

40 Days of Prayer for
Church Renewal

DAY 1: Avoid the Tragedy of Unbelief

Read Matthew 13:53-58

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

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

Unbelief shuts the door on the transformational power of Jesus. Faith opens the floodgates to that same transformational power. In contrast to this passage of Scripture are countless others where Jesus worked miracles when faith was evident in the lives of people. (Read Matthew 9:1-8; 9:18-26; 15:21-28; Mark 10:46-52)

When Jesus looks at your life, what does he find? An attitude of faith? Or an attitude of unbelief? Do you believe Jesus can do a work of renewal and revitalization in your church? Do you believe he will? Do you believe that to the extent you are praying for Jesus to bring renewal to your church?

Prayer: Read Matthew 9:24. If your unbelief is a roadblock to Jesus working in your church, confess the sin of unbelief. Ask God to strengthen your faith in him.

Day 2: Remember God's Power

Read Jeremiah 32:17-44

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

Sometimes we forget how powerful God is. We forget the great things that he has done in the past. We often allow the immensity of our own problems and challenges to overshadow the greatness of our God. Our view of God becomes anemic.

In order to build a case for the greatness and power of God, Jeremiah reminds us of what God has done in the past. He reminds us that God “made the heavens and the earth.” What a display of power! God spoke, and the world came into existence. No one but God could do that. Creation itself is a testimony to all-powerful nature of God.

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

Have you forgotten the immensity of God's power? Today, recall the many great things that God has done as recorded in Scripture. Remember the great things he has done in your life personally. Remember the great things he has done in your church.

Prayer: Ask God to do a work of revitalization in your church that is so astounding only he can receive credit for it.

Day 3: Confess Pride and Embrace Humility

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...” 1 Peter 5:5-6

Pride is a subtle sin that leads to destruction. A haughty spirit precedes a great fall. In pride, Peter confidently declared that he was ready and willing to die with Christ. How far Peter fell when later he denied three times that he even knew Christ!

Pride is quick to see the shortcomings of others, yet pride blinds us to our own sin. Such pride wrecks havoc in the church, leading to back-biting and broken relationships. Indeed, almighty God resists us when we harbor pride in our own heart and behave gracelessly toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. Church revitalization will never take place where pride reigns.

Conversely, humility recognizes our smallness before God. Humility considers the needs of others more important than our own needs. Humility serves others. Humility makes us useful instruments in the hands of our Redeemer. Humility is a pre-condition to God doing a work of revitalization in our church.

Prayer: Pray that God would reveal to you the pockets of pride concealed in your own heart. Repent. Plead that God might grant you the spirit of humility and thus make you useful in the work of church renewal.

Day 4: Purify Your Heart

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

“Strive for...the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14

Purity of heart—in a word, *holiness*—occurs when we reject sin and embrace that which is pleasing to God. Purity of heart, or holiness, is better than mere morality because it goes beyond the law of God and embraces the motive of the heart. A pure heart hates sin and loves the law of God. A pure heart sees beyond the law of God and sees the goodness of God behind the law. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Without purity of heart—without holiness—our testimony becomes sullied and weakened by the presence of sin. Snow is blindingly pure when fresh-fallen, but driven over by vehicles it becomes mixed with filth and loses its luster. Just so, sin robs our witness of its purity and power.

The 19th century pastor Charles H. Spurgeon recognized the power of holiness when he declared:

“In proportion as a church is holy, in that proportion will its testimony for Christ be powerful.”

Prayer: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. (Psalm 51:2, 10, 13)

Day 5: Search Me, O God

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” Psalm 139:23-24

Our hearts are deceptive to the point that we cannot fully know our hearts; hence we should never trust our hearts. We harbor sin in our hearts often without even realizing we are doing so. Yet God is omniscient, knowing all things, and he knows every motion of our hearts, even our thoughts before we think them!

Confession and repentance of sin are part and parcel of the Christian life. Christian integrity demands that we know our sins and that we repent before God. Integrity cries out for the all-searching light of God to penetrate the dark recesses of our hearts and expose our hidden sin. Such exposure leads to repentance; and repentance leads to blessing.

Just as God withheld blessing from Israel because of the hidden sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1-26), so God withholds the blessings of revitalization and revival when we harbor hidden sin in our hearts. Will you submit to God’s all-searching eye and deal with your sin so that his blessings on this church may flow unhindered?

Prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me. Cleanse me from every sin and set me free. Fill me with fire where once I burned with shame. Grant my desire to magnify your name.

Day 6: Jesus Must Increase

Read John 3:22-30

“...this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:29b-30.

If we are to experience revitalization and renewal, we must decrease and Jesus must increase. Too often in the church, individuals seek to garner position and prestige. They seek to exert their will and opinion in the work and ministry of the church. When this happens, the church becomes personality-driven instead of Christ-driven.

Christ loved the church and shed his own blood to redeem her. He humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death on a cross; therefore, God has highly exalted him, and has given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord (see Philippians 2:5-11).

The church that experiences revitalization will be the church where individuals are small and Jesus is large. Are you willing to decrease so that Jesus might increase? Are you willing to lay aside your vision for the church so that Jesus' vision for the church might be magnified?

<p>Prayer: Pray for the humility and grace to be made little of so that Jesus may be made much of.</p>

Day 7: The Soil of Brokenness

“...break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”

Hosea 10:12

Left unplowed, rich soil (fallow ground) becomes hardened and overgrown with weeds and thorns. Should the farmer attempt to sow seeds on such ground, he would reap very little in the way of crops. The ground must be thoroughly broken up through plowing before seeds can flourish and yield a harvest.

Churches in need of revitalization are often like unplowed, unbroken, fallow ground. The weeds and thorns have overgrown the hearts of her congregants. Before such a church can expect to see a harvest of souls, she must experience the brokenness of repentance for her years of disobedience and lethargy. Only soil thus broken can yield a harvest.

Do you long for an outpouring of God’s presence upon this church? Are you ready to be broken by God for the glory of God? Are you willing to do the hard work of repentance? Are you ready to seek the face of God with all your heart that we might experience the refreshing rains of spiritual revitalization?

Prayer: Father, show us those things in which we have failed to honor and obey you as a church. Grant that we might experience the brokenness of repentance. Be pleased, O Father, to then pour upon us the refreshing rains of renewal and revitalization.

Day 8: Ask, Seek, and Knock

Read Matthew 7:7-12

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened,” Matthew 7:7-8

Commenting on this verse, the great Reformation theologian John Calvin (1509-1564) said, “Nothing is better adapted to excite us to prayer than a full conviction that we shall be heard.” Not only do we expect God to hear us when we pray, but Jesus affirms the sure effectiveness of prayer by implying that God always answers.

The answers may not be what we want, but God designed prayer to conform us to his will, not him to our will. The text goes on to state that God gives good things to his children, but this is contingent upon our asking. We must persistently ask, revealing our dependence upon God. We must persistently seek, knowing that the answer is within God. We must persistently knock, admitting that God must be the one to open doors.

We need God to revitalize our churches, but are we asking him to do so? Are we seeking for the answers within God? Are we knocking so that he might be the one who opens the door and receives the glory for his strength and graciousness?

Prayer: Fervently continue to pray for revitalization in our church. Ask the Lord to do a great and mighty work among his people knowing your prayers will be effective because God promises to answer his children.

Day 9: Turn from futility to the God who acts for his name.

“Samuel said to the people, ‘Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things, which cannot profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself,’” 1 Samuel 12:20-22

God, since the beginning of time, has demonstrated his goodness to all of creation, but specifically to his covenant people. Similarly, a husband may be good to all women, but reserve a special love for his bride, the one he joined himself to in a covenant relationship.

It is the Lord’s good pleasure to make a people for himself and continually demonstrate his faithfulness and loving-kindness to them. Those who have been born again by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit are God’s people. He will not abandon them! Why? Because God’s chief concern is the glory and praise of his great name!

This provides God’s people with immeasurable confidence and boldness. God is pleased to act for his people because of his great name. No greater name or motivation for God to act exists. God will act in and through his people, not for their sake, but for his name.

We must not turn to idols or programs that will not deliver us and are worthless time wasters. We must turn to the true and living God. In him, profit and deliverance are found.

Prayer: Ask God to work on behalf of his people for his name. Boldly approach the throne of grace with full confidence and assurance that God will make his name great in and through his people. Pray, as Samuel did, that God’s people would serve him with utmost dedication. Ask God to forgive you for turning aside to things that cannot profit or deliver you because they are idols.

Day 10: Walk in the Spirit

Read Galatians 5:16-26

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

In our text for today, Paul contrasts the fruit of the Holy Spirit with the deeds of the flesh. The deeds of the flesh are our own doing. The fruit of our sinful actions stem from our wicked desires. But we cannot claim the good fruit in this passage as evidence of our own work of transformation. Rather, the Spirit produces this fruit as evidence of his indwelling and transformative work in our life.

Does this mean we have nothing to do with the production of this fruit? Yes and no. No because the Spirit produces his fruit in his people. Yes, because Paul commands his readers to “walk by the Spirit.” This means we avail ourselves to the grace God gives us that his Spirit may produce fruit. What does this look like? Read Scripture. Pray. Do not forsake the fellowship of the saints. Fast. Partake of the Lord’s Supper. Commit to a life of holiness unto the Lord. Obey the commands of Scripture. When we do these things, the Spirit produces his fruit through these means.

Revitalization cannot take place in our church if it does not begin with us. We cannot expect the Spirit to be working and moving among God’s people if we resist his work in our own lives.

Prayer: Ask God to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. Confess your sin of not walking by the Spirit. Pray that you, and the other members of our church, would commit themselves to the means through which the Holy Spirit works to produce his fruit, and yield to him.

Day 11: Forfeit my agenda

Read Luke 22:39-46

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done,” Luke 22:42

This text of Scripture ought to challenge us on three levels. First, Jesus humbled himself to the point of death in order to fulfill his Father’s will, setting an example for us to follow. Those who follow Jesus into death, taking up their cross and following him, will see life. This life occurs in the life of the believer but then ought to spill over into evangelism so that others experience this life.

Second, if the Son of Man prayed to his Father and needed to be strengthened, how much more ought we to do the same? Jesus models persistent petitioning of his father in order to fulfill his father’s will. God, by his grace, strengthened Jesus in his humanity by sending angels. Have you ever prayed to a point of exhaustion, requiring God’s strength? Don’t give up praying when you are tired, keep praying and rely on God to provide the necessary strength.

Finally, Jesus taught that prayer prevents us from entering into temptation. Unfortunately, the disciples did not pray as persistently as our Savior did, and they fell into temptation. We don’t know what temptations are before our church, which is why we need to pray. God uses prayer to prepare us for temptation that could threaten the revitalization of our church.

<p>Prayer: Confess your lack of prayerful persistence to God. Set aside a time of intense prayer today and consider fasting. Beseech the Lord to unite his church under his will, living in full submission to what he has revealed in his word.</p>

Day 12: Be controlled by the Spirit

“For those who live according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit about the things of the Spirit,” Romans 8:5

Paul presents two different realities to live by: the flesh or the Spirit. The flesh produces destruction, setting its desires and affections on ungodly pursuits. Apart from God’s Spirit, this is the natural inclination of the human heart. But thanks be to God for his supernatural and gracious work of bestowing his Spirit upon those who are his. He constantly upholds those who are his own by his Spirit.

We must intentionally set our minds on the things of the Spirit if we are going to ask God to lead his church by his Spirit. This won’t magically or simply just happen from one Sunday to the next. It requires us to maintain the unity the Spirit provides while using the gifts he has given in order to grow into a mature man whose fullness is Christ. This happens through the conscious effort of our church to love one another as Christ has loved us. Fulfilling this new commandment through the Spirit God has poured into our hearts will bear the fruit of the Spirit, promoting holiness, Christlikeness, and purity.

<p>Prayer: Confess to God the times or areas of your life which you have refused to set your mind on the things of the Spirit. Ask God to reveal these areas to you in order that you might intentionally pursue Christlikeness by the Spirit who resides within you. Pray that God’s Spirit would guide our church into maturity and vitality.</p>
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Day 13: Forgive one another

Read Ephesians 4:25-32

“And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ,” Ephesians 4:32

Christians are a forgiven and forgiving people. We are *forgiven* because of Christ’s atoning work and imputed righteousness received by faith. We are *forgivers* because God humbled us by his unmerited favor, restraining his wrath toward us and pouring it on his Son, our Savior, instead. This blessed reality constrains and compels us to forgive those who have sinned against us, because if God has forgiven us how much more should we forgive others.

Sometimes, the hardest people to forgive are those closest to you. You know their flaws, see their faults, and wonder how they can sin against you and others time after time. Further, it is hardest to ask for forgiveness from those closest to you. This requires you to humble yourself and admit your unrighteous deeds before another human being.

Tragically, this remains true in the church. We often don’t want to offer or ask for forgiveness from each other. Because of this, sin is never addressed, and reconciliation never takes place. Many churches split and/or die because they refuse to do for others what Christ did for them. What a freeing place the church would be if we all sought forgiveness and offered it freely to one another.

<p>Prayer: Pray that God would humble us under his mighty hand. Pray he would cause us to remember how great a price was paid for our forgiveness. Ask the Lord to make us a church who regularly confesses our sins to God and each other. Further, may we offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us without hesitation.</p>

Day 14: Raise up new leaders

“You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also,” 2 Timothy 2:1–2.

The church ought to be a reproducing organism. Paul desires to see his own discipleship efforts expand to four different generations of disciples: 1.) Paul 2.) Timothy 3.) Faithful men 4.) Other’s also. The church’s life depends upon discipleship efforts from within the local church.

I recently spoke with a member from a local church that described a unique phenomenon at his church. They came under conviction of failure to intentionally disciple one another. The entire congregation approached the pulpit, laid hands on one another, and cried out to God for forgiveness. Recognizing and confessing sin is step 1, participation is step 2. We must be about the business of being disciplined and discipling others, and this must take place within our local church context.

Who are you currently following? We are all being disciplined by someone whether we recognize it or not, for better or for worse. Who are you currently discipling? Again, whether we realize it or not, we are setting an example for someone. Every decision we make as a believer is a decision to actively engage or disengage from healthy discipleship relationships. Your role at church is never neutral. We are either passing down our faith to the next generation, or failing to do so.

<p>Prayer: Ask God to point you to mature Christians who can help you in your walk with Christ. Ask God to prepare you and give you the strength to disciple others who are younger in the faith. Pray that God would raise up leaders from within our church.</p>

Day 15: Love That Testifies

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Although the command to love our neighbor is ancient (see Lev. 19:18), Christ’s commandment here is “new” in a unique way. As the redeemed of the Lord, we are created anew in Christ our elder Brother, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, adopted as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father, and are part of the family of God. Indeed, as the newly-formed people of God in Christ, we will live together eternally.

We who are thus redeemed should love one another in a manner worthy of our Redeemer. Christ here says we are to love one another “just as I have loved you.” Jesus loves us unconditionally and self-sacrificially. So we, as the family of God, ought to love one another unconditionally and self-sacrificially.

When we love one another thus in the church, offenses, disagreements, and divisions are overcome because our love is unconditional. We love and forgive Christ has loved and forgiven us.

Such love testifies to the entire church *and the watching world* that we are truly disciples of Lord Jesus. Such love kindles the fire of genuine church revitalization.

Prayer: Do you find it difficult to love some brother or sister in the church? Is there someone you need to forgive and be reconciled with? Pray that God would remind you of His love and forgiveness for you in Christ. Pray that God would teach you to love and forgive as you have been loved and forgiven.

Day 16: Be a Peacemaker

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

Our world and nation are embroiled in trenchant strife and conflict. When conflict erupts, hatred boils over, sides are drawn, and people are divided. When conflict prevails, trust is broken, relationships are shattered, and peace vanishes.

Sadly, in many churches today, we see just such conflict—people choosing sides, embracing hatred, and promoting division over issues that have more to do with personal preferences than with biblical truth. When this happens, the witness of the church is damaged and the church is robbed of its gospel vitality.

Jesus calls us to be peacemakers—to be those who actively work to bring about peace, to pursue peace with all persons. Peacemakers work to restore wholeness in their relationships with others. Peacemakers work to bring opposing factions in a conflict together so that reconciliation can take place.

God in Christ has blessedly worked to bring about reconciliation and peace between himself and us who were his enemies. When we work to bring about reconciliation and peace between conflicted parties, we reflect the image of God—and God is pleased to call us his sons and daughters.

A conflicted church cannot experience spiritual renewal and revitalization. Will you commit yourself to the work of being a peacemaker for the sake of revival in your church and community?

<p>Prayer: Ask God to give you the spirit of a peacemaker. Pray for wisdom to see ways God will use you to facilitate reconciliation and peace in your church for the sake of revival.</p>

Day 17: Be a Servant

Read Mark 10:42-45

*“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,
and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all”
(Mark 10:43-44).*

Most churches have them. You know them. They like positions of authority. They like to make decisions for the church. They like to talk and be heard. They like to tell people what they should do. They like to rule. They see themselves as the Great Ones.

Then there are the quiet ones. They don't say much, but they are faithful. They do the “menial” tasks. They work. If something needs doing, they do it. They always think of others. They use their hands to bless others. They serve others. *These are the the ones whom Jesus says are great and first in the Kingdom of God.*

You see, no servant is above his master. If our Master, Jesus, came not to be served but to serve, then we must assume the role of a servant. Not grudgingly, but gladly, for our Savior served with joy. And it is indeed a joy to be a servant of the Most High God!

Church revitalization requires the participation of those who have a servant's heart. Are you willing to lay down your life to serve others for the sake of the gospel?

<p>Prayer: Ask God to give you a servant's heart. Ask him to show you ways you can serve your fellow church members. Ask him to show you ways you can serve the lost in your community. Ask God to use you as the ministering hands and feet of the church.</p>
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Day 18: Brokenness, Confession, and Vision

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11

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

Nehemiah, upon hearing of the shame and decline of the returned exiles, was broken in heart. His brokenness led to confession of sin. His confession of sin led to an appeal to God’s mercy and might. His appeal to God’s mercy and might led to God’s vision for his people. And this vision for the people of God led to revival, reform, and revitalization.

Are you broken over shameful, spiritual decline in your church? Broken to the point of weeping, mourning, fasting and praying? Are you ready to confess your sins and the sins of your church before a merciful and mighty God? Are you ready to appeal to God’s mercy and might on behalf of your church and your community? Are you ready to seek God’s vision for your church?

If not, revitalization is not forthcoming. If so, however, you may reasonably hope that God will do a remarkable work of revival, reform, and revitalization in your church.

Prayer: Ask God to break your heart over spiritual decline in your church. Confess your sins and the sins of your church before him. Appeal to God’s mercy and might in a manner similar to Nehemiah. Plead with God to give your church a vision of what he has called you to do. Beg God to do a work of revival, reform, and revitalization in your church.

Day 19: Be Salt

Read Matthew 5:13-16

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

Salt was often used in the ancient world to preserve meat against putrefaction. Most salt was mined from marshes, and therefore contained many impurities. When exposed to water, the salt became diluted and mixed with the impurities to the point of being useless. Such diluted salt was often thrown on roadways and trampled into the ground.

As followers of Lord Jesus, we have the ability to influence others away from moral putrefaction. When we live for Christ, we influence and encourage others to worship and glorify God (Matt 5:16). Conversely, when we live in unconfessed and unrepentant sin, our influence becomes diluted, and useless. To be “salt” is point others to Christ. To be “salt that has lost its saltiness” is to live in such a manner as to dilute our Christian influence.

Are you living in such a way that your life points others to Christ? Or are you living in sinful ways that dilute your testimony, making you useless in the work of leading others to Christ?

Prayer: Ask God to help you evaluate your saltiness. If you have sin in your life that is diluting your saltiness, confess it and seek God’s forgiveness. Plead with God to make you salt and light in this corrupt and sin-darkened world. Ask God to make you useful in the work of church revitalization.

Day 20: Available Power

Read Ephesians 1:16-20

“...that you may know...what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” (Ephesians 1:18-20)

Some think church renewal and revitalization is powered by the right set of programs, or the right combination of leadership, or the right location, or a great preacher. Such thinking is wrong-headed because it seeks to displace the glory of God in the renewal of his church.

The power God makes available to his church is immeasurably great power. It is the same power God displayed in raising Christ from the dead. It is resurrection power. It is the kind of power that God alone possesses. This power, Paul said, is working in and is available to those who believe.

Nothing is sufficient for the revitalization of the church except the power of the Spirit of God working through the Word of God in the people of God for the sake of the Son of God to the eternal glory of God.

And this power is available to those who seek God with an undivided heart.

Do you long to know the power of God working in your church? Do you yearn to have a heart enlightened to comprehend something of the immeasurable greatness of his power? Do you pray for God to display his power in your church in such a way that he alone receives the glory?

<p>Prayer: Pray that God would be pleased to make you and your church know the immeasurable greatness of his available power. And commit to God that you will give him the glory due his name when he does so.</p>

Day 21: Believe in the God Who Raises the Dead

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

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

Parched and bleached by the sun, the brittle bones scattered across the valley presented a vision that summoned two words to the prophet’s mind—death and discouragement. The only thing more discouraging than the vision itself was the fact that God’s own people were represented by these abandoned bones. They had died, and their revitalization required nothing less than the intervention of almighty God.

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

In the vision, God did what only he could do. As Ezekiel preached, the bones came together, were wrapped by muscle and skin, and those corpses were resuscitated. The dry bones lived! Likewise, Israel was revived and restored.

There is a lesson we need to learn. God delights himself in revitalizing that which seems to be dry and lifeless. Do you believe that what God can do for your church what he did in Ezekiel’s vision and for Israel?

<p>Prayer: Ask God to increase your faith in him as you continue to pray for revitalization in your church. Ask him to help you believe that by his power dry bones can live.</p>
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Day 22: Ask God to accomplish his will

Read Matthew 6:9-15

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

What requests do you bring before the throne of the Creator of the universe? Often times we bring many of our needs before him, as we should. Later in this text we are called to ask God for daily bread, that is, the repetitive request for God to provide the basics of life. But, do we ask God to do what he says he will do? God will build his kingdom; God will accomplish his will. So then, why do we ask for his kingdom to come and his will to be done?

We make these requests to humble ourselves before our King and align ourselves with his plans and purposes. We do not exist to build our kingdom, or accomplish our will. By daily asking the Lord to build his kingdom and accomplish his will we recognize that the universe exists for God, not for us. His plans are paramount, and our plans must align with his, for God’s kingdom will conquer all, and his will shall prevail.

But there is more. These particular petitions force the prayer warrior to recognize his or her utter inability to bring in God’s kingdom. Jesus did not tell his disciples to pray for the strength to build God’s kingdom. No! He told them to pray that God would build his kingdom and accomplish his will. As Leon Morris rightly comments, “The prayer looks for God to take action, not for worshipers to bring the kingdom into being.”

<p>Prayer: Humble yourself before God and ask him daily to bring in his kingdom and accomplish his will in your church and life. Ask the King to prevail in your neighborhood and community so that souls would be saved and the gates of hell would face their certain destruction as the kingdom of light spreads to the ends of the earth.</p>
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Day 23: Recognize you are a servant

Read Joshua 5:13-15

“Neither, He replied. ‘I have now come as commander of the Lord’s army.’ Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship and asked Him, ‘What does my Lord want to say to His servant?’” (Joshua 5:14)

How many errors would be avoided if all God’s children asked the question, “What does my Lord want to say to his servant?” Joshua’s posture, response, and disposition reveal a humble servant’s heart.

What is the mark of God’s servant? Can it involve stacking chairs? Cleaning up after potluck? Organizing events? Getting to church early to open up and prepare the rooms? Or closing up the church after a long day? Yes. A servant of the Lord can do all these things. But these actions, on their own, do not mark the Lord’s servant.

An unquenchable desire to know and fulfill God’s will marks the Lord’s servant. In the Lord’s presence, we should be quick to hear, slow to speak, and eager to obey. This posture requires a spirit that is easily broken by God’s word, trained to immediately listen to the voice of God.

As churches, we have one commander: the reigning King of kings and Lord of lords. We are either for him, or against him. He does not align himself with us; we align ourselves with him. In unison, may we seek what the Lord desires to say through his word to our church that we might obey.

<p>Prayer: Ask the Lord to reveal himself to our church through the preaching of his word that his servant—our church—may fulfill his commands.</p>
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Day 24: Humble ourselves

Read 2 Chronicles 7:12-14

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

We serve an amazing God who desires the same things from his people across all generations and lands. He desires those who humble themselves, pray and seek him, and turn from their evil ways.

As a church, we must humble ourselves under the authority of the word of God. What it says, we do. We do not stand over the word as judge, or beside it as equals, but underneath it as willing servants. We must obey it submissively with great joy.

As a church, we must pray and seek God’s face. We can talk with each other, and form committees and leadership teams, but if we do not seek God’s face, we cannot expect God to work in our congregation.

As a church, we must turn from our evil ways. We cannot expect God to bring revitalization to our church if we are unwilling to live lives of holy conduct. God will not spread his glory through our sinful lives; rather, he will unleash righteous judgment against our sin, be it through discipline or destruction.

What we have before us in this text is a recipe for faithfulness. May we follow the timeless principles that inform us of what God desires.

<p>Prayer: Pray for the preaching of the word on Sunday. May God humble our congregation through the preaching, showing us how we ought to pray, and compelling us to live as holy people owned by God.</p>
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Day 25: Return to your love, or have your lamp removed

Read Revelation 2:1-7

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

Lord may these words never be said of us!

We have all seen those couples that have lost their love for one another. What was once a flame barely flickers any more. But this does not simply happen to married couples, it happens to churches as well. A church that loses its love is as useless as the lone lightless lamppost on a dark street; it might as well not even be there.

Churches can lose their love for God, love for each other, and love for reaching the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In short, they fail to live with an undying love for God and man. Remember the burning passion you had at conversion? You couldn't read enough Scripture, spend enough time in prayer, or share the gospel with enough people. Coming to church on Sunday morning was the highlight of your week. Over time, these joyful expressions of new life can fade with the pressures of the daily grind. What can we do to overcome apathy and lethargy?

Remember where you/we have fallen, repent, and repeat the deeds we performed at conversion. Recommit yourself to scripture reading, prayer, evangelism, and worship gatherings. If we forsake our first love, the One who walks among the lampstands will find us useless, and remove us.

Prayer: Beg the Lord to reignite love for God, each other, and our community. Pray that God would never look at our church and say, “I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first.” Our Lord Jesus, may it never be!

Day 26: Seek God first

Read Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Churches have many needs. Some churches need new carpets, pews or chairs, windows, leadership, pastors, deacons, or even a new influx of people. Sadly, the burdens of the day to day wear us down and become our primary focus. We can begin our business meetings with what we perceive to be our most urgent needs without recognizing what God calls us to seek first: his kingdom and righteousness.

Jesus calls his followers to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness *first*. The concept of “first” does not pertain to chronological order, but to preeminence. What is the difference? It is the difference between seeking something first, then moving on to the next task, and making God’s kingdom and his righteousness the driving force that shapes and orders every single concern that we have.

When we properly order our life and center it on the kingdom of God and the righteousness that comes from him, we become less worried about our mental lists and become more focused on what really matters.

What is our church anxious about? Finances? Leadership? Upcoming decisions? An outreach event? Let us seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and allow God to provide for our needs.

<p>Prayer: Ask the Lord to change our motivations, release us from our anxious thoughts, and detach us from the needs of the world that hold us captive. As a church, may we seek the expanse of God’s kingdom above and over all other things. Pray that God would prevent us from being bogged down in ministerial details.</p>
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Day 27: Consider what others think

Read Romans 15:1-3

“Each one of us must please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.” (Romans 15:2)

Christianity cannot be exercised in isolation from one another. Jesus told his disciples that the world would know that they were his disciples by their love for one another (John 13:35). A practical way to live this out in community is to please our neighbor by building them up.

In other words, fellow Christians should live their life in such a way that they constantly edify one another, motivating and pushing each other in Christ likeness. Paul encourages his audience to live selflessly, helping one another in our weaknesses.

What example does he point to? Jesus Christ. The eternal word made flesh lived a life we could not live and died the death we should have died for the purpose of our edification.

While together and apart, we should consider how we might build one another up. We can edify one another through prayer, engaging in meaningful conversations that reflect the care and concern we have for one another, meeting each other’s physical and spiritual needs, using our speech to bless each other, making a joyful noise to the Lord through song, coming to church prepared to worship, gently correcting each other as well as humbly receiving correction, and various other ways.

<p>Prayer: Ask God to reveal different ways we can build up the members at our church. Confess the sin of selfishness. Ask God to grant us the strength to imitate Jesus who lived for our edification.</p>
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Day 28: Pursue blessed harmony

Read Psalm 133:1-3

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony.” (Psalm 133:1)

There are not many things more discouraging, or distasteful, than a heated church business meeting over a trivial issue. At the moment, when tensions are high and voices are raised, no issue seems trivial. Later on, however, when relationships have been severed and people have left the church over an issue regarding taste and not substance those meetings do leave an unpleasant feeling for the people involved.

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

As we move into revitalization, what ways are we seeking to promote unity in our church? And is there anyone in our church family with whom we need to seek Christian reconciliation?

<p>Prayer: Ask God to help you be a person of peace in your congregation. Consider praying that God would give you a peace-making spirit to aid our church as it moves forward to revitalization.</p>
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Day 29: Love Your Leaders, Don't Idolize Them

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

For when one says "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? 1 Corinthians 3:4

Paul warns here against division in the church resulting from vesting too much confidence in various leaders. This often occurs when members prefer the leadership style of prior leaders, which seems to be the case with the Corinthian church. Most pastors are all too familiar with the statement, "Brother so-and-so didn't do it that way!" Such divisions easily lead to jealousy and strife within the membership (vs 3), weakening the ability of the church to minister the gospel effectively.

While we should love, honor, and submit to leaders who by God's grace shepherd the church well (Heb 13:17), we must remember that such leaders are only servants in God's harvest field (vs 9). They plant, they water and they minister faithfully, but God alone blesses the church with fruitful increase (vs 7). Because Christ has graciously placed differing gifts in the church (Eph 4:11), leaders often have differing leadership gifts. And Lord Jesus knows exactly what leadership gifts your church needs for this season of your life together.

Love your leaders. Pray earnestly for your leaders. Encourage your leaders. Follow faithfully your leaders' godly examples. But don't place them on a pedestal and divisively compare them to one another. And don't credit them with results only God can produce.

Prayer: Commit to praying regularly for your leaders. Pray that God will guard their lives against the assaults of Satan. Pray for their families. Pray for their ministry. Pray earnestly that God would anoint their preaching and ministry of the Word. Pray that God would guard your heart against putting a leader in your church on a pedestal. Remember, they are only servants of the sovereign King of Heaven.

Day 30: Be Faithful, and Be an Encourager

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

Living a faithful Christian life is not easy. In fact, God tells us in his Word that all who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer (2 Tim 3:12). This is the case precisely because we are merely strangers and sojourners here on earth—we are citizens of heaven!

God, however, has graciously given us the gift of the church—the fellowship of believers—to compensate for the difficulties we face in living for Christ. In the midst of the storms of life we have a safe harbor where we can rest and be encouraged. And that harbor is the gathered church.

Notice the exhortation in our text: “Do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some.” Faithfulness to the appointed meeting times of the church is essential. Failure to be faithful in this discipline is to neglect the gracious gift God has given us. It is also to disobey the clear commandment of Scripture. And neglect of this gift makes living for Christ impossible. There are no “Lone Ranger” Christians. Ever.

When we gather as a church, we do so to worship God and “stir up one another to love and good works.” In a word, we encourage one another to love God and neighbor, to sit at the table of God’s Word, to proclaim the gospel to those who are lost, to let our lights shine before men, and to make disciples who make disciples. We encourage one another to endure suffering for the sake and glory of our Lord, and so bear one another’s burdens.

Are you faithful to attending the appointed gathering times of your church? Do you avail yourself of the blood-bought, encouraging gift of the gathered church? Do you encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ and stir them up to love and good works?

<p>Prayer: Pray that God will help you be faithful to the appointed meetings of your church. Pray that you will become an encouraged encourager who stirs up others to love and good works.</p>
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Day 31: Discover and Do Your Part

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

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

Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God gives spiritual gifts to each individual member of the church. When each member exercises the gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit, the entire church experiences strengthening and growth. The cumulative effect of each person exercising their spiritual gifts is a maturation of the church in knowledge, faith, and ministry (cf. Eph 4:11-13, 15-16).

An individual who has the gift of teaching teaches others, and those taught mature in knowledge and faith and begin to teach others. One member gifted for works of service serve others and thereby strengthens and encourages each member for the work of service. An individual gifted in serving inspires other to be more faithful in serving. One member gifted in prayer encourages others to pray more effectually and fervently, and so on.

Church revitalization begins when more and more members of the body discover their areas of giftedness by the Spirit and then exercise faithfulness in that area. And make no mistake, *every* member of the church possesses gifts from the Holy Spirit—for the common good of the entire church.

In what areas of ministry has the Holy Spirit gifted you? Are you faithfully exercising those gifts for the good, growth, and maturity of the church? Are you doing your part so that the body of Christ can function efficiently and effectively?

<p>Prayer: Ask God to help you examine yourself and discover those areas the Holy Spirit has gifted you for the work of the church. Pray for faithfulness in the exercise of your spiritual gifts. Then thank God for the spiritual gifts you observe in your brothers and sisters in Christ.</p>
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Day 32: Strive to Excel in the Building Up of the Church

Read 1 Corinthians 14:6-12.

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:12.

Some in the church at Corinth wanted certain spiritual gifts so that they could call attention to themselves. Rather than seeking to exalt Christ through the building up of the church, they strove to exalt themselves. As a result, jealousy and discord abounded in the church at Corinth.

Paul's objective in writing this first letter to Corinth was to correct the disunity within the body of believers and thereby empower their witness. Rather than seeking what they viewed as the more spiritual of the gifts of the Spirit for self promotion, Paul urges them to desire spiritual gifts for the sake of building up the church. Indeed, Paul urged them to work hard to *excel* or *abound* in strengthening, maturing, and growing the church through their spiritual gifts.

Church revitalization accelerates when church members work hard to strengthen, mature, and grow the church. Excellent use of your spiritual gifts enhances and empowers the witness of the church. When you abound in the exercise of your spiritual gifts, the work of ministering the gospel in your community grows exponentially.

Are you working hard to excel in the exercise of your spiritual gifts?

Prayer: Ask God to make you eager to excel in the exercise of your spiritual gifts. Pray that your fellow church members might become eager to excel in the exercise of their spiritual gifts. Plead with God to mature and grow your church's ministry of the gospel through the excellent exercise of the spiritual gifts of every member of your church.

Day 33: Love So As to Exalt Christ

Read John 13:31-35.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
John 13:35

In the Upper Room discourse Jesus delivered final instructions to his disciples whom he would soon leave. He begins this final discourse by commanding his disciples to love one another as he has loved them. That love for one another is the first issue he addresses in this final discourse speaks to the importance of the command.

Love and unity in the church are critical to the work of revitalization. Jesus stated that all people would know we are his disciples by our manifest love for one another. Some of our churches are stagnate or in decline due to their lack of genuine love for one another, a lack which leads to disunity. Lost people in our communities rightly doubt they can be loved by a group of people who do not seem to love one another.

In *The Mark of the Christian*, Francis Schaffer states that the love of Christ in the lives of believers is what sets them apart from the world. He concludes that the world has a right to judge the authenticity of Christ's claims to be the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, by what they see in the lives of his followers. Is Jesus the one who can change lives? Are the lives of his followers different than those of the world? Do they truly love one another at all times?

Do you live love and unity with other believers so as to exalt Christ?

Prayer: Pray for God to fan the embers of fervent love for one another in you and your fellow church members. Pray that your love for one another might become a powerful testimony to Christ's saving, transforming power in your community.

Day 34: Is Your Church Healthy?

Read Acts 11:19-30.

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

The church at Antioch of Syria practiced healthy spiritual disciplines from their inception. Here are a few of the characteristics that marked the healthiness of the Christian church at Antioch:

- 1) They proclaimed the gospel to people not like themselves (vss 19- 20). Jews shared the gospel with Greeks.
- 2) They proclaimed the gospel despite the threat of persecution (vss 19-20).
- 3) The church at Antioch gladly received aid from the church at Jerusalem (vss 22-23)
- 4) They disciplined those who came to faith in Christ (vss 22-26)
- 5) The church at Antioch embraced the leadership of Barnabas and Saul (vss 22-26).
- 6) They practiced generous giving toward those in need (vss 27-30).
- 7) They saw significant numbers of people believe and turn to the Lord (vs 21).

Measured by these characteristics, is your church healthy or unhealthy?

Prayer: Ask God to revitalize your church. Ask him to restore the health of your church so that you look more like the church at Antioch. Commit yourself to the faithful practice of the disciplines evident in the Church at Antioch.

Day 35: See the Power of Agreement

Read Acts 6:1-7.

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

The seemingly legitimate complaint by the Hellenists that their widows were being neglected in the daily ministry threatened to divide the early church at Jerusalem. Indeed, many churches have split or even disintegrated over far less important issues. But notice three things that prevented the church from dividing.

First, the complaint was brought to the leaders of the church for their consideration. Secondly, the leadership offered a reasonable solution to the problem, even deferring to those Hellenists who raised the complaint. Thirdly, the church was pleased to agree with and ratify the counsel of their leaders. The result? Catastrophic division was averted.

And God blessed their agreement by greatly increasing and multiplying the number of their disciples.

Declining churches often embrace disagreement. Do you bring complaints to the leadership of your church rather than tattle, whisper, and backbite? Do you trust the leadership of the church to offer reasonable solutions to legitimate complaints? When your leadership offers such solutions, do you gladly agree with and ratify their counsel?

<p>Prayer: Pray that God will give you the spirit of agreement when complaints arise in your church. Trust God to gift your leaders with wise counsel on such matters. And commit yourself to embracing wise counsel that promotes agreement for the sake of the gospel.</p>

Day 36: How Are You Recognized?

Read Acts 4:1-13

“Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13

Clothing, language, accents, hairstyles, area codes, and sports teams say a lot about us. They reveal where and when we are from. Some features stick out more prominently than others do, but first impressions can be quickly gleaned from these and several other categories.

When an unbeliever or visitor comes into our church, can he or she tell where we are from? Is it evident that we are of the kingdom of God’s beloved son having been rescued from the kingdom of darkness? Does our language flow from our mouth as truth spoken in love and as grace seasoned with salt? Are psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs ever on our lips? Does our conduct and body posture during the preaching and reading of God’s word portray intentional hearing, knowing that God speaks in his word? Do we boldly proclaim the gospel? Do we obey the new commandment and love one another as Christ has loved us?

Opponents of the gospel message in the early church recognized those who had been with Jesus because their entire being underwent an extreme transformation by the Holy Spirit known as regeneration: new birth. Those who are alive are easy to distinguish from those who are dead, this is true physically and spiritually. Those who have been with Jesus are alive, proclaiming and living for him.

<p>Prayer: Pray that our church would reflect that we have been with Christ. Ask the Lord to make this evident to all who walk through the doors of our church.</p>
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Day 37: Obey His Marching Orders

Read Matthew 28:16-20

“Then Jesus came near and said to them, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’” Matthew 28:18-20

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

In the act of going, Jesus hasn’t called His people to merely record decisions. He has commanded that His people make disciples. A disciple is a learner and follower of Christ. Is the church you serve intentional about making disciples? What is your strategy for reaching all nations? Our Commander-in-Chief refuses to send His followers into the mission field alone. He promises to always be with us.

You and I have been called to attention and given an assignment that can change lives, marriages, families, churches, and nations. Let’s not disobey our Commander-in-Chief’s marching orders!

Prayer: Reflect on how you’ve responded to the Great Commission. Have you and your church treated Jesus’ command as optional or mandatory? May you allow the Lord to use you to impact the nations for His glory!

Day 38: Raise the Temperature

Read Revelation 3:14-22

“So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.” Revelation 3:16

The church of Laodicea had a nearby water supply that was undrinkable due to its temperature, which would cause people to become sick. The water supply would come from Hierapolis where it was a hot spring, making the water valuable for its medicinal effects. Colosse, another nearby city, had cool water, which would have been utilized for drinking. Laodicea, just like their water temperature, was between these two cities. To the people of the town, the water lacked the benefits that it offered Hierapolis and Colosse.

God uses this very real illustration to tell the church of Laodicea that their testimony, much like their water, makes him sick. He would prefer that they boil over for Christ or remain cold-hearted to the Gospel. Instead, they remain lukewarm: a sickness inducing state.

A lukewarm church consists of individuals who show up, but don't worship or outright verbally reject God. It fills the pews with dead souls while failing to realize they are in the presence of the living God.

There is a two-fold hope for a lukewarm church. First, Jesus offers the church what it needs: a fire tested and enduring faith (gold), the righteousness of Jesus Christ (white garments), and spiritual sight (eye-salve or ointment). Second, Jesus disciplines those whom he loves. He will not allow his children to escape discipline and instruction in righteousness.

Prayer: Pray for the church, and yourself. Ask that God would prevent us from being lukewarm. Ask the Father to have Jesus swiftly and persistently discipline us that we may not make him sick. Pray that God would cause our worship and lifestyles to burn white-hot for him so that he would not spit us out of his mouth.

Day 39: Strengthen What Remains

Read Revelation 3:1-6

“Be alert and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before My God.” Revelation 3:2

What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase, “That church is dead.”? An empty parking lot? Financial disarray? No activities? Ironically, this was not the church of Sardis. It had a reputation of being alive. The church appeared, from an outsider’s perspective, to be hopping with life. But this would not fool the one who holds the keys to Death and Hades. Although they appeared lively on the outside, he knew they were dead.

Why were they dead? Because they had those among them who soiled their garments, becoming unclean because of their immorality and sinful lifestyle. God sees those who walk with white garments, in other words, those who maintain holy lives, and will grant them permanent and perfectly white garments.

What should a dying church of mixed members do? Obey 5 simple commands. *Wake up!* Become aware of the dire situation brought upon the church because of immorality among those in the pews and on the roles lest Jesus come in like a thief and take your church away. *Strengthen* the people living for holiness and continue to foster healthy spiritual disciplines and worship practices. *Remember* the message of truth that is proclaimed in Scripture. *Keep* sound doctrine and right living. Finally, *Repent!* Ask the Lord to forgive the congregation of its immorality and provide the necessary strength to abandon its sins.

<p>Prayer: Pray that God would find our works complete because we have followed the five commands given to the church at Sardis. Ask God to grant us strength for holiness. Pray for those who have soiled their garments, ask the Lord to grant them faith leading to repentance.</p>

Day 40: Know Who Knows Your Church

Read Revelation 2:1-3:22

“I know...” Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15

Jesus Christ, the living one who was once dead but is alive knows your church. The one who holds the keys to Death and Hades knows your church. The First and the Last, the King of kings and Lord of lords, knows your church. Not only does he know every nook and cranny in the building, he also knows every square inch of our hearts. He knows our works—be they good or bad, our dwelling place, our tribulations and poverty. Jesus, the one who has a sharp two-edged sword coming from his mouth, knows our past, present, and future.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan tempts Eve and Adam’s voice is mysteriously absent. The text indicates that Eve and the Snake were present because you can read their conversation. However, if the text did not explicitly tell us Adam was present, we would have no idea where he was because he remains in silence. He failed his bride.

Jesus has not failed his bride. He is the perfect Head. He is the faithful covenant leader. His word to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, along with the entirety of Scripture, confirm that he has not left his bride without a voice, and he knows exactly where she is and what she needs.

As we close this prayer guide, know who knows you. We cannot fool Jesus. He is either pleased or displeased with our works, all of which are naked and exposed to him. At the end of the day, we will give an account to the one who walks among the churches based on our faithfulness and obedience to his voice.

<p>Prayer: Father in heaven, may our works be pleasing in the eyes of your Son, our bridegroom. Thank you for his righteousness. Exalt his name in our church and may we obey his voice with an unwavering commitment. Amen.</p>
