul of persecuting Him personally, indeed because Christians are the body of Christ. Thus discerning the body of Christ is truly recognizing his presence among the Christians, or better still in the Christians. If we treat other Christians with contempt, ridicule, or even worse, rejection, then we are in fact persecuting Christ. If one member suffers, all suffer. If one member is honoured, all are honoured. Division in the body of Christ is a serious sin. We should honour one another, esteem one another (as better than ourselves), care for one another, support one another, and bear with one another. We should love each other as we love ourselves. The body of Christ is also our body, and we should take ownership of it, to protect it as ours and as belonging to our Lord.

It is time that we allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and lives. Are you persecuting and rejecting Christians of other denominations, of other races and nations? "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many." (1Cor.12:12-14, ESV)

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

1Cor. 10:16-17; 1Cor. 11:26-29; 1Cor. 12:12-14; 25-27; Gal. 6:6-7.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any lies that you believe about other Christians, that influence how you act or react to other Christians from a different race or denomination in your own nation or other nations.

US: Be intentional to connect with Christians in the Body who are of a different race or nation. Instead of accusing them or calling for revenge, why not helping them to come to reconciliation? Hear their stories. Climb into their skin. Pray that the Lord will grant us grace as we move forward in the process of reconciliation, so that we will be totally honest and truthful in our dealings with each other from different races and different churches.

THEM: Pray for truth to prevail in all areas of society in our nation, that lies will be exposed and that those who continue in lies will be convicted to repent and turn their hearts to walk in truth. Pray that the truth will truly set us free!

Remember to memorise John 17.

"In an attempt to hinder, if not altogether halt, the next move of God, Satan has sent forth an army of fault-finding demons against the church. The purpose of this assault is to entice the body of Christ away from the perfections of Jesus and onto the imperfections of one another."

– Francis Frangipane

DAY 34 | 19 JULY 2024 | FRIDAY**UNITY IN OUR FAITH****SCRIPTURE READING**

"I, therefore, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all... He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ..." Ephesians 4:1-32 NKJV

A worthy walk before God will be marked by lowliness and gentleness, not a pushy desire to defend our own rights and advance our own agenda, but bearing with one another. We need this so that the inevitable wrongs that occur between people in God's family will not work against God's purpose of bringing all things together in Jesus.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God never commands us to create unity among believers. He has created it by His Spirit; our duty is to recognize it and keep it. This is a spiritual unity, not necessarily a structural or denominational unity. It is evident in the quick fellowship possible among Christians of different races, nationalities, languages, and economic classes. The church where in the Gentile and Jewish believers were united was no mere enrolment on a register of membership; it involved their union with Christ by faith and therefore their union with each other as fellow-members of his body. Our unity is because in Jesus we share one body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Father. Each of these common areas is greater than any potential difference. The purpose of the offices of spiritual leadership in the church, is to equip the members of the Body for the work of ministry (service), so that the body of Christ would be built up (expanded and strengthened), and united in our faith. Growing up into Christ, will cause believers to mature, to discern deception, to become increasingly Christlike in their conduct, in their ability to live pure and holy lives, to forgive and reconcile, and to become ministers of reconciliation in the world around them.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Ephesians 4; Col. 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 4.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Did you grieve the Holy Spirit through lying, stealing, cursing, vulgar language, or unforgiveness? Are your actions always full of grace, kindness, compassion and righteousness? Then it is time to put off the old ways, and seek to be clothed in Christ's holiness.

US: Pray for the local churches in your area. Be as specific as you can, naming the churches and praying also for their leadership. Pray that the shackles of spiritual apathy, lethargy and slumber, and indifference will be broken off the Body of Christ. Pray that the Church would be sober and vigilant, watching and praying, and grow in the unity of faith in Jesus Christ.

THEM: Pray for an abundance of grace to be released through the church into the world. Pray for the grace and truth of Jesus Christ to bring healing to your nation. Pray that the stronghold of unforgiveness, hatred, bitterness, resentment and anger will be broken.

Remember to memorise John 17.

The prime duty of the ministers of the church is not to baptize, marry, and bury the members of their church, to comfort and console them, and to get them somehow into heaven, as the Arab guides get tourists to the top of the Pyramids. Their duty is to perfect, that is, to adjust the church members for the work of ministry, that they may contribute to the building up of the Church.

– F.B. Meyer.

DAY 35 | 20 JULY 2024 | SATURDAY

GOD'S EXTRAORDINARY GRACE

SCRIPTURE READING

"But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience He brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved. In our union with Christ Jesus He raised us up with Him to rule with Him in the heavenly world. He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his grace in the love He showed us in Christ Jesus. For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus He has created us for a life of good deeds, which He has already prepared for us to do." Ephesians 2:4-10 GNB

With but and because, Paul explains God's reason behind reconciling man to Himself, and these reasons are found totally in God. The reasons are His rich mercy and His great love, which He focuses on us. Some imagine that God loves us because we are so lovable. Instead, God's love is so great that it extends even to the unlovely - to the children of wrath mentioned in the previous verse. Every reason for God's mercy and love is found in Him. We give Him no reason to love us, yet in the greatness of His love, He loves us with that great love anyway. Therefore, we must stop trying to make ourselves lovable to God, and simply receive His great love while recognizing that we are unworthy of it. This is the grace secret of the Christian life.

When we were dead: This is when God started loving us. He did not wait until we were lovable. He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses, providing nothing lovable to Him. Made alive together with Christ: This is what God did to those dead in sin. He shared in our death that we could share in His resurrection life. The old man is crucified and we are new creations in Jesus with the old things passing away and all things becoming new.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:
Eph.2:4-10; 2Pet.1:3-9; Tit.3:4-6.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: As you reflect on these scriptures, thank God for the abundant, extraordinary grace and mercy that He demonstrated to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Thank Him that He extended that grace and mercy to you for your salvation.

US: Pray that the church will learn to love like God. Our own love can never be enough to love like He did. That is why He pours His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom.5:5). It is God's gift to the church. Let us use this gift as we relate to others around us.

THEM: Before coming to Jesus, Gentiles were "Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless and Godless" (John Stott). That is the state of the world around us. How will they know about God's love if they cannot see it in the church?

Remember to memorise John 17.

Grace is God's unconditional love in action, embracing us in our imperfections and transforming us with His mercy.

WEEK 6 | DAY 36 | 21 JULY 2024 | SUNDAY**FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT ARE ONE****SCRIPTURE READING**

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one—I in them and You in Me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world."

John 17:20-24 NIV

Before the world began, Father, Son and Holy Spirit were living eternally in an amazing circle of relationship. Consider some of the characteristics of the way they relate to one another: love, trust, mutual respect, affection, enjoying and celebrating one another, perfect unity, supporting each other, working together towards the same goals, confidence in each other, interest in each other, teamwork, co labourers, open communication with each other, honouring and esteeming one another, always there for each other, different in role but totally interdependent. What we see here is perfect love with each one complementing the other. Though they are one in substance, in their Person they are not identical. But being different was never a problem – it is what makes them Father, Son and Holy Spirit! What we see in its most perfect form is unity in diversity. There is no competitiveness, no power struggle, no one threatened by anyone else, no one trying to dominate, no one jealous of anyone, no conflict of interest. Here is the model of perfect relationships, enjoying one another throughout eternity. – *Healing Hearts Transforming Nations. Rhiannon Lloyd.*

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Joh.17:20-24; Joh.10:30; Joh.1:1-2; 1Joh.5:7; Matt.3:16-17; Matt.28:19.

CORPORATE PRAYER

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, are You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that You are one, and You determined before the creation of the world, to create us as humans to be one with You in Christ. Our unity with You is Christ in us and You in Him (Joh.17:23). Father, we desire to be brought to complete unity, to overcome all the hindrances and divisions that prevent us to come to this unity. We confess and agree that all of us that were baptised in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, should be one. Please forgive us Father, for not taking this oneness serious, making it our aim, to be reconciled with Christians from other all other tribes, races and nations. Please forgive us for harbouring resentment, unforgiveness, prejudice, even hatred, in our hearts against other Christians. Please forgive us where we have not honoured, protected, or prayed for one another, carried one another's burdens, or loved one another as Jesus had commanded us. Please transform our hearts and make us one, as You are one. Amen.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"O Lord God Almighty . . . I bless you and glorify you through the eternal and heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom be glory to you, with Him and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever."- Polycarp (70-155/160). Bishop of Smyrna. Disciple of John the Apostle.

DAY 37 | 22 JULY 2024 | MONDAY**THE GLORY OF ONENESS****SCRIPTURE READING**

"I gave them the same glory You gave Me, so that they may be one, just as You and I are one... I want them to be with Me where I am, so that they may see my glory, the glory You gave Me; for You loved Me before the world was made." **John 17:20-24 GNB**

"But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is mankind that You are mindful of them, a son of man that You care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; You crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet." In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what He suffered." **Hebrews 2:6-10 NIV**

In John 17, Jesus prayed that the church would be given His glory: "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one," and "The glory which You gave Me I have given them." There should be a shared glory among believers, the glory of the present Christ. A focus on Jesus in our presence will bring about unity. David said in Psalm 8, that God crowned mankind with glory and honour, and though we don't see the effect of the glory, we see Jesus. He was made lower than the angels for a while, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death for everyone (Heb.2:6-10). The glory of Jesus, is a glory that comes from suffering and humility. Jesus' glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son (Joh.1:14), given to Him by the Father, often appeared humble, weak and suffering, and was ultimately displayed in sacrifice. The glory of the indwelling Spirit of Christ becomes visible in oneness, when Christians who have died to themselves and have taken up their cross, lay down their agenda, their ambitions and their preferences. The glory of Christ in us is far greater than any earthly glory, and way different than what we expect it to be.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Joh. 17:20-24; Heb.2:6-10; Psalm 8; Joh. 1:14; Rom. 18-19; 2Cor.4:15-18; Col.1:27.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Do you long to see Christ's glory? Do you long to be one with Christian brothers and sisters? Are you willing to be made one with Christ in His suffering so that you can share His glory? Ask God the Father to make you truly one with Christ and with other believers, whatever the cost.

US: Pray for the Church to long for the fullness of Christ to be expressed in the unity amongst believers. Pray for church leaders to understand how essential it is to work for unity.

THEM: Pray that through the unity of the Church, the world will come to believe that God the Father has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world, not to condemn it.

"Suffering does not automatically bring glory to God. Some believers have fainted and fallen in times of trial and have brought shame to the name of Christ. It is only when we depend on the grace of God that we can glorify God in times of suffering." - Warren W. Wiersbe

DAY 38 | 23 JULY 2024 | TUESDAY

A HOLY NATION

SCRIPTURE READING

"Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." 1 Peter 2:6-10 NKJV

The apostle Peter refers to Exodus 19:5-6, applying it in a different way. He speaks to Christians scattered all over the Roman Empire. He reminded them that they were saved out of the aimless conduct and traditions of their forefathers (1Pet.1:18), and that before their salvation they were not a people belonging to God (1Pet.2:10). He reminded them that they had lived as the Gentiles but to now stop being double-minded and start living as Christians, to be holy and loving one another (1Pet.4:3-8). "You are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a Holy Nation". All believers from whatever background are 'the body of Christ', the Church, the Holy Nation, God's own family. By faith we are all Abraham's children now (Gal.3:28-29; Rom.4:16), and in a sense, we are also commanded by God to 'leave our country, our people and our father's house,' in order to become citizens of the Holy Nation. This Holy Nation is a very special nation because it is made up of people who love God from every ethnic group (Rev.5:9-10).

In Christ, we have a new identity as beloved sons and daughters, adopted into His family (Gal.4:4-9). Our ethnicity forms a significant part of our identity. Because of conflict, war and migration, we become identified with either an oppressor or a victim, or we may feel we are inferior or superior. People of mixed race often suffer, feeling that they do not belong anywhere. God's purpose is to heal our identity. If we do not understand the bigger picture of God's plan for the Holy Nation, then we focus on our own nation and continue to live out of our natural identity with its woundedness, pride, etc. instead of living out of the new identity of royal citizens of God's Holy Nation where everyone is equally valued. We become proud, wanting to impose our supposed superiority on others and blind to the weaknesses and shortcomings of our group, unable to discern the good or bad, within our culture. We fail to appreciate other cultures, ethnic groups or races, to see them as equally valid and valuable. If we have grown up in a people group that was oppressed and have experienced wounding and lack of acceptance, we tend to develop a feeling of inferiority. We compensate by making an idol of our own race, nation or culture. All our energy goes into promoting or gaining equality for our own group. We end up becoming the oppressor ourselves. This tends to happen whenever we have not availed ourselves of God's grace for healing and forgiveness. – *Healing hearts, transforming nations. Rhiannon Lloyd.*

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

1Pet.2:6-10; 1Pet. 1:15-18; 2:10; 4:3-8; Gal.3:28-29; Rev.5:9-10; Gal.4:4-9.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Just like Abraham we all have to respond to God's call to become part of His new Holy Nation. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. If you have never 'left your country, your family and your father's house' to follow Jesus, then do it today. (Gen.12:1).

US: God's calling to be holy as He is holy (1Pet.1:15-18) is not debatable. He commands all who call themselves Christians, who are part of His Holy Nation, to be set apart from all other nations. The Church has to decide to either obey God or to disobey Him. Pray for the Church to stop being double-minded and to turn to God with their whole heart. Pray that the Church will sing the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

THEM: Jesus prayed that the world will know that the Father sent Him, when we are one. But He also warned us that the world will hate us. Pray that the Church will be a faithful witness as being God's own special people, and that unbelievers will want to know Christ.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Lord, let my life align with my identity as A PECULIAR PERSON, displaying Your Praise, reflecting Your Glory, in Jesus name." - Adetokunbo O. Ilesanmi

DAY 39 | 24 JULY 2024 | WEDNESDAY

REDEEMED CULTURE.

SCRIPTURE READING

"Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 NKJV

God's plan was that the Holy Nation would be rich and colourful, and include all the different cultural expressions. Nevertheless, as we live in a fallen world, Satan often perverts and hijacks what God intended to be beautiful. As we come into our true destiny in the Holy Nation, we can ask God to redeem our cultures and restore to us His original intention to make our cultures a blessing. But we must also be discerning and sift the wheat from the chaff. Not everything in our cultures is in line with the Word of God. Our ethnic identity is often distorted and needs to be redeemed and restored. Anything associated with witchcraft or idolatry, and any cultural and moral values that are contrary to biblical values must be laid down at the cross (Rev.21:24-27). Our citizenship in the Holy Nation and Kingdom culture must take priority. Thousands of Christians have found a new freedom in accepting their citizenship of the Holy Nation. Together they have become strong prophetic voices in their country, demonstrating a higher way to live. Instead of prejudice, suspicion, mistrust, divisions, hatred and unjust inequalities, they live out a new unity where they honour one another and celebrate diversity just as God intended from the beginning. – *Healing hearts, transforming nations. Rhiannon Lloyd.*

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

2Cor.5:16-17; Rev.21:24-27; Heb. 11:13-16; Luk.5:36-39; Act.2:13; Eph.2:19.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Prayerfully consider these questions: What aspects of your culture can be redeemed and used to glorify God in the Holy Nation? What are the negative characteristics of your culture? What difference would you see if all believers in your country would live as fellow-citizens in the Holy Nation? What could you do to help this become a reality?

US: Pray that the Church will understand what it means to live as a Holy Nation, together in oneness with Jesus Christ. Pray for a new understanding that the Church is not an organisation that a Christian belong to, but a Family that you are born into, a Body with many different members.

THEM: Pray that the Church will be the solution to the divisions, ethnic conflicts and wars, not by mediating peace on humanitarian levels, but by becoming Christ's ambassadors in a fallen, crooked world.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"Regardless the culture, the problem is the same: Sin. Regardless the culture, the hope is the same: Jesus." – Dustin Bengé.

DAY 40 | 25 JULY 2024 | THURSDAY**WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART?****SCRIPTURE READING**

"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the LORD will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry. I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.'" Ezekiel 14:3-5 NIV

Monuments have been a significant part of human history for thousands of years, serving as symbols of power, remembrance, and cultural identity. The earliest monuments were created by ancient civilizations as a way to commemorate their gods, rulers, and victories in battle. The city squares of the Greek era were crammed with statuary of gods and men. Monuments play an important symbolic role in people's lives and are erected as part of a visual culture that continually reminds us of something or someone important.

The Old Testament refer to monuments from the era of Noah, who 'built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it' (Gen.8:20). The building of altars became a practice for the patriarchs when they had an encounter with God. Throughout the Bible, an altar indicates approach to God, or communion with Him. The Ark of the Covenant, the tabernacle and later the temple, was a reminder that the God of Israel was dwelling among the Israelites. There was no image of Him because He forbade images (Exo.20:4), but the temple was an earthly copy of God's dwelling place in heaven (Heb.8:5). As long as the temple was standing, the Israelites knew that God was among them, to protect and provide for them. Whenever Israel fell into idolatry, God allowed the tabernacle or temple to be destroyed (Jer.7:9-14). God accused Israel of setting up idols in their hearts, when their hearts were supposed to be filled with love for Him (Eze.14:3-5). God also accused the leaders of Israel, to have secret rooms for idols in their hearts and minds (Eze.8:10-12). In Psalm 49:10-11, the psalmist reminds himself that although people name countries after themselves, they all die and the grave will be their home.

In the New Testament, Jesus gave His followers two very important symbolic reminders of His presence with us: baptism and communion (the Lord's supper). These sacraments (religious ceremonies) symbolise the believer's participation in the crucified and resurrected Christ. It does the same task as a national monument, linking common historical heritage and forging cohesive identity. Through participation, a believer acknowledges connectedness to a wider faith community, the church. However, the most common symbol of Christianity is the cross. It is the universal symbol recognised by every other culture in the world. The persecution of the early church was mainly because Christians refused to worship the Roman Emperor by burning incense to his image or statue. They lost their lives, their homes, their income, even their families, because they refused to allow any other Lord into their hearts, except Jesus Christ.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Gen.8:20; Exo.20:4; Jer.7:9-14; Ezek.8:10-12; 14:3-5; Psa.49:10-11; Luk.6:45-46.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: What cultural monuments, statues, buildings, temples and symbols are there in your heart that you are unwilling to let go? Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart to see if there is a secret room of images that displeases Him (Eze.8:10-12).

US: Pray that Christians will no longer use culture as a weapon against Christians of other cultures. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to lay down our cultural weapons, our monuments, our statues, even our heritage, so that we may be truly one in Christ.

THEM: Pray Romans 10:11-15 in your own words as a prayer for your nation.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross. If he refuses the cross he remains on the throne." – A.W. Tozer.

DAY 41 | 26 JULY 2024 | FRIDAY

ETERNITY IN THEIR HEARTS

SCRIPTURE READING

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end." **Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV**

The Preacher understood that man has an awareness and a longing for the eternal, and that God has put this in their hearts. We can say that eternity is in our hearts because we are made in the image of an eternal God. The well-known missionary and author Don Richardson used the phrase eternity in their hearts to describe the phenomenon of redemptive analogies in most all aboriginal cultures. Almost every culture has traditions, customs, or ways of thinking that reflect basic Biblical truth, and these can be used by missionaries to explain the gospel.

Don Richardson, author of the bestselling book *Peace Child*, has studied cultures throughout the world and found startling evidence of belief in the one true God within hundreds of them. He wrote the book to show how the world is already prepared for the Gospel and how the Gospel was prepared to go out into the world. Eternity in Their Hearts covers the stories and legends of 25 different tribes and people groups around the world from the Greeks, to the Canaanites, to the Inca, to tribes in India, China, Korea, Burma and more.

The first story Richardson addresses is about Epimenides, a "prophet" who was aware of an unknown god without a name the Greeks had not appeased. He proposed a sacrifice of a "clean" animal quite similar to how the Jews did it, and offered it to the nameless god. This is the account Paul used in Acts 17 when addressing Mars Hill. He knew of the story and revealed the name of this unknown God to the Greeks (Acts.17:22-31). Another story was about Pachacuti, the king of the Inca shortly before the Spanish Conquistadors arrived. To the Inca, the sun god was the chief of the gods. However, Pachacuti realized that the sun could be covered by a mere cloud and was only visible half the time. He discovered there was a single omnipotent God who was above and beyond all the others. Unfortunately the Incas had no one who brought the Gospel to them before the Conquistadors wiped them out. Richardson kept pointing out was how all these tribes had within their culture the things that pointed to God. These peoples were lost, but many of them longed for and sought the answer that was promised. Some were known to be waiting for "the book from God." How amazing is our God to have placed redemptive analogies in all cultures to bring all men to Himself, bearing out the truth from Ecclesiastes that God "has also set eternity in the hearts of men" (3:11). When Jesus commissioned His followers to take the gospel to the whole world, He gave them His Holy Spirit to help them accomplish this task. What a joy it would be to discover God's redemptive plan for every culture in your nation.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Ecc.3:11; Acts.17:22-31; Mat 28:18-20; Acts.1:8.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Have you ever personally responded to Jesus' commandment in Matt.28:18-20? Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone into another culture to share Jesus' love with them?

US: Pray that the Church will again discover the joy of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to other cultures. There are so many lessons that we can learn from the methods of the early church to overcome cultural boundaries. Read this fascinating article by Lausanne World Pulse: <https://lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/1061>

THEM: There are so many cultures who have not yet received the good news about Jesus Christ. They have been divinely prepared to receive the gospel, if only someone would go and share it. Pray and ask the Lord how you can become involved in cross-cultural evangelism and discipleship. It was meant for every Christian to be equipped by the Holy Spirit and be up to the task.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"I have seen, at different times, the smoke of a thousand villages—villages whose people are without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world." – Robert Moffat

DAY 42 | 27 JULY 2024 | SATURDAY

SINGLENES OF HEART

SCRIPTURE READING

"And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart," Ezekial 11:19 NLT

"And I will give them one heart and one purpose: to worship me forever, for their own good and for the good of all their descendants." Jeremiah 32:39 NLT

"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common."

Acts 4:32 ESV

When Jesus promised us that He will send us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, He indicated that He knew that no human was able to do what He was requiring of them. No amount of self-effort or zeal could produce oneness of heart. God does not expect us to transform ourselves. He sends His Spirit to dwell in us to accomplish that which is humanly impossible – to produce a church that is one Body, that is holy in all their conduct, and in all things pleasing to God. He promises to give us: singleness of heart, a new spirit, to take away our stony, stubborn heart, and give us a tender, responsive heart (Eze.11:19). He gives us a one heart and one purpose, for our own good and for His glory (Jer.32:39). When the early church faced resistance and persecution, they prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to be of one heart and soul, and even sold their possession to share amongst all of them (Acts.4:32). God is not a liar. What He promises, He will do (Num.23:19). The hindrance is lack of faith on our part. Jesus said that if we had faith like a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for us (Matt.17:20).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Eze. 11:19; Jer.32:39; Acts.4:32; Num.23:19; Matt. 17:20; Joh. 11:14; Heb. 11:6.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Bow low before God. Affirm again your faith in Him. Tell Him that you love Him more than anything else in this life. Give Him your old stony, stubborn heart and expect Him to give you a new heart.

US: Ask God to perform His heart operation on His church, to give us a one heart, filled with one purpose – to glorify God and to do His will.

THEM: Pray that God will remove from our hearts every hindrance that resists us loving our fellowmen as ourselves.

Remember to memorise John 17.

All culture, whatever significance it may have, just as all education, civilization, development, is absolutely powerless to renew the inner man. – Herman Bavinck.

WEEK 7 | DAY 43 | 28 JULY 2024 | SUNDAY**THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNASHAMED****SCRIPTURE READING**

"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." James 3:17-18 ESV

Sometimes, we hold on to sin because we're convinced that what others are telling us is just not true, right, or biblical. We suggest that their interpretation of truth is different than ours, and so we live on in our sin until the consequences become too great (Proverbs 18:1; James 3:13-18; Matthew 18:21-35; 2 Timothy 2:10-14). The time has come to lay the past to rest. We cannot change the past or allow the past to influence us. We have been called by God to a higher purpose, to the ministry of reconciliation, to proclaim the gospel of God's forgiveness. God has been gracious to remove all our collective debt of sin in the past through forgiveness. Let us do the same, so that the present and future generations can be restored as happened in the generations that followed Daniel and Nehemiah's confession (Dan.9; Neh.1:5-6). Those who are in Christ have become a new creation, the old has passed away, the new has come (2Cor.5:14-21).

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Proverbs 18:1; James 3:13-18; Matthew 18:21-35; 2 Timothy 2:10-14; Dan.9; Neh.1:5-6; 2Cor.5:14-21.

CORPORATE PRAYER

The story is told of a young pastor in Zimbabwe who lived maybe a century ago. He was coerced either by his tribe or some outside group to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ. Rather than giving in, he wrote what is now called the creed of the FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNASHAMED. Louise Robinson Chapman, a veteran missionary to Africa (1920–1940) writes that the poem was found among the papers of this young pastor after he was martyred for his faith in Christ. Let us recite it together.

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have stepped over the line; the decision has been made: I'm a disciple of Jesus! I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I no longer need to be praised, regarded or rewarded. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide reliable. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go on till He comes and will work till He stops me. When He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you."— Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

DAY 44 | 29 JULY 2024 | MONDAY

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

SCRIPTURE READING

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." Acts 2:42-43 ESV

Early Christians called themselves a "third race" or a "new race." They recognized that they were not Jews, not Gentiles, but one new man embracing all who are in Jesus. Paul says that the idea was that God would "create one new man out of the two" (Eph.2:14-15). As The Message translates this verse, it's "a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody". No-one could "pull rank", as it were. John Chrysostom was one of the great preachers of the Early Church (his name means "Golden Mouth") and he put it like this: It was "as if one should melt down one statue of silver and another of lead and the two together should come out gold". This bringing together of Jew and Gentile in Jesus is a partial fulfilment of God's eternal purpose as stated in Eph.1:10 that He might gather in one all things in Christ.

The Jerusalem church practised daily fellowship as they listened to the apostles' teaching, broke bread (communion meal) and prayed together. The togetherness or oneness of the church resulted in a mighty display of the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts.2:42-43). They did not fellowship with unbelievers (2Cor.6:14) but their fellowship was with one another, first only Aramaic and Greek Jews, but soon expanded to other races and nations as well (Gal.2:9; 1Joh.1:3,7).

One of the worst problems of the church is that we still, in a great measure, live in our own little boxes, separated from one another. We think that we know our brothers and sisters of other races, but this is not always true. Frequently we are still strangers to one another, we do not know or understand one another's traditions, cultures, circumstances, ideals and fears. It is time that we start talking to one another. The famous South African writer Ellen Kuzwayo said: Africa is a place where stories must be told. We need one another's stories, if we want to get to know and appreciate one another. My story is the eyeglasses that I give to you to look through them to my life. I need your eyeglasses to look through them at your life. It does not matter how much pain some stories will cause by looking at them, if we want to understand one another we must speak to one another! We need to work out a strategy to get believers together from all backgrounds: business people, women, fathers, mothers, students, children - all possible groups - to speak to one another. We will be amazed at what might happen.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Eph.2:14-15; Acts.2:42-43; Gal.2:9; 1Joh.1:3,7.

PRACTICAL POINTS

ME: Find at least one person of another race and ask him or her to tell you their story. Invite a family or a person of another race to a meal at your house. Ask the Lord to open your heart for new cross-cultural friendships.

US: Go to a church where people from a different race worship. Join them for a worship service and let your heart be blessed.

THEM: Visit an area where people from a different culture are staying. Just linger there and ask the Lord to open your eyes to see them in a different light.

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; this is the way of Christ,"
- John Chrysostom.

DAY 45 | 30 JULY 2024 | TUESDAY

SHEEP OR GOATS

SCRIPTURE READING

Please read Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the sheep and the goats.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God instructed his people to take care of the poor and needy (Deut. 14:28-29). In Jesus' parable in Matthew 25, the main concern of God's kingdom is to care for the poor, sick and needy, even strangers (hard to grasp in our age of xenophobia). Every time the church obeyed Jesus' command to 'love one another', it resulted in spectacular church growth (Acts.6:1-4).

In the Roman system, the vast majority of people lived in rural areas or small towns. There was no middle class in the Roman Empire. Wealth was based on ownership of land. Most land was controlled by a limited number of wealthy, elite families, who earned profit from taxation and governmental policies. Inequality was widespread in both rural and urban areas. It was in this climate that the early church lived and grew. It was estimated that in the year 40, there were a thousand Christians. Their numbers grew to about 7,500 in the year 100, to about 217,000 in the year 200, and to six million Christians at the beginning of the 4th century. This growth is impressive if we consider the social situation of the early Christians. Despite the scorn of the powerful elite and persecutions, the early Christian movement was growing. This implies something was deeply attractive to the society.

There are three major facets by which the early church attracted people. 1) They self-identified as "resident aliens" and it reflected in their teachings. They believed that because Christ had conquered death Christians need not to fear death, for they will rise from it. This belief encouraged them to withstand persecution, and in how they handled epidemics for example. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner; a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way the equal of martyrdom. 2) The presence of divine power in the form of healing, miracles and exorcism of demons made the church very attractive to people who were oppressed by spiritual forces and longed for liberation. 3) Their teaching that people are faced with two options, they can choose the way of life or way of death. Christians who choose the way of life must first love God, and then his neighbour as themselves. In practice, if one has material possessions, one must freely give to those who are in need: "Give to anyone that asks, without looking for any repayment, for it is the Father's pleasure that we should share his gracious bounty with all men." *Shepherd of Hermas* states: "Assist widows, visit orphans and the poor, ransom God's servants, show hospitality, help oppressed debtors in their need." Since Christians are strangers in a strange land and not permanent residents of this world, they should not settle in like colonists and not increase wealth for the sake of being rich. Their priorities should be, "instead of fields, purchase afflicted souls, as each is able." These theological concepts - love, sharing our goods, the right use of wealth, God as the Creator and the Provider of the material world – were passed on to later Christians.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:
Deut. 14:28-29; Acts.6:1-4; Luk. 10:25-37.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts. Are we living like our brothers and sisters in the early church, considering ourselves aliens passing through this world, not seeking wealth but freely sharing from the bounty God has given us?

US: Is your heart longing to be part of a church that is so attractive that unbelievers would flock to it, to become part of a body whose love for one another is visible to all. Let us bring this request before God's throne.

THEM: Let us join Jesus in his prayer in John 17, that God would make us one so that we can reflect His love, His power, His grace to the world around us.

Remember to memorise John 17.

"When a needy person stands at your door, God Himself stands at his side." – Hebrew proverb.

DAY 46 | 31 JULY 2024 | WEDNESDAY**BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING****SCRIPTURE READING**

I am giving you the choice today between God's blessing or God's curse! There will be blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am giving you today, and a curse if you refuse them and worship the gods of these other nations."Deuteronomy 11:26-28 TLB

The God of the Bible is the source of all blessings. He was the first to pronounce blessings on his creation, especially on the humans He created (Gen.5:2). After the Flood He blessed Noah and his sons (Gen.9:1). When God began His redemptive work through Abraham, He blessed him, and promised him that through his offspring the whole world will be blessed (Gen.12:3; 22:18). At Mt Sinai the Israelites entered into a covenant with God. Part of the covenant was the Ten Commandments or Law of God. The Law demanded obedience otherwise there will be a curse. When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, God told Moses to spell out the conditions for blessing or curse to the Israelites (Deut.11:26-28; Deut.27, 28).

God's blessing exalted a nation, and secured successful cities and farming, blessings on children, food and livestock, protection and power against enemies, bountiful harvest of food, set apart as God's special people, feared by other nations, abundant prosperity, appropriate rain and freedom from debt, and leadership among other people and nations. The curse meant the opposite of all of these.

In the New Testament, Jesus added another aspect to the blessing of God, the blessing of becoming partakers in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At first the conditions for the blessing do not look like a blessing at all. Becoming one with Christ means the fellowship of His sufferings, but it also means the unlimited supply from the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6).

Matt.5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt.5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matt.5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Matt.5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Matt.5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Matt.5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

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

Matt.5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt.5:11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Matt.11:6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.

Jesus authorised Christians to bless others but He forbade us to curse anyone (Matt.5:44; Rom.12:14). If we want to have God's blessing on our lives, we have to be like Christ, who did not come to curse, but to lay down His life for the world.

Scriptures to meditate on before praying:

Deut. 11:26-28; Deut.27 & 28; Matthew 5 & 6; Rom. 12:14.

PRAYER POINTS

ME: Present yourself to the Lord as a living sacrifice. Ask Him to cleanse your thoughts, emotions, your tongue, mouth and words from all curses, filthy language, coarse jesting, foolish talk and corrupt and angry words. Ask Him to consecrate your lips and to fill your mouth with blessings.

US: Christians can sometimes be the cruellest, meanest, most malicious accusers of people in the world around us. Yes, we have to renounce sin. Yes, we have to expose sin. But we are not to accuse sinners before God. He has made us his ministers of reconciliation. We were born-again to be a blessing, to be witnesses of Jesus' grace and truth. Pray for the Church to be blessed by God to be a blessing to the world, and through us, to fulfil His promise to Abraham: your offspring will be a blessing to the whole world.

THEM: Deliberately seek to bless those people you come into contact with daily. Be kind, gracious, merciful and compassionate toward them. Cover their sin with mercy. Keep your mouth shut when you want to curse. Depend on the Holy Spirit to use you to the glory of Christ.

Remember to memorise John 17.

*"To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless."
– Gilbert K. Chesterton*

DAY 47 | 1 AUGUST 2024 | THURSDAY

BE BLESSED!

Proclaim these blessings over your family, your husband/wife, your children, your parents, your friends and associates, your pastor and the members of your congregation, the mayor and council members of your town, the president or prime minister of your nation along with his cabinet, over other nations especially those you like the least, over those who hurt you, over those whom you hate, over your worst enemies, and over every person in your nation.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Num.6:24-26, NIV)

"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 15:5-6, ESV)

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13, BSB)

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2Cor. 13:14, NIV)

"May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (Eph.3:17-19, NIV)

"And (may) the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil.4:7, ESV)

"May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May He, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen." 1Thess.3:12-13 (NLT)

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." (1Thess.5:23-24, NIV)

"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work." (2Thess.2:16-17, NKJV)

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pet.3:18, NASB)

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jud.1:24-25, NASB)

DAY 48 | 2 AUGUST 2024 | FRIDAY**OUR FATHER'S LOVE****SCRIPTURE READING**

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."
2 Corinthians 6:18 NIV

God wants to make up to us anything that we lacked in our human experience. God says, 'I want to be your Father. Whatever you lacked, I want to make it up to you. If no-one ever said, "I love you, I'm proud of you", I want to tell you these things.' Discovering the wonderful heart of our perfect Heavenly Father heals our wounds. He is the best Father we can ever imagine. One of the ways that God expresses His love to us is through one another. As a church we have a wonderful opportunity to become father or mother figures for orphans, or for those who did not receive parental love for whatever reason. But first our own hearts must be filled with God's love or we will have little or nothing to give. Listen to Him declaring His love for you.

The Father's love letter. (Barry Adams)

My child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. Simply because you are my child, and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect Father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvellous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day, I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came

to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. [Romans 8:31](#) And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. [2 Corinthians 5:18-19](#) His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. [1 John 4:10](#) I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. [Romans 8:31-32](#) If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. [1 John 2:23](#) And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. [Romans 8:38-39](#) Come home, and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. [Luke 15:7](#) I have always been Father and will always be Father. [Ephesians 3:14-15](#) My question is... Will you be my child? [John 1:12-13](#) I am waiting for you. [Luke 15:11-32](#)

– Love, your Dad, Almighty God.

DAY 49 | 3 AUGUST 2024 | SATURDAY

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Head of the Body, the Church. You are the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead and in everything You are supreme. It pleased the Father to let all His fullness dwell in You, and through You to reconcile all things to Himself, by making peace through Your blood, that was shed on the cross (Col.1:18-20).

We confess as a Church that we have not discerned Your Body correctly but have thought of ourselves more highly than we ought to, forgetting that it is one Body with many members and that all the members do not have the same function, but still each member belongs to all others (Rom.12:3-5). We confess that we have become puffed up with our own ideas and so as a Body we lost connection with You the Head, and the Body has suffered and became disjointed and could not grow up to maturity (Col.2:18-19). We kept on biting and devouring one another and some members were destroyed by our lack of love (Gal.5:14-15). Please forgive us and restore our relationships. You had combined the members of the Body so that there should be no division, but that we should have equal concern for each other, and suffer together as well as rejoice when other members are honoured (1 Cor.12:24-27). Let us be one as You and the Father are one. May Your prayer be answered that the Father will protect us by the power of His Name, the Name given to You, so that our oneness will be manifested in the love that we have for one another (Joh.17:11), since it is through this love that the world will know that we belong to You (Joh.13:35).

Lord Jesus Christ, help us to put off our old selves that are corrupted with deceitful desires, and transform the attitudes of our minds, so that we can put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, and so live together as members of one Body (Eph.4:22-25). Let your peace rule in our hearts (Col.3:15), so that when we fast and pray, and humble ourselves to seek Your face, You will hear our prayers and answer us and come and heal our land (Isa.58:3-4; 2Chron.7:14).

The mystery that You have revealed to the Church is that through the Gospel we Gentiles have become heirs together with Israel, and we are members of one Body, sharing together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Eph.3:6). As we pray together as nations of the world, restore us, the Church to the purpose You had for us before You even created us (Eph.2:15; Eph.3:10,11). As we accept one another in unity, may Your Name be praised (Rom.15:7).

How good and pleasant it is when brothers (and sisters) live together in unity! It is like precious oil on the Head, running down on the beard of our High Priest. For it is in unity where the Lord bestows His blessing – Life forevermore! (Ps.133:1-3) May Your Church experience this life as it flows from the Head to the Body, all joined in unity. Amen.

DAY 50 | 4 AUGUST 2024 | SUNDAY

THE CROSS

(This is a practical exercise for a congregation, a prayer group or few individuals together. You will need a wooden cross, a hammer, some nails, pieces of paper, pens, a box of matches, a tin rubbish bin.)

It is one thing to receive teaching on Jesus being both our sin and pain bearer. It is another thing to put this truth into practice and actually give Jesus all our sin and pain. It is interesting that Jesus sometimes asked people to do something practical so that they could really grasp some truth. He put mud on the eyes of one blind man and told him to go to wash it off in the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7). There was nothing special about the mud or the pool. But Jesus knew that for this man, acting something out like this would help his faith to grow to the point where he could receive his healing. Naaman was also told to go to wash seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kings 5:10). Let us consider a practical action that can help us receive healing for our wounded hearts.

Writing down our worst sufferings and losses can help us admit our woundedness. Sharing this suffering and loss with someone else, (especially if they are from the tribe who caused our suffering) can be very healing, if we experience compassion from the 'other side'. Pouring out our pain to Jesus, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is another powerful step towards healing, if we truly believe that Jesus is waiting to lift it off us and carry it instead of us. Nailing the paper on which we have written our suffering and loss to a simple cross help to make the truth of what Jesus did for us even more real. It also helps us to let go of it, entrusting it all into His compassionate care (See Colossians 2:14). Removing the papers from the cross and burning them seals this further in our hearts.

The above has been practiced with groups of people in many countries and continents and has become known as The Cross Workshop. It is a means of acting out our belief that Jesus carried our pain on the Cross. Very often this becomes a step of faith to really trust Jesus to carry the pain, and consequently, it helps the healing process to begin. It is also an opportunity for people to listen to the hearts and suffering of others, so that compassion can flow between people who were previously regarded as "enemies". Finally, it can bring new hope that God can bring something beautiful out of all that we have suffered. The relief and new freedom experienced through it has been amazing. It has enabled many to be able to forgive the offender for the first time. Although the main focus is on Jesus as pain bearer, many have found forgiveness for their sins for the first time, as they had not previously understood that Jesus was their sin bearer. It becomes a means of their salvation. Many have also experienced physical healing as they poured all their burdens into the heart of God. – *Healing hearts, Transforming nations. Rhiannon Lloyd.*

Keys to healing:

- Sharing our painful experiences and being compassionately listened to by the group that caused our pain is a great source of healing.
- Transferring our pain to Jesus is the most important part of the Cross Workshop experience and symbolic acts can help our healing.
- Seeing how God can bring good out of suffering gives hope for the future.

Practical steps.

1. Place the cross flat on the ground in an open area where people can freely walk or kneel. Place the hammer and nails on the ground next to the cross.
2. Firstly, consider whether you want to do it on your own, with your family, or with one or two close friends.
3. We would recommend that you deal with your own pain first, before seeking to help anyone else. First, ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind everything He wants to touch at this point. Under His guidance, write down on a piece of paper any pain or wound that is in your heart, or any way that the Thief has robbed you personally. Writing down the headings will suffice – you don't have to write down the whole story.
4. If you are doing this alone, tell Jesus all about it and don't restrain any emotions that may surface. If with others, take time first to share with one another and briefly pray for each other.
5. Having poured out your pain into God's heart, bring your piece of paper and nail it to the cross. Also bring the pain of your group to the cross. Carry the cross outside and remove and burn the papers. Take time to thank God for His sacrifice for you.
6. Finally, ask God what He would like to give you in exchange for your pain. Then take some time to record any good things God has been doing either in the midst of the suffering or in spite of it and praise Him for His victory in it all. You may wish to place a flower in the ashes as a symbol of your hope that God can redeem all you wrote there and bring something beautiful out of it.
7. Seal everything that God did for you during the 50 days with a corporate prayer of thanksgiving.

READ THESE SCRIPTURES TOGETHER AS AN OFFERING TO GOD

"And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (Rev 5:9-10, NKJV)

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev 7:9-10, NKJV)

Pray John 17 together with faith that our heavenly Father is eager to fulfil it in our generation.

ONE HEART PRAYER GUIDE IS A SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE, ENDORSED BY:**WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY:**

Elizabeth Jordaan and  24-7 PRAYER SOUTH AFRICA

BACKGROUND

This 50 Days of Prayer for Reconciliation was birthed from the Genadendal Pilgrimage of Grace (Herewith the link to the [video](#)), which in turn was born from ordinary women praying weekly over the last 25 years for the fulfilment of the unity Jesus Christ prayed for in John 17, for His disciples and those who would come after them – us, His Church– to be One in Him. This prayer has not yet been answered and the hope is to mobilise many believers in South Africa and even throughout the world to pray, believe and work actively and intentionally to see this important prayer that Jesus prayed, answered in our day and age.

Reconcile SA is a South African Christian Leadership (SACLI) initiative, helping South Africans to journey from Racism to Reconciliation. Since 2016, SACLI Reconcile have created platforms and started different initiatives to move this process forward. Reconcile SA facilitated and organised the Pilgrimage of Grace with the help of the Moravian and Dutch Reformed Churches of South Africa and In Harmonie NPC. The Genadendal Pilgrimage of Grace took place in September 2022 in the Western Cape, South Africa. This Pilgrimage brought together the leaders of the Moravian and the Dutch Reformed congregations of South Africa. The purpose of this pilgrimage was Repentance, Reconciliation, Restoration and Prayer. Deep repentance from the Dutch Reformed (the oldest congregation in South Africa) to the Moravian church (the second oldest congregation in South Africa) took place. This group of pilgrims still journey together and meet at least once a year in person to build relationships and get to know one another. To truly and intentionally grow into the unity that Jesus prayed for.

Three other significant SACLI Reconcile initiatives were the following:

- In June 2016, 40 years after the Soweto riots, in which many young black South Africans died while protesting, the white Afrikaans-speaking Churches offered a public apology for the injustice of forcing black schoolchildren to be educated in Afrikaans. This day of Repentance took place at the Orlando Stadium in Soweto. 10 leaders from the World Council of Churches and almost all denominational leaders of the South African Church were present at this historic meeting, giving the event a significance for churches around the world.
- On 24 November 2017, black and white Christian leaders and intercessors prayed in the parliament of South Africa. The focus was to repent for the sins of Apartheid, the 1913 land act and all the unjust laws, practices, killings, racism, and humiliation it caused. (Herewith a link to the [Prayers prayed in parliament](#)).
- Prayer births Prayer and at the Pilgrimage of Grace in 2022, 54 Days of Prayer for the healing of the continent of Africa was launched. There are 54 countries in Africa and every day there was prayer for a specific country. People were so blessed praying for Africa that in 2023 it was decided to relaunch the Prayer for Africa– this time for 54 weeks, again praying for the Healing of Africa. The 54 weeks of Prayer just finished on the 5th of June 2024.



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