

40 Days Prayers & Meditation *2018*

INTIMACY

&

RESTORATION

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Day 1

All Beginnings Are New

"On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil.."
(Exodus 40: 2-3)

We begin the period of 40 days of prayer and meditation today. The Hebrew year of 5778 promises new beginnings for God's people. In a sense, all beginnings are new. They give us opportunities to venture into new things – a road we never traveled before, to have a fresh start, a second chance, or simply to do the "old" things in a new way.

The Lord's word to Israel, His chosen people "On the first day of the first month..", is to set up the place of worship, the tabernacle, the meeting place with God, etc... This is more than just a ritualistic requirement; this is putting in place the essentials to ensure success for the rest of the year. Worship, places the focus on the One whom we worship. Decide from the start of this year, in whom we will put our priority on, what it means in its practical outworking. Decide how we shall spend our time, money, energy, mind (yes, our thoughts), every resource that the Lord has granted us. Decide beforehand. Do not leave it to chance. Things will not fall into their places automatically.

Decide this year; to set apart carefully guarded time with the Lord. Be it a daily time slot, weekly worship – a time of meeting with the Lord, for prayers, reading His words, praising Him, or simply enjoying His presence. All these are essential to keep our focus right, on the Lord who is the source of all, and I reiterate, ALL that we need for life.

As the Lord has decreed to Israel, the center of the tabernacle, the basis of the privilege of meeting the God of the Universe, is in the Everlasting Covenant that God has established with them. For us, on a more superior Covenant established by the Blood of Jesus! Whatever He promises, it is yes and amen in Christ Jesus. It is worthy of our effort to set apart intimate time with the Lord, personally and corporately.

May the Lord, our God of Covenant, our Faithful Father, bless you in this coming year!

Prayer Focus

1. List down 3 things you want to see changed or happen in this year, which only God can do or perform. Then, list down 3 things which you want to see changed or happen this year which only you can do and perform. Commit them to the Lord, ask from the Lord His perspective and declare what the Lord's mind is on these matters in prayers.

Day 2

The Year of Restoration

*"Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys."
(Job 42: 12)*

When we speak of restoration, it always involves the recovery of what has been lost. When the Bible speaks of restoration, it almost inevitably involves God's amazing grace towards His people, His restoring to His people more than before!

The Bible tells us that the Lord restored to Job "double" of what he has lost and children who were more excellent than before. Job was described as *"a man who was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."* (Job 1:1). Though his faith and righteousness were not perfect, his heart towards God was undoubtedly honourable. The devil may have capitalized on his weakness, but God ultimately triumphed in his life!

No matter how the past was to us, we can count on God's gracious restoring heart towards us. If it was because the imperfection in our faith which occasioned any loss, defeat, failure or heartaches, be determined to remain *"blameless and upright, fear God and shun evil"*, and be certain that the Lord will restore to us more than what has been lost. As did God with Job, He will also mature and perfect our faith in the process.

Look to this year with great expectation, for the Lord will surely demonstrate His faithfulness to us! The Lord will bless our future more than the past, He will bless our latter days more than our beginning!

Wishing all of you a year filled with His *shalom*.

Prayer Focus

1. List down major areas in your life where you hope to see restoration.
2. Ask the Lord to reveal to you if there is any sin or fault on your part, or your forebears, which has occasioned the loss. Confess them before the Lord and seek His forgiveness.

Day 3

God's Restoration and Enlargement

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. (Joel 2: 26-27)

Shortly after the end of the service last Sunday, after sharing with the Church on God's supernatural restoration, I received a new year greeting on Whatsapp, quoting the verses in Joel 2:26-27. As the number of the sender was not registered in my phone, I thought it was from one of the visitors, perhaps in response to the sermon that morning. However, curiosity got the better of me and I enquired the identity of the sender later that evening. To my surprise it was from one of the Grab drivers we recently engaged during our trip to Penang!

These comforting and assuring words of God were to Israel at a time when they were faced with impending judgment from God due to their rebelliousness. The Prophet Joel brought a most marvelous message from the Lord revealing His most amazing grace. God's restoration always originates from His grace and mercy. His desire to bless His people is always because of His love and mercy for us.

Often, we want to glorify the Name of the Lord. The Lord in these verses, spoke twice that His people shall never be put to shame. He is very concerned about our name as well! He cares deeply that His people, those who has been called by His Name, those who belongs to Him, shall never live in shame brought about by sins and failure. His Restoration involves the restoring of our dignity and identity.

In this coming year, I believe that the Lord will bring specific restoration to us. What are the areas of your life which has been covered by "shame"? Be encouraged that the Lord wants to wash that shame away from us. His restoration always leads to supernatural Enlargement of our territory and increase as well. Look to Him this year, for His Restoration and Enlargement which is more than what we could think or imagine!

Prayer Focus

1. Give thanks to the Lord for extending His grace to you in the past. Thank the Lord for the many promises He is going to fulfil in your life this year. Entrust to Him all your concerns for this year.

Day 4

A Season With God In It

“And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. (Deuteronomy 11: 13-14)

We go through natural seasons of a year. As we are at the start of a new year, we look back to the calendar year that has passed and prepare for a new year ahead. In the new year, we hope for better times to come. We look to the Lord to bless us with a “happy new year”. A time for renewed hope.

Our God does not work according to man’s time table or calendar. God has His own seasons for His own work. No man can dictate to God what He should do and when and how He does it. God has given us seasons of a year, to enable us to know what He will do in the natural (sometimes in the spiritual as well!), so that we know what to expect. However, sometime things do not happen in their season. Sometimes we experience delay in receiving what God has promised. Sometimes we feel that we are somehow out of sync with God’s will and purpose.

While it is good to take stock of the past year and make resolutions for the coming year, it is more important that we receive from the Lord “in its season” His blessings, provisions and fruitfulness. It is of utmost important that we should determine, resolve “to love the Lord our God, and to serve Him with all our heart and with all our soul”. Then, our faithful God will surely cause His favour to come upon our lives and our household in His appointed seasons.

As we come to the beginning of this year, I want to wish you a season of restoration in 2018. That the Lord will restore the glory of His presence in your lives when His Light shines on you. I pray that you will enter into a new season of all things, with God right in the midst of it!

Prayer Focus

1. Thank the Lord for seeing us through in various seasons in our lives, in our family, our Church and our nation.
2. Thank the Lord in advance, the restoration and healing we are about to receive in the future.

Day 5

Time Has A Purpose

“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)

When we go to attend a meeting or a conference, we want to have a timetable to know the flow of events. It helps us to know what we can expect; how do we prepare for each of these events. The program is normally arranged in such a way that we can get the most out of the conference, for the purpose of the conference, as the organizer designs it to be. Doing things out of time with the timetable may prevent us from receiving the maximum benefits from the conference, it may even cause us to miss the point altogether.

When God created time, it is not merely a record of chronological events. The writer of Ecclesiastes repeated his observation that there are times and seasons for everything. Going against the purpose of the specific time and season, doing things and living life out of sync with the appointed time and season will prove to be futile and yield no fruits – toiling and striving yet receive little result. This tendency of living out of God's season and God's time has become a hallmark of human living after the Fall of Man. It has become one of the major goals of the devil, to lure and force man to live out of God's time. Because if he can make man live like that, he would have succeeded in leading man away from his God given destiny.

Yet, there will always be some sort of “holy dissatisfaction” in the heart of man. Something is missing. Because God has in-built a longing for eternal purpose and significance. That longing can only be fulfilled if man walks in God's time and season. Fruitfulness comes from obedience to God. Fruitfulness comes from hard work but not toiling and striving. Fruitfulness comes when we walk in God's appointed time and season, in step with His working and the working of His Holy Spirit.

Therefore, seek God's time, know His specific seasons for specific working. Choose to walk in them. Flee from the devil's time and his timetable, come out from it! Transit now into your restoration of destiny and fruitfulness!

Prayer Focus

1. Ask the Lord to reveal to you if you have been living out of sync with His time and season for your life. If yes, determine to make amends.

Day 6

God's Time

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1: 4-8)

God has His times and seasons for everything under heaven. He alone knows and chooses what to do in every time and season. Not that He is not able to be "multi-tasked", but He put in place specific happenings so that we as His people, may tap into His plan and purpose for every season.

The disciples were first told to wait in Jerusalem, not to go anywhere, but to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit has been poured out on them, Jesus said that they shall then be witnesses in Jerusalem and bring that testimony of God's power and salvation out from Jerusalem and beyond, until the end of the earth.

In season of waiting, they should not move. In season of moving, they should not stay. But they did stay on a bit longer in Jerusalem. Thus, persecution broke out, to move them on to the next season – the season of being witnesses "in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

We can only live in fruitfulness if we obey God's time and season for us. Where are you now in God's season? Where are you in terms of your seasons as a church? Have you received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His empowering? Are you to move out and step into God's season? Or, have you overstayed your season?

What say you?

Prayer Focus

1. Pray and ask the Lord to give you the courage and boldness to step out into the season that God has prepared for you in various areas of your life.
2. Pray for your church, your cell group, fellowship groups, etc, that the Lord will lead you forward this year into new beginnings.

Day 7

Only By Prayer And Fasting

He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:29)

The Disciples were faced with a difficult situation, one which is beyond their own resources and knowledge. They could not drive out a demon! They had no lack of faith. They have been witnessing the Power of God Jesus demonstrated. But they just could not do it. When Jesus came into the situation, the impossible (to the Disciples) became possible. Then, Jesus said, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting".

In our walk with the Lord, we may at times come face to face with a challenge that is beyond us. The experience we had of the Lord, our knowledge, resources, etc, just could not bring us to a breakthrough. If we continue to remain in that situation, we soon find ourselves subject to all kinds of destructive thoughts; unbelief begins to seep in, doubts about ourselves and about God, accusation comes, the flesh takes over. In that kind of situation, we cannot afford to stay put. We need to let Jesus take over.

Prayer demonstrates our dependence on God, fasting demonstrates our "desperation" for God. Prayer and fasting is to seek God's presence and intervention with earnest and singlemindedness. We surrender our perspective, in exchange for God's manifold wisdom. If we are on a wrong track, merely changing direction is not enough, we need to switch track. We need to switch from track of man's experience to track of God's supernatural working.

Are you in a situation where you find yourselves at the end of the rope? Do not lose heart. God has not forgotten you. He will not abandon you. Switch track now. Determine to seek Him with determination in prayer and fasting.

"This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

Prayer Focus

1. You may want to enter into (if you have not already started), a time of fasting and seeking the Lord. Spend this time of fasting emptying yourself of your own desires and pursuits. Ask the Lord to "download" His heart desire into your heart. Then, begin to pray for anything which the Lord has placed on your heart concerning His Kingdom.

Day 8

The Lord Shines Upon You

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord makes His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lifts up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” (Numbers 6: 24-26)

When we are faced with challenges in life, we are taught to turn our faces to the Lord for help. Turning our faces to the Lord signifies our looking to Him for solutions, comfort, help, deliverance and resources. Turning our faces to Him tells of our dependence on the Lord, that we are out of our own resource and wisdom – at our wit's end.

The Bible in Psalm 107, tells us that even though we have gotten ourselves into troubles because of our sins and rebellion, when we turn our faces to Him and cry out to Him, He saves us from all our distress. Not because we deserve it, nor is it a right we can claim, but simply because we are His children and we belong to Him.

In the Aaronic blessing we read today, the Lord does more than just rescuing us from our troubles and restoring to us what has been lost, He also turns His face towards us and shines upon us. When He makes His face shine upon us, He looks upon us with pleasure and desire for an intimate relationship with us. When He lifts up His countenance upon us, He smiles at us with approval. Peace can be expected.

I believe the Lord is going to turn His face towards us with pleasure and approval when we turn our faces toward Him in humility.

Prayer Focus

1. Tell the Lord your most intimate struggles within you. Pour your heart to Him today. Whatever they may be, however difficult they may appear to be, He is your caring and loving Father. He will hear you and rescue you.

Day 9

The Father's Heart

*"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."
(John 6: 44)*

Father is more than just a gender thing. It is the way that God reveals Himself to man. It is the way which God relates to man. The concept of "Father" speaks of a protector, a guide, a counselor, who loves tenderly, who disciplines for the good and future of the child, who is intently interested in the welfare of his children. He is one who is trustworthy, forgiving and, safe to run to and fun to be around. Yes, even fun!

Father also speaks of someone from whom we derive our identity, our sense of worth, sense of belonging - someone who blesses us always. However, the enemy knows that if he can distort the image of a "father", he would succeed in building up a thick wall or barrier between man and God. This is what happened in the world today. Many have had bad and painful experience with their earthly fathers, and thus rendering them handicap emotionally when they come to God the Father. They cannot relate. They cannot trust God as Father. Some have been out-rightly rejected by their fathers. Such deep pains could go down through generations and stop them from coming to the Father.

God has the solution. Man needs a Saviour. One who would rescue them from this pit of entanglements. So, He sent Jesus. But even then, many still cannot receive this Saviour. You see, God the Father knows that unless mankind relates to Him as Father, they will not see salvation. He loves us so much that He would Himself supernaturally enable us to receive Jesus, in order for us to be reconciled to Him as Father-son. All this is done while we are far away from God, and perhaps still quite angry with Him.

That is the heart of the Father. No matter how far away we are, or we think we are, from Him, He always seeks to find us and draw us back to Him. This is the heart that God wants all fathers to have. Indeed, the concept of "father" comes originally from Him. Thank the Lord for being a Perfect Father to us. Let us pray and bless all fathers with this Father heart of God.

Prayer Focus

1. What might be hindering you from relating to God as Father? Try praying today by addressing as Father throughout. Ask Jesus to come to you today and deal with those hindrances, if any.
2. Pray for all fathers, especially in our church, our community, spiritual fathers and above all, in families, that the Heart of God the Father will constantly occupy their hearts and consume them.

Day 10

Those Who Know Their God

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits. (Daniel 11: 32)

Knowing God is more than just an intellectual exercise.

The unique position which God's people, the Church has before God is that we are in a covenantal relationship with Him. God honours covenants because He is a faithful God. He will not go back on His words. His words are as good as promises which never fail.

Being in a Covenant with God, established through the Blood of Jesus places us in such a privileged position. It opens the door for us to have intimate relationship with Him. It opens the door to the secret things on God's heart. It opens the door of heaven for God's supernatural resources to be poured forth into our lives. It makes knowing God possible. The natural consequence is the building up of our faith to trust.

God will never disappoint those who trust in Him. The Psalmist in Psalm 25:1 cried, "To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my enemies triumph over me." It is a reasonable expectation that our trust in God will avail God's protection and victory over the enemy in our life.

Knowing our God is not merely putting us in a defensive position. It empowers and enables us to achieve great things that no natural human abilities or talents can accomplish. Mighty exploits! It is therefore essential that we as a generation, seek to know our God given such an advantage of having a Covenantal relationship with Him. The Covenant is given to us free, the Covenant benefits we must press in and lay hold. Unless we experience these benefits, we are not able to impact and inspire the future generations to love God and do great exploits!

Prayer Focus

1. Pray that God's people will know their God personally. Pray for someone whom you care deeply and wishes them to come to know God as their God and Father who will never forsake nor leave them. Write down their names, commit them to the Lord daily.

Day 11

Those Who Know Our God

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits. (Daniel 11: 32)

It is possible to know our God intimately.

Moses was a man whom God talked to face to face like a friend. (Exodus 33:11) Today this reality sounds far-fetched, mystical, even seemingly unattainable. The reason we can have that kind of intimacy, perhaps not in a physical sense, but certainly in a spiritual sense, is because our relationship is defined by the Blood Covenant of Jesus. It is a promise from God that we shall have the authority to become children of God if we receive Jesus – acknowledge Him, welcome Him into our lives, to be part of our daily life. (John 1:12)

The word “authority” in Greek is *exousia*. Authority is the right to access to a privilege. That privilege is to be able to approach God like a son would approach his father. How many of us as children are not allowed to approach our fathers face to face? Though there may be some who do not have the opportunity to do so because they have lost their fathers since young, it is natural to assume that is the privilege of a son. This is part of the Covenantal privilege we have as Christian. Yet, if we deny ourselves of this Covenantal privilege, we may find our relationship with God becoming more and more distant.

When we are in God’s presence, there is I believe, a heaven and earth difference between knowing that we are God’s children and seeing ourselves as God’s servants only. A servant is to carry out the instruction of the Master out of obedience, but a son is to know the Father’s heart and do what is on His heart out of love.

We can know God like a son would know His Father because God longs to reveal Himself to us face to face. He has given us the authority to be His children, thus the authority – to access His resources, to do mighty exploits for His Kingdom. You can do it!

Prayer Focus

1. Find a private time and place to talk to your God today, like a son would talk to the Father. Pour your heart out to Him, for He is always ready and willing to listen. Spend time reading Psalm 27. Listen to what your Father is saying to you.

Day 12

Foundation That Speaks

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6: 45)

How often do we find ourselves saying the wrong thing, or responding in an inappropriate way? How often do we find ourselves saying, “I am sorry” because of that? If those words and responses are the result of what is hidden in our hearts, how did those things find their way into our hearts in the first place?

Jesus talks about “good treasure” and “evil treasure” of the heart. Treasures are what we value highly and would keep them or seek them. These treasures are not stored up overnight, they are accumulated over time. These “deposits” into our hearts have been permitted by us to come in or allowed to stay on. They may come from our surrounding – the values being taught to us, popular culture being imposed on us through media, peer pressure (this applies to all age groups!), values acceptable or even celebrated by the society we are in. If these are ungodly, out of sync with God’s words and God’s order, once allowed in over a period of time, they become deposits in our hearts. These deposits may also be the result of sinful thoughts and ungodly responses or emotions which we have allowed in over time – anger, resentment, bitterness, unrepented sins, etc. These deposits will become “treasure” hidden in our hearts. It governs and controls our thought life, our belief system, our words, our behavior, our responses, shapes our faith and determines the level of our prayers and commitment to the Lord. It becomes the foundation of our lives.

Foundation of life though buried and unseen, speaks through our lives. While it is absolutely essential for us to discipline our words and responses, it is even more important to invite the Lord to deal with any faulty foundation in our lives. The process may involve uprooting the ungodly, re-planting, relearning and relaying the godly. Jesus can do it. Focus on the treasures of your heart - your foundation.

Prayer Focus

1. Ask the Lord to reveal to you what might be the hidden, faulty elements in the foundation of a) your life; b) your family; c) your church; and d) our nation. Confess them to the Lord. Pray and ask the Lord to remove the ungodly and plant the godly into those foundations.

Day 13

Set Apart

For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.” (Exodus 33: 16)

God is holy; therefore His people must be holy. The word holy means “to set apart”. Personal or corporate holiness is often connected to behavior, godly behavior. But holiness actually got to do with be separate from the rest, sealed with a specific ownership, dedicated to another.

We are God’s holy people because we bear the ownership seal of the Holy Spirit. We belong to God. The one essential hallmark that set us apart from the people around us is God’s Presence. Whatever that flows from God’s Presence, whatever that the Presence of God promises, when they are evident in our lives, the world around us will know our God.

Whenever the Presence of God is found in the midst of His people, the evidence that follows should include His healing, deliverance, favor, wisdom (in all areas of life), miracles, His protection, His provision, etc. All that we can find in the Scriptures describing His presence, should be evident in the life of the Church. That is how God intends to impact the world through His people, the Church today. We become His vessel to carry the witness of His power to the world.

When we are set apart, we bring glory to God. We worship Him with our lives when we are set apart. When we worship God, God draws near to us. That, should be the DNA of the Church!

Prayer Focus

1. Ask for God’s healing, freedom, favor, wisdom, protection, provision and His transforming presence in your life, your service to Him, your finances, your family, and all those who need these. Allow Him to work out His perfect will in your life.

Day 14

Pursue Spiritual Purity

“Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” (1 Corinthians 5: 7)

We live in a world that is highly convenient nowadays, to pursue the gratification of the flesh. Internet has opened up an unprecedented gateway to a world of information, godly and ungodly, even highly defiling. If the cyber world is a new “mountain of modern culture”, the devil is certainly moving very quickly to occupy it.

Our lifestyle in this current age is also becoming more convenient for individual to withdraw from community life, or at least to reduce human interaction to the bare minimum. We make friends through social media, we can choose when to respond or even whether to respond at all to remarks made by our friends on social media. We do online banking, shopping, investing and even study a course entirely online. At least one Bible College that I know of, now making deliberate efforts to gather their online students together to interact face to face!

This development has presented the opportunity for spiritual impurity to come to us. The easy access to the internet has opened the door to all kinds of defilement to come into the homes – pornography, philosophies that are incompatible with Biblical teachings, ungodly values through videos and audios, etc. The cyberspace also provides an escape for people who have personal issues, resentment issues, unforgiveness issues, hatred, etc to run to and hide, or spread these negativities anonymously without having to face their unresolved issues.

Impurity, no matter how small, ultimately defiles the whole. Spiritual impurity of any sorts – compromising God’s Word, His values and His character, ultimately defiles our whole persons, and eventually the whole Church. Take heed of the words of Scripture, “Get rid of the old yeast.” Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you today, and choose to cooperate with Him, to purge yourself from all spiritual impurities. For in Christ, this has been made possible.

Prayer Focus

1. Ask the Lord to sanctify our lives that we might be worthy vessels to be used for His purposes. Pray for our generation and the next, that the Lord will “deliver us from all evils”.
2. Dedicate a fast to the Lord and allow Him to purify our thoughts, desires and the inner chambers of our lives.

Day 15

Patience

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

Have you ever felt impatient toward someone who seems to take a long time to change? Think about the time when the Lord has shown His patience towards us, waiting for us to respond to Him in love. We are ever thankful for the Lord's patience towards us, wanting the best for us. Why not extend the same to others?

“The Lord is more patient than we can comprehend. But patience is not something we always extend to others—we need patience from the Lord and others but less often show patience.

We see the ordeal others process through and wonder why it's taking them so long. Meanwhile, the Lord, who always sees and watches, always knows and foreknows, patiently stands by.

Maturity teaches that patience is part of wisdom; despite the wait or delay in achieving results, once I really know what God wants, wisdom will not settle for less. Leadership, too, is measured by the ability to patiently wait. We are to lead with confidence and patiently expect all who follow to join us at the finish line.

“The end of a thing is better than its beginning;

The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.” (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

“Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.” (Hebrews 10:36)”

Adopted from Shirley Weaver's Daily Devotional

To be patient with others is part of the expression of love. “For love is patient”.

Prayer Focus

1. Confess to the Lord if impatience has caused you to hurt others, especially those who are close to you. Pray to the Lord for an opportunity to mend any relationships strained by impatience.
2. Ask the Lord to teach you patience.

Day 16

Love Has A Price Tag

“Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13: 8a)

We often say, love has to be unconditional. Love has to be without a price tag.

Love gives, and it gives wholeheartedly. But when we love, do we expect something “in return”? Perhaps not some material or physical return (though sometimes we do), but it could be some form of expectation – to be appreciated, to be acknowledged, to receive love in return, to hear a “thank you”, at least, not to be ignored or treated rudely in return.

However, this is not always the case, is it? When we love with an expectation for some kind of return, and that does not happen, we feel hurt and disappointed and even stop loving all together. For us to continue loving, there is a price to be paid. It is the one the loves who needs to pay the price, not the one being loved. The one receiving love receives it free. For the love-r, love does have a price tag!

Everyone who loves pays a price, no exception. A parent who loves a child may not be appreciated. The child may continue to rebel and treats the parent rudely. For the parent to continue to love that child, he or she may need to bear the consequences of the child’s own rebelliousness and folly.

God is love. He demonstrated to us the very essence of love – The Lover pay the price, the beloved receives it free and whole, unconditionally. God’s love for us has a price tag too, and Jesus paid it on Calvary! That’s how God loves us as Father!

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
(Romans 5:8)*

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for that love of God to fill your heart today, so that you will love those God loves – your family (spouse, children, parents, etc), your brothers and sisters in Christ, our nation, your neighbours and yourself!

Day 17

Form Of Godliness

*“... having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”
(2 Timothy 3: 5)*

During durian session, we will see an increase of durian in the market. The durians look much the same on the outside. We would go to stores that sell the “impressive” fruits. Some of these fruits are special breeds, some are local native breeds. If we sink our teeth into some of these fruits and find them disappointing, we would probably stay away from that particular breed from now on! If we buy some durians from a particular store and find them inconsistent in quality and taste, we would mostly stay away from that store in the future.

The Church is meant to carry the “flavour of God” in our society. She comes with an “impressive” resume as the Body of Christ – the tangible representative of Jesus on earth. The world has a certain expectation of us as God’s people. They look to us at least, in exploration, for hope, answers and fulfilment of their needs.

We cannot afford not to live a victorious life in Christ Jesus. We cannot have the apparent wisdom of God, and not having the real substance to satisfy or point the world convincingly to Jesus. For through us God demonstrates His superior wisdom in that, *“to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 3:10).

The form of godliness speaks of substance that satisfies. Worship that is true and authentic, love that is unconditional, truth that is uncompromising, righteousness that is God-centered, values that are Bible-based, wisdom that leads to life, and the list goes on. When the world takes a mouthful of us and taste us, would they find substance of God’s treasure?

We have what the world is looking for and what they need. Let’s give them the real thing without any compromise!

Prayer Focus

1. Spend time praying for the Church, her mission, witness and ministry today. Pray for yourself, and other disciples of Jesus that we will always stay close to Jesus in intimacy. For without intimacy with God, our Christian life would be lacking in authenticity.

Day 18

True Worshippers

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (John 4: 23)

The phrase “true worshippers” must not be taken to imply that there are “less than true” or even “false” worshippers among God’s people. When Jesus used the phrase, I believe He was highlighting that all worships acceptable to God must be “in spirit and in truth”.

In spirit, because the kind of worship God desires from us has to be birthed forth from the heart, from the essence of our whole being; totally focused, wholly committed. In truth, because we cannot worship a God whom we do not know, and our worship must be sincere, primarily towards Him with no hidden agenda on our part – truthful. We must know our God to offer an acceptable worship to Him. We must have faith in who God is before we can draw near to Him in worship. (Hebrews 11:6)

We must be honest with ourselves that sometimes our worship is not entirely “in spirit and in truth” in the way that has been described. There is a need for us to return to a consistent way of life in true worship. Because God is seeking for such to worship Him. He is seeking for true worshippers that He might draw near to. True worship attracts God’s presence. When God’s presence is with His people, His glory is seen in them.

Prayer:

Lord, cleanse and sanctify my life, that my whole life is a sanctuary unto You. Let everything in my life be wholly devoted to You, set apart for Your purpose, that it might attract Your presence. Let Your presence dwell and remain in me, as I choose to dwell and remain in Jesus, so that every work of darkness and its consequences in my life and my family, shall be destroyed and eliminated. In Jesus’ Name. Amen

Prayer Focus

1. Spend extended time worshipping the Lord, using your own expressions. Tell Him how much you love and adore Him for who He is, not just for what He has done for you.

Day 19

Preserving Freedom

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

A general observation of history tells us, freedom once obtained, is something that needs to be defended and guarded. There are nations which at some point in time, experienced freedom from bondages, today falls into “slavery” of a different sort. In some nations in the so called “40-70” window (nations who used to be hugely Christian who are situated between latitude 40°N to 70°N), even have the Lord’s Prayer removed from schools and the public arena due to “political correctness”. A new set of values and standards governing public life, human sexuality, politics, even religions, shaped by man’s wisdom and rationale, have emerged in our present day world. Freedom and civil liberty has been redefined over time. Biblical values and truth have been labeled as outdated or even “offensive”.

Losing of that God-given freedom in society and nations began with the individuals, in the individual disciple of Jesus, with the Church. Paul tells us in the Book of Galatians that Jesus has set us free for the purpose of bringing that freedom and Christ centered liberty to every level and sphere of the human life and experience. Every disciple of Jesus is tasked with this mission. However, that freedom, that personal liberty in Christ Jesus needs to be consciously and jealously guarded and defended. It does not remain automatically. As soon as we deviate from the truth of God’s words, because they sound uncomfortable to us, we trigger off a long and winding downhill slide to destruction and judgment.

The Scriptures warn us about the latent destructive power of sins and compromising on God’s words. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” (Galatians 5:9). Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us continuously where we have departed from His Way, His Truth. Bring every one of these departures to the Lord in repentance. No point trying to get things right in the present, while ignoring our past sins and disobedience. When the root of sins is severed, the growth of destruction will stop. When our freedom in Christ is preserved, God’s grace shall abound.

Prayer Focus

1. Today, remember those Christians who have grown cold in their faith, or became lukewarm, or have become disappointed with God, or discouraged in any way. Ask the Lord to meet them where they are and bring them back to their first love for Him.

Day 20

Costly Kingdom

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Revelation 12: 11)

Eric Liddell, the Scottish Olympian who competed in the 1924 Paris Olympic, was the man who inspired the movie *Chariots of Fire*. Differing slightly from the story line of the movie, he was informed of the 100 meters heat he was to compete in, fell on Sunday before he arrived in Paris. However, he refused to compete in his pet event because it would be against his Christian conviction to keep the Sabbath holy. He ended up competing in the 200 meters and 400 meters race instead, both being not his strongest events. He went on to win the bronze medal in 200 meters and gold in 400 meters, and also setting a new Olympic record then. He later on went on to become a missionary to China and died in 1945 as a prisoner of war.

We may view Eric Liddell's life as not having a pleasant ending. However, I believe like many other saints in God's Kingdom, advancing His Kingdom sometimes requires God's people to make sacrifices. These sacrifices are necessary if we want to stand up and be counted as God's faithful people. They are sometimes necessary when we refuse to compromise of godly values and Biblical principles. Non-negotiable.

Today, many of the disciples of Jesus are confronted with the challenges to compromise on the words and calling of God. The choice for us is not necessarily an easy one. But what we choose will have eternal implications, not only for us when we stand before God one day, but for others around us and the future generations. Our choices will determine whether we are overcomers or "compromisers" who lose our witness. They will determine whether we will experience God's miracles in our lives or live a mundane, unfruitful life. These choices will determine whether our lives are legacies and encouragement for future generations to follow - an inspiration to faith, or lives having no positive impact on others.

When challenges come, rise to the occasion!

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for the strengthening of God's people of all walks of life. Pray that we will live uncompromising lives to the glory of our God.

Day 21

Progression of Faith

Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” Moreover David said, “The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:36-37)

How many of us would remember the goodness of God at some point in our lives? How many of us can testify to a benefit, miracle, breakthrough, healing, etc from God in our personal life? I am quite sure everyone of us would be able to recall an encounter or experience of God’s grace in the past. What have those experiences done to our faith? I am also quite sure that it has contributed to our knowledge of God and our trust in Him.

The thing about faith is like a “chicken and egg” situation. Do we have faith first before we can trust in Him? Or do we trust in Him first before we experience faith in us? Faith grows as we put our trust in God increasingly. We start with the little things we trust God with, e.g. praying for a parking space on a busy street, asking God to help us pass a test, praying for good weather on a church outing, etc. God listens to all these daily requests from us. At times, we receive favourable answer from God. This is the way God meets us at our faith level. He answers these requests of ours in order to affirm and build up our faith in Him, so that we will be able to exercise faith over greater things in life and in His Kingdom. This is His equipping process for us.

David went through this process of faith building. He experienced the protection, strength and deliverance of God when guarding his flocks. The faith in him was built up over time, until he could exercise that faith over matters of greater importance, matters concerning the honor of God and the destiny of the nation of Israel.

As we move towards praying for the nation and the Church, let us also progress as David did. Let us reflect on all the occasions in the past where we have experienced God personally. Let us allow these memory of God’s faithfulness, goodness and power propel us to trust God for greater things, as we focus our prayers on “*The Mission of the Church, the Destiny of the Nation*”.

May His Kingdom come, may His will be done – on earth as it is in Heaven!

Prayer Focus

1. Think of the Mission of the Church and what our nation Malaysia should be. Ask the Lord to equip and build up His Church so that we might effectively carry out her Mission in this world. Pray for Malaysia that we shall be a godly nation reflecting righteousness in every area of this nation.

Day 22

Progressive Revelation

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."
(Romans 1:17)*

God reveals Himself progressively, not only through history and the Bible, but also in the life of a Christian.

When God reveals Himself to us through His words and deeds (miracles and healings), He is inviting us to know Him intimately and into a relationship with Him. Whether we will receive more from Him in terms of deeper revelation, and therefore greater freedom and blessings, depends entirely on us. The manner we respond to every revelation of God Himself, will determine whether we will have more of Him. In order for us to grow in spiritual maturity, we need to respond to God's revelation:

- with faith, believing what He says;
- by treasuring every bit of it, and count it a privilege to know Him;
- by pursuing more of Him, wanting to know His will more; and
- with obedience, taking heed of His words, taking God seriously.

In faith we receive His revelation and His words, and His words are therefore able to build up our faith. With increased faith we increase our capacity to receive more of Him, deeper understanding of the things of God and deeper experience of His healing, restoration and His presence. God is then a reality to us. *From faith to faith* we grow, *by faith in* God and His promises and His word *we live our lives* in the supernatural reality of God.

With progressive faith we receive progressive revelation. With progressive revelation we progressively walk into His destiny for us.

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for God's people to be deeply rooted in God's word. Pray that we will encounter His restoration in increasing measure. As we grow in personal knowledge of God, we will also grow in faith and witness, becoming a people who lives in His supernatural presence.

Day 23

Light to the nations

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”
(Isaiah 60:1-3)*

When darkness covers the earth due to the sins committed in the land, darkness also covers the people. The Scripture describes it as “thick darkness”. When people lives in darkness, they will be affected by the way of darkness. When people succumb to the way of darkness, darkness will creep into the people and occupies the soul, dull the spirit and torment the body. Such is the severity of the consequences of allowing darkness to prevail in our land and over our lives.

Darkness will multiply itself if allowed to do so. It can only be overcome by light. This light must first come from the outside. Because darkness cannot produce light. This Overcoming Light will deal with the darkness covering the land, covering the people and darkness in the people. Darkness is occasioned by sins. So, when the Light shines, it exposes the sins of the land and the people. Then the people has a choice: to agree with the Light and repent, so that they can come out from the control and destructive effects of darkness, or ignore what has been made visible and continue “business as usual”.

Every Christmas we celebrate the coming of the Light of the nations, hope of mankind, Jesus Christ. What has He been showing you in His words and through His Holy Spirit? Choose to respond to Him by rejecting sins in your lives. Choose to allow the Light to shine on you. Because in doing so, your light will shine. God’s glory which is connected to His presence will be seen in you. The people around you in the society, in nations will notice the presence of the Lord in you and will be drawn to you.

As God’s Church in this land praying for the nation, we cannot afford not to have this Light in our lives. If darkness is still in the people, even God’s people, we cannot impact our society and pray for our nation effectively.

May the Light of the world, Jesus shines upon you so that you might be a light to the world!

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for all disciples of Jesus to rise up and shine in their individual position in life – in the family, in the marketplace, in schools, colleges, universities, in ministry, in leadership, etc. That we will together as Church be a blessing to the nations.

Day 24

Deliverer from Zion

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-27)

In the midst of many controversial events surrounding Jerusalem and Israel, we remember Jesus was born and crucified in Israel. Out of the Biblical and historic Israel, came the Deliverer and Saviour of the world. When Jesus the Son of God came into human history, that changes everything! He saves mankind from the consequences of sin if we choose to receive Him. He defeats darkness and its entire kingdom, exposing its lies, and disarming it of its most powerful weapon - death. He enables man to live as God has intended us to live in the first place – intimately His.

Could God have sent the Saviour to be born in any nation? Yes, I suppose He could, but He chose Israel to be the cradle of man's hope. He did not decide at the spur of the moment to do so, but He has prophesied His plan long before the event took place. The destiny of Israel is to fulfil God's redemptive purpose for the world. She has no other purpose of her own but only God's.

The Church likewise is God's new creation. We who forms the Church have no other purposes in life except that of God's. That is to live out and proclaim the salvation, healing and deliverance which we have received, and continue to receive from this Mighty Deliverer and Saviour.

We thank and praise God that He is so deliberate in planning and executing the rescue and restoration plan for mankind, and we who choose to follow Jesus are the beneficiaries of God's grace. Out of Zion, our Deliverer came forth!

Prayer Focus

1. Seek the Lord's heart on how He wants you to live your life so that He might be magnified. Ask the Lord to use you for the purpose He has brought you into this world. Be open and submissive to the Lord when the Lord speaks to you.

Day 25

Connect or disconnected

*“Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.”
(Proverbs 23:23)*

I was in the car with my family when I heard this over the radio: the same sex marriage bill which was tabled in the Australian Parliament has received overwhelming support.

Same sex marriage has been a challenging issue in many nations today. It has challenged the Church regarding her position on this issue; many opinions have been offered even among the theologians of the day. What has the Bible got to say about this matter? What is God's view on this issue confronting the modern civilization? The Church who is the Body of Christ, the people of God, would be expected to be some sort of moral compass for the world. Yet, the worrying thing is that even the Church is deeply divided over this issue, let alone providing any sort of guidance and solution.

The only reason the Church can be the voice of God in the world is when she is closely connected to the God whom she worships. As we connect to God in intimate, uncompromising relationship, we hear His voice, we know what is on His heart. The very moment the Church's connection to God is compromised, sometimes not necessarily cut off from Him, but rather having “faulty” connection with God – disconnected, we can well miss His voice and heart. When the Church is in a disconnected state from God, we cannot possibly provide moral leadership, healing and hope in society.

The challenge upon us today in the Church is to return to seeking the one true, intimate and uncompromising relationship with God. Know His words, walk in His truth, live in the reality of His Holy Spirit, spur one another on to do the same, is certainly not an option for us. If we neglect in doing so, not only we will lose our witness for Jesus in the world in our generation, we will risk surrendering our future generation into the hands of the enemy.

What happens today is due to the choices of the past. What we decide today will determine the future. Choose wisely.

Prayer Focus

1. In the midst of many challenges to timeless Biblical values, let us pray for one another that our faith will be firmly rooted in the truth and love of God. Pray for Christians everywhere to love as God loves, not according to the standard and way of the world. Remember those in your cell groups, your church and your family, pray that we will always stay connected to the Lord.

Day 26

World Changers or World Dwellers

Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 16:14)

Some crops such as oil palm, changes the environment and soil when they are planted. Not only that their appearance is radically different from other plants around them (usually), but they also influence what kind of plants which can co-exist with them. While there are plants that blend into their environment, there are also others which protects and enhance their environment.

In the Old Testament, Israel was birthed forth as God's chosen people, to go into the world, to exhibit a combination of the characteristics I mentioned above. The Church is very much like Israel in the Old Testament in that we are God's covenantal people through Christ Jesus. We are in the world but not of the world. If we were to blend in, as world dwellers, we would have become like the pagan nations around us, rejecting and ignoring the worship of the God of the Bible. If we were to forcefully impose our presence and values to the world, we would be deemed as "intruders". However, if we were to live among society and nations, demonstrating the presence and power of God, passionately preaching the Kingdom of God, and living out the values of the Kingdom in all our dealings and relationships, we would be deemed as World Changers.

The Church is called to be World Changers. We are to protect our society from the destructive effects of sins and the kingdom of darkness, by preaching the gospel and teaching of God's words. We are to be salt and light of the world, to enhance the God-given life to the world – the abundant life. For that reason, we must not be hidden and not seen nor heard.

World dwellers just seek to dwell peacefully in the world at all costs, don't rock the boat kind of philosophy of life. World Changers on the other hand, seeks the welfare of the city we dwell, seeking God's best for society and nations. We must be seen and heard!

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for ourselves that we might daily internalize the truth and Word of God, allowing it to consume us, that we might be World Changers and not merely World Dwellers.
2. Pray for the welfare of your city, town, village, etc. and all who dwell in it.

Day 27

We sow He rewards

*See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. (Isaiah 40:10)*

Our lives are likened to investment. Nothing that happens to us today is disconnected from what we sow in our past. Everything that we do today has a direct consequence on our future. If we sow wisely today, we can be sure we shall reap abundantly a harvest of righteousness. But, remember. Though sowing is our responsibility, it is God who will reward us generously.

“The Lord's reward arrives with Him and is according to what has already been done – before. Also, the Lord rewards according to what we store on the inside – in the heart, our inward, hidden treasure.

Promotion comes from the Lord as a reward with eternal implications. Natural rewards, too, reflect yesterday's investment. Men reward themselves where God will not, and God rewards where mankind cannot. We need that revelation!

The most profound part is the heart—always. We should do as David did; he prayed for truth in the deepest part of His being: “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” (Ps 51:6)

The Lord's reward is with Him.” (Adopted from Shirley Weaver's Daily Devotional)

Be encouraged today. Choose to sow goodness, kindness and godliness. The Lord's reward is our reaping!

Prayer Focus

1. Ask the Lord to show you where He wants you to sow His truth, His love, His kindness and mercy today. Pray for His guidance as He teach you how to sow.
2. Pray to the Lord if you are reaping from ungodly sowing in the past, to forgive you and do a miraculous reversal.

Day 28

When our best is not enough

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Man who is created in the image of God, has the capability to achieve many accomplishments. On our own, we can create, fix problems, manage our lives (sometimes attempting to manage others' lives, too!), build things and tear down things.

My wife and I had the opportunity to listen to Dr. Caroline Leaf, the renowned Christian neuroscientist, describing the power of the physical brain is only unleashed by the mind – our thoughts and thinking process. Fascinating as it is the physical structure of the brain and the way it functions, it is even more fascinating to learn of its potential when right thinking or godly thinking is added to it.

This is not about the power of “positive thinking”. “Positive thinking” may enhance the working of the brain, resulting in emotional health. But even with man's best effort, in trying to “renew the mind”, it hardly unpacks the enormous potential of the mind, as God has designed it. The essential and unnegotiable key is the Holy Spirit working in and through the human spirit and soul, and the Word of God, which is spiritual, activating the physical cells in our brain. How amazing that is!

Whatever circumstance or sets of challenges we face in our lives, there can be significant results when we put in our best efforts - read more, pray more, serve more, receive more ministry, etc. But without the activating power of the Spirit and the Word, we find that it falls short of the best results we long for. With our own striving and reasoning, we can never make our lives work out for the best, the best that God has intended. Only when we surrender our excellence, our best efforts to the Lord, that in exchange, we can receive the glory of God, manifesting through our lives. Not that we become passive and fatalistic, but realizing that we have to take up our responsibility to seek God, obey Him and discipline ourselves, and at the same time, lean on the working of His Holy Spirit and trust in His unfailing Word.

When our best effort is not enough, allow God to come into lives and let Jesus be the Lord of every part of our lives, starting with our minds!

Prayer Focus

1. Determine to stop all striving today. Allow the Word of God to first occupy and transform your mind. Spend the day reading through *Psalms 119*. Respond by praying according to this Psalm.

Day 29

You must be born again

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8)

Our ancestry has a certain bearing on our lives. More than just cultural influence or upbringing, we are affected by our ancestral heritage. It is in the DNA – the spiritual DNA. We inherited it without any choice. It affects our thinking, mindset, belief system, it controls the manner we process life information, and thus, influence our decisions.

It is therefore little wonder that Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again if he wanted to see the Kingdom of God. Unless we are transformed by the Holy Spirit on the inside, we cannot see the revelation of the Kingdom of God. Unless we enter into this “new birth”, we cannot live out the reality of the Kingdom. At birth, we begin a life journey of living out our inherited heritage, who is written in our DNA, including our spiritual DNA. When we encounter Jesus, a new birth occurs. A birth that is occasioned by the Holy Spirit. At our spiritual new birth, we are given the “right” to new spiritual DNA. At new birth, we begin our journey of “DNA replacement”, we begin to live out the new inherited heritage from the Father.

This would mean we can expect new mindset, new way of thinking, new belief system, godly choices, new understanding, new way of processing life information, etc – a renewed person! Expect new things from the Lord today.

Prayer Focus

1. Invite the Lord to renew us by His Holy Spirit. Pray to ask the Lord to do a deep transformation work in us, so that we might have the mind of Christ, know the Love of the Father, and live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Day 30

Demonization and identity

Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. (Mark 5:15)

How valuable is a person's life? If the value of a person is measured by his usefulness, the devil certainly values a human being very highly. He needs human bodies to execute his will and purpose. Therefore he sends out his demons to take control of human beings to make them agents of his kingdom, doing his work of destruction, deception and division. Once a person is under the influence of the demonics, he is no longer his own master. He lost his God given identity, at the least, confused. He would lose his destiny, too, robbed of opportunities and abilities to live a purposeful and meaningful life.

In the Biblical account of Jesus' ministry in *Mark 5:1-20*, the man who was demonized was deprived of sanity and his destiny. He could not have meaningful relationships, work, live a decent life, to love and be loved, etc – things that we consider normal and sometimes take them for granted. Once he was set free by Jesus, he was clothed and in sound mind, ready to move on in life, having a clear sense of who he was.

Yet, after knowing that the demons which were cast out by Jesus went into 2,000 pigs and drowned, the people who knew this man so well, would rather that Jesus leave their region. Suddenly, the values of 2,000 pigs outweighed the value of a human life set free. However, this man who "once was dead but now alive", was ready to walk into his destiny, one that was given by God – to be witness for Jesus and His saving power among his own people.

We, too, can be set free to be who we really are, and to do what we are really supposed to do. We are so valuable in God's eyes that He has a perfect plan for us!

Prayer Focus

1. God values all human lives. Remember those who are sick in the soul, tormented by the enemy. Intercede for their freedom and restoration. Pray that the Lord will affirm their identity as God has created them: valuable and loved.

Day 31

Feast of Tabernacles

“You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.” (Deuteronomy 16:13-15)

The 7 days period of the Feast of Tabernacles is a time of rejoicing. This is also a time when the Jews remember God “tabernacles” with them – He dwells among His people. In the history of God’s people and His Church, it was God’s presence in their midst that brought freedom, favour and fruitfulness. When God’s people rejoices in the goodness and mercy of the Lord they experience in the past, giving thanks to Him and acknowledging Him, He promises future blessings and prosperity.

The Lord has in the Old Testament time, called His people unto Himself first, to give themselves to the Lord in worship, trust and total devotion, before He called them to the fields that he has prepared for them – to prosper. Today, many want to know the purpose of their lives and the secret of prosperity. The testimony that the Lord has recorded for us, like those of Solomon, Joseph and Esther, still remains relevant to us. God first calls us to acknowledge Him and worship Him alone, not just by paying lips service, but by walking the talk, then He calls and sends us to the fields where we prosper. As Boaz said to Ruth, *“Do not glean in any other fields.”*, so the Lord says to us, *“Do not glean in any inferior field, but the field that I have assigned you.”*

The purpose is so that we might become a testimony of His faithfulness, a demonstration of His glorious presence. The Queen of Sheba responded aptly after witnessing the blessings and success from God in Solomon’s life : *“Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne to be king for the Lord your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness.” (2 Chronicles 9:8)*

It’s all about His glory!

Prayer Focus

1. *Lord, I rejoice in all the benefits I have received from you. Because of Your unfailing faithfulness to me, I declare that I shall enter into greater fruitfulness and harvest in my life this year. I pray that You will bless me and make me a blessing to my family, my workplace (my school, college, my university, etc), my cell group, my church, my community, my city (town or village) and my nation. Because of Your tabernacle with me, You shall glorify Your own Name in me. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.*

Day 32

Succession

“Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed.” (Psalm 112:1-2)

Succession is important in all human institutions. Whether in commerce, politics, family, or leadership, succession is often intentional and planned. Similarly in the Church, succession will need to be intentional. Not only in terms of leadership, but the passing on the baton of mission and ministry, from one generation to the next.

As a church, we must be consciously investing into raising the next generation, so that they will walk in the fear of God. The Church has down the centuries, been carrying on the mission and ministry of Jesus as the Body of Christ. We have a mandate from the Lord to make disciples of all nations. The work of the gospel, often referred to as the Great Commission needs to continue till Jesus comes back again.

To continue on this fundamental mission of the Church, we need to raise up youths who love the Lord and who seeks His Kingdom and righteousness, above anything else. Youth and children ministry must be the concern of all of us. As their forerunners, we must lead, guide and nurture them into their God-given destiny. It is God’s blueprint for succession that the blessings received by one generation, shall be imparted into the next generation.

However, we cannot impart to the next generation what we do not have. The succession plan of God to cause blessings to be passed down from generation to generation is His plan to bless us with success. This plan of generational blessings is for the family, too. If however, in the life of our predecessors, the line of succession of generational blessings has been truncated, we need the Lord to bring restoration. We can only impart, when we have first received. The Lord is able to restore, to our families, the Church and us, the blessings that have been locked up, if we allow Him to. Let us seek the restoration and reinstatement of God’s generational blessings in our lives, so that we can be a blessing to successive generations.

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for the children and youth ministries in our Church, that the Lord will protect the next generation from all works of darkness. Pray to strengthen their faith and deepen their relationship with the Lord. Pray for all children and youth ministries leaders that the Lord will empower them with His Holy Spirit and filled their hearts with love for the Lord and for the children and youths.
2. Pray for Christian parents that they may step into their roles as God’s agents to impact and nurture their children in the fear of the Lord.

Day 33

After God's Heart

But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” (1 Samuel 13:14)

A person who is after God's own heart is a person who pursue what is close to His heart. God's heart is for the multitude (Mark 6:34) and for the land, nations, cities and the whole earth (Psalm 24:1). The person who is after God's heart is concerned about the multitudes who are lost and the land which is cursed. He pursues the salvation of the multitudes and the healing of the land passionately.

“The land cannot continue sustaining the purposes of God unless it is in covenant or in a relational agreement with Him. For the land and its inhabitants to continue sustaining God's purposes, there must be a moral alignment with God's righteousness. Deuteronomy 29 offers a summary of the personal, social and environmental devastation that results when the people treated God and the covenant in a selfish and hypocritical way. The book of Lamentations tells us what happens when they did: ‘We must buy the water we drink; our wood can be bought only at a price... our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger.’ (Lamentations 5:4-14). The land could no longer freely sustain them in their rebellious state; only at a great price could they live off the land.” (Julius Suubi, Healing the Land)

The state of affairs in our nation has a spiritual root. It requires a spiritual solution: the intervention of God. The Church holds the key to the healing and transformation of the land. Because the Church alone can pray in the powerful Name of Jesus with the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord is seeking men and women who are after His own heart, to entreat Him passionately and fervently for the healing and restoration of the people and the land— in prayers and with appropriate action. John Knox once prayed in great agony and was heard saying, *“God, give me Scotland or I die!”*. Not out of fleshly pursuit, but the pursuit of what is on God's heart. The Lord did give him Scotland before he died.

Prayer Focus

1. Pray to the Lord that His Light will shine into our nation and disperse all works of darkness which are oppressing the people. Pray for righteousness and godliness to prevail this land.
2. Ask the Lord to raise up leaders of His choice to govern this nation and bless them with His wisdom and resources.

Day 34

The Wedges of God

Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. "For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. (Leviticus 26:8-9)

A wedge is a useful and powerful tool. It can be used as a door-stopper to stop a door much bigger and heavier than itself. When it is put into the hands of a skillful carpenter, it can be used to split wood much stronger, harder and bigger than itself.

Intercessors are like the wedges of God. Once they submit themselves to the Lordship of Jesus, they can do mighty exploit for the glory of God. When they yield their lives to the Lord in worship, in obedience to His voice and His words, when they humble themselves to be transformed by His Holy Spirit, great and mighty things will happen when they pray. These wedges of God will be so powerful that even the gates of hades will not stand against the Church!

When the Church prays fervently, desiring to see God's Kingdom being established on earth, that His Name be lifted up, it attracts God's blessings and intervention. For something to change in the physical, something must first move in the spiritual. And we the Church has the key.

We are at the threshold of destiny in the Church and in this nation. The Lord is seeking willing "wedges" to be used for His purposes, to build up and tear down, to uproot and plant. Are you ready to be part of God's move?

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for the Church to boldly take up her position of spiritual authority and pray for God's righteousness to be established in our nation.
2. Pray against any forces of darkness seeking to derail our nation from God's destiny.
3. Pray that the Lord will bring our nation into His blessedness and be a channel of blessings to the nations.

Day 35

Atonement

But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness..... Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.
(Leviticus 16:10, 21-22)

During the Holy Week, we remember the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. For Israel, on the Day of Atonement, God set it apart for His people to address their sins, both individually and corporately. One of the animal sacrifice on that day is a goat called “scapegoat”. This is one animal that is not to be slaughtered, but let free into the wilderness. The sins of the people and the nation are confessed over it, and it is to bear the consequences of those sins.

Imagine what could happen to the scapegoat. It must be quite pleased initially, that it is spared from being slaughtered like its other counterparts. The sounds of despair and agony of facing imminent death from the dying animals must have been so terrifying, and fresh in the scapegoat’s memory. Then, this sudden freedom comes. What a relief! However, this sense of freedom would soon turn into another horrifying experience – alone, exposed, vulnerable, lost and eventually death.

Sounds cruel, for an animal lover like myself. But that only tells us the cruel reality and consequences of sins! Looks like freedom, sounds like freedom, but soon the destructive effects of sins will ravage mercilessly through the lives of the sinners, and even the lives of their loved ones and descendant.

And Jesus came to be the perfect scapegoat for us. Atone means to “cover”. Whenever we plead the “Blood covering of Jesus”, we are appropriating, among other things, His spiritual cleansing, removing of the guilt of sins, placing the destructive consequences of sins on Him, and being spared from death, separation from God, unprotected, fear and curses. THANK YOU, Jesus!

Prayer Focus

1. Spend time thanking the Lord for paying the price of our sins.
2. Bring before the Lord, for yourself or on behalf of your forebears, sins and consequences of sins that you know, give them to Jesus the perfect Lamb of God. Confess and repent before Him and ask for forgiveness and healing.

Day 36

Finished Well

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

In 2017, the world witnessed the retirement of one of its best athlete, the legendary Usain Bolt. Though he did not win gold in his last competitive 100 metres final, he was given a rousing and somewhat emotional farewell at the end of the World Championship. He has finished his race well, within the standards and requirement of the sport – no drugs, all hard work and stay committed.

Each of us who is called by the Lord in the journey of faith on this earth, has our race marked out for us. We are only to do what the Lord calls us to do, to live the kind of life that God has destined for us. Nothing more, and nothing less. At times, to keep on moving in the direction and calling that God has for us may prove to be challenging, trying, or even painful. Our part is to persevere, regardless. To do all these, is not to gain acceptance from the Lord, but to demonstrate our love to a loving God who saves us from death and destruction. To do this, is to receive the highest fulfilment in life, when we walk in the purpose for which God has brought us into this world.

Whatever state you are in, whatever part of that journey of faith you are at, work hard (“fight the good fight”), stay faithful, stay committed and determined to the end (“finish the race!”) and no short cut, no fleshly ways but follow God’s ways (“keep the faith”). You will certainly hear in the end, the Master’s voice: *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Matthew 25:23)*

Prayer Focus

1. Whatever the Lord has called you to do or accomplish in life and ministry, ask the Lord to keep you faithful to the end.
2. Pray for all God’s servants and ministers, that the Lord will keep them under His wings of protection and finish their race. Pray for God to bless their family and their offspring, as a testimony of God’s faithfulness for future generations.

Day 37

Can love be demanded?

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.... (Isaiah 9:6a)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

My family and I recently watched the famous *Phantom of the Opera* in theatre. Though I have heard much about this musical, read its synopsis, listened to its soundtrack, it was until I watch it personally that I captured the story. The “phantom” in the story was portrayed as a man though hugely talented, was deeply deprived of love in his life because of physical deformity. He poured out his affection on a girl and turned her into a musical success in the opera. But when his affection was not returned by this girl, he demanded love from her. Of course, he realized that love cannot be demanded. He had to forfeit his demand and release the subject of his affection to her freewill choice. A powerful musical that tells of man’s deep struggle for the need of love.

During this Holy Week, we remember Jesus who was born into this world a man, died on the Cross as man, to save us from the deadly destruction of sins. To us, a Saviour was sent to us. To God the Father, a Son, the only begotten Son, is given. Which father would ever give his son to another willingly if not for love? Love that puts us on the same level with the Father’s affection for His Son! And that love was given freely to us, entirely out of the freewill choice of God.

When a person is deprived of love in life, it “deforms” the person’s whole being – affecting his spirit, soul and body. It drives his spirit into darkness, it traps his soul in despair, hopelessness and bitterness, and it causes sickness to spring out in the body. A total disorder that has far reaching destructive consequences in life. And God sent His Son – to first demonstrate this unconditional love for us, then invite us to live in that love.

Good Friday is about God manifesting His love for us. He has not forgotten about you. He has done the one thing that only He could do – to offer a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. It may be hard to believe, that God our Creator gave His Son for you. But this is God demonstrating His “undemanded” love towards us. So, this Easter determine to invite this love into your heart. Determine to live in this love. Because the first step towards putting right your life is to encounter this love personally.

Prayer Focus

1. Ask for yourself, and pray for others, to encounter this amazing grace of God in Jesus afresh during this time. Pray that this love will bring healing and restoration to those who are rejected in life.

Day 38

Are you willing?

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39)

Around this time last year, I was faced with an important decision in the life of my ministry. I needed to choose whether to take up new challenges in the ministry. I was not entirely sure it was from the Lord. As I was struggling through, these words of Jesus repeatedly came to me. I knew whatever new opportunity for ministry that comes to me, I must be willing to first say yes to the Lord. When He calls, I must obey.

I finally came on my knees to the Lord after Good Friday. I told the Lord that I will obey and submit to Him when He calls. A couple of weeks after that, I sensed the Lord was saying to me, "Son, all I wanted to know was whether you were willing. That new opening for ministry was not for you." The whole incident reminded me of Abraham. When God called him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, Abraham obeyed. The Lord made it clear eventually that Isaac was not to be the sacrifice. The ram was. God wanted to know whether Abraham was willing.

In fact, God Himself has prepared His only begotten Son to be sacrificed, so that man will never need to sacrifice another "son" for their sins. Can you imagine if Jesus was not willing to go to the Cross? How pitiful our lives would be? How hopeless and disastrous would mankind be? Yet, Jesus was willing.

When God calls us to carry out an assignment, He first wants to know whether we be willing. You see, by saying yes to Him even if the assignment seems overwhelming to us is expressing our trust in Him. He is our Loving Father. He will not call us to do something if He is not willing to supply us with His grace and resources. He will not set us up for failure! He loves us too much to do that.

What has God called you to do? What assignment has He given you? You can trust He has your best interest in mind. You can trust Him when you say yes to Him, He will not leave you nor abandon you on the job.

When He calls you, are you willing?

Prayer Focus

1. Spend time praising and thanking Jesus for His willingness to go to the Cross.
2. When the Lord has called you to an assignment, surrender whatever struggle you might have to Him. Ask Him for grace to say yes to Him.

Day 39

Resurrection Power

“..that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Philippians 3:10)

On Easter, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. In that single event, Jesus has defeated death, for Himself and for us. The victory Jesus brought to us is not a one-time victory, but the opening of a door to the enormous richness and abundance of God's power for those who believe. This Resurrection power does not only open the door to heaven for us, but it is available for us to appropriate here on earth. The Apostle Paul understood this well. He sought to “know” this power, not as intellectual knowledge, but as relational knowledge.

We can only appropriate and appreciate the Resurrection Power of Jesus if we know Him intimately and in increasing measure. This Resurrection Power is able to “resurrect” those things in our lives that seem to be “dead”, hopeless or lifeless. There may be circumstances and things in our lives that are out of God's order and God's will, something has gone seriously wrong, look to Jesus to appropriate this Resurrection Power in that particular area in our lives. It could be a soured relationship, financial losses, unfulfilled dream, etc.

Sometimes in order to experience the Resurrection Power of Jesus, we need to put to death those things that are ungodly or sinful in our lives. Jesus had to die on the Cross to deal with sin and the ungodlies. These things are best left nailed to the Cross and never to be resurrected! Dealing with sins and the ungodlies will mean that we need to take responsibilities over our actions, decisions, attitudes, however made or committed, and bring them to Jesus. It may also mean that we need to change our attitudes, the way we make decisions in life and discipline our words and actions.

I pray that on Resurrection Day this year, you will find hope and courage, to appropriate this Resurrection Power in your lives. May you encounter the Risen Christ afresh and anew on that day.

Prayer Focus

1. Pray that the Resurrection Power of Christ will once again touch you and the church you are in, so much so that you will bear witness to that Power more effectively.
2. Nail to the Cross all things ungodly, in exchange, receive new hope, new strength, new life and fresh empowering from Christ.

Day 40

Hope of Resurrection!

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Resurrection of Jesus brings hope and life. Hope – because Jesus has conquered death, therefore we can be confident that those who are in Christ Jesus, death cannot hold us. Life – because the Resurrection of Jesus affects us now in this life.

The Lord is His revelation to the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 37, where the Lord set him in a valley full of dry bones and asked him, *“Son of man, can these bones live?”* I believe it was a deliberate question the Lord addressed to *“the Son of man”*. The Lord was in fact asking, *“Humanly speaking, is this possible?”*

There may be circumstances or areas in our lives where they are deemed “dead”. Hope may seem lost forever. What the Lord has willed, purposed or promised may seem impossible now. The Lord could be asking you this question, *“Son of man, can these bones live?”*. The Prophet Ezekiel was asked to do a prophetic act – speak at the Lord’s instructions into the dry bones.

On this Resurrection Day, the Word who became flesh has risen from the dead and will die no more. The Word lives! So, everything that the eternal and ever-living Word touches will live, life will be returned and restored. Ask for a Word from the Lord today. At His instruction, speak into death, and see and taste the Power of Resurrection in Jesus’ Name!

Speak God’s Word, prophecy to the Valley of Dry Bones today!

Prayer Focus

1. List down any God given dreams, plans and hopes that have “died”. Speak to them by faith the life of Resurrection. Speak to hopes for family, church, finances and nation, that you know was stolen or robbed by the enemy, to come back to life this year. Expect “resurrection”.