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Introduction to our 40 Days of Prayer

Dear Good Shepherd Church Family,

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is preparing to embark on a prayer journey over the next 40 days. Your pastors and staff are excited to be walking together with our Savior Jesus Christ and with our church family on a journey of transformation this year.

Our prayer for you this year is that you will use this devotional as a daily prayer guide to help you grow deeper in your faith and strengthen your covenant relationship with God. We are also praying for the Holy Spirit to use this devotional to assist Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in seeking the will, wisdom, and discernment of where God is leading us!

Our hope for you is that you will find a time and place to let God's Word impact and influence your life. We pray that the Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to you as you pray and seek Him over these 40 days of prayer. We ask the Holy Spirit to come and saturate your heart with the truth of Jesus Christ, that your encounter with the Savior each day will reveal the love of Jesus more fully in your life.

If you have a heart for revival and have been longing for the presence of Christ to be manifested in your life, family, church, and community, please pray through this prayer guide with hope. Take time over the next 40 days to be centered in God's Word and abide with our Savior as we seek His will in our lives both individually and corporately. Read and pray with the expectation that God will use this prayer guide to open your hearts and reveal His love for you more fully. We pray that your heart and soul turn to Christ with an even greater depth of love, devotion, and longing for Him.

A dedicated team of prayer warriors prepared the prayers for each day. We extend our many thanks to Gale Stringham, Patty Johnson, Chris Hopkins, Terrilee Fitz, Ann Miller, Cleone Larson, Kate McGuire, Vanessa Gonzales, and Barb Nelson.

As we are taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, "Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Let us take time over the next 40 days to use this Prayer Guide, and in addition, to join in praying,

Our Lord and our God, You are our first love. We ask You, as Your church, to help us to be faithful to You. Give us ears to hear Your Holy Spirit. Speak Your wisdom and knowledge to us, so that we, filled with Your Holy Spirit, and with love for You and for one another, know how You want us to move forward as a church at this time. Help us hear Your voice louder than the voices of fear, louder than the voices of anger, and more clearly than any voice of confusion, so that, together, we can love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves.

May the Holy Spirit fill you with God's love and grace as you fall more deeply in love with our Lord Jesus Christ who is our Immanuel.

Pastor Susan Westland

Direction in Prayer

“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” Matthew 6:13

Jesus taught us much about prayer in example and in word. “The Lord’s Prayer,” or as it could be known, “The Disciple’s Prayer” is a part of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. It is the model prayer, and it gives us an outline of the subjects we should pray over.

At the close of the prayer, Jesus instructs us to pray for the Father’s direction for our day. It includes a healthy understanding of our enemy and his ability to deceive us away from the Father’s will for our lives. Satan loves to bring the child of God into the place of temptation and ultimately; after we have surrendered to temptation, to the place of bondage.

We should pray every day for God to lead us in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Pray that He will give us daily deliverance from the enemy’s power and deceit. Yesterday’s deliverance was great, but we must depend on the Father to lead us daily. The enemy never ceases his relentless attacks. He plans and schemes to control us constantly. Therefore, prayer should be a vital part of our daily life.

Of course, we have opportunity for complete victory over all of the enemy’s attacks. As believers in Jesus Christ, we know who the King of the Kingdom is. It is His kingdom to which we belong, and after prayer, we are refocused on God’s kingdom priorities. We know that it is His power, which is able to accomplish all of these things and also know that it is all about His glory.

Prayer for today: *Almighty God, as we begin our 40 days of prayer, may these daily prayers bring us closer to You. Fill us with Your Spirit, Lord, and keep the evil one from distracting us as we focus on You and Your vision for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Continue to bless this congregation. Protect us from the evil one. We give heartfelt thanks for this vision of transformed lives as we reach out to our community, nation and world. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Don't Let The Fire Go Out!

“Why is the house of God neglected? Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.” Nehemiah 13:11b

When the Olympics came to America several years ago, part of the experience was to see the Olympic flame. For every Olympics, a flame is lit from the eternal Olympic flame in Greece and then carried to wherever the Olympic games are being held. The flame made its way to Atlanta for the opening ceremonies by traveling all over America first.

Volunteers and heroes from all over America carried torches holding the flame from place to place. While the flame was passing through Tacoma, Washington, Harley Sheffield had the honor of carrying it on his bicycle. As he was crossing the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the expansion grates on the bridge blew a tire out on his bike. The torch popped out of its holder, fell onto the bridge, and broke into pieces. The Olympic flame was extinguished.

Sheffield was horrified. They would have to go all the way back to Greece and start over again! He would go down in history as the man who allowed the flame to go out! His panic was unnecessary because a “mother flame” was present in a trailing van as well as a replacement torch. Thus, he could resume his duty, and the Olympic flame traveled onward.

We must keep that fire burning! Ask Jesus to reignite your fire, your passion. God has asked all that follow Him to do something. Maybe you are being called to pray or help with the “kiddos” or serve the homeless. God has put a fire in you, and we never know what life we would have touched and changed, if we let that fire burn out.

This story provides a great illustration of our walk with God. Too many times we stumble and allow our flame to go out. If your flame has been doused, there is not a “mother flame” to restore it. But there is a “Father flame” who stands ready to light your torch today, and He will keep it lit.

Prayer for today: *Eternal God, today we give special thanks that we've once more heard the “still small voice” and come to You in prayer. Now that You have our attention, set our hearts on fire with a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. Fan the flame of faith and hope at Good Shepherd. Show us Lord, as You did Nehemiah, how we can best use our time, talents, and treasures to further our church's vision for Your glory. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

The Birth Of A Dream.

“Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb.” Genesis 30:22

Rachel was Jacob’s dream wife. They were very much in love. Like most married couples, they desired to have a child so their love could walk upon the earth. God listened to Rachel’s dream for a child, and He answered her prayer by giving them a son. Their dream became a reality named Joseph.

It is impossible to overestimate the power and role of dreams in human existence. Dreams have brought us lifesaving medical breakthroughs and soul-stirring revival movements. Some of our greatest athletic achievements are the result of a personal dream. The United States of America is the result of a dream of real democratic government by a group of patriots. Martin Luther King changed the course of a nation because he had a dream. Your world and “the” world can be changed because of the dream inside you.

These dreams are your daytime dreams -your vision, your hopes, your aspirations, and your desires. A God-given dream won’t go away. Search your heart and mind to get in touch with the dream God has put inside you. Then write down the dreams God has put on your heart. Then pray about it, ask God how to proceed in fulfilling the dreams He has given you, then take action with what Jesus wants you to do! Good Shepherd’s dream to be a Christ Centered, Bible believing, Holy Spirit filled church began in Habakkuk 2:3, “For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false: Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.”

Prayer for today: *Most Merciful Father, it’s Your Spirit that calls us to You in prayer. We ask that You make it the dream of each of us at Good Shepherd to be a living example of how faith works in the down-to-earth application of everyday living. Lord, create in us what You want others to see in our lives, so that they will seek both a personal relationship with Jesus and Christian fellowship with us, in the house that You are building at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

What A Great Dream Looks Like

“He said to them, ‘Listen to this dream I had.’” Genesis 37:6

In 1989, a movie called “Field of Dreams” was released. Kevin Costner played Ray Kinsella, a 37-year-old man who had never done a crazy thing in his life until he heard a voice one day that said, “Build it and he will come.” In the movie, when Kinsella plowed his cornfield over and made a baseball field, everyone said he was crazy for following his dream. However, through the magic of the movie this man could find out what a dream looks like when he was reunited with his father as a young man. The theology is certainly not correct, and the plot is nowhere near reality, but that is what makes the movies, the movies.

One thing is for certain; people will come to a place where their dreams can be fulfilled. God’s field of dreams is not in Iowa, but rather in the hearts of His people. How do we know what a dream looks like? This list below gives us a good description of what a God-given dream looks like:

- A God-given dream will stir your passion.
- A God-given dream will be humanly impossible to accomplish.
- A God-given dream will make an impression on you for a lifetime.
- A God-given dream will cause you to exercise strong faith.
- A God-given dream will be attacked by the enemy of our soul.

As we continue our 40 days of prayer journey today let us lift our voices together asking Jesus to bring us the dreams and visions, He has for GSLC so He may be glorified as we strive to follow our God-given dreams.

Prayer for today: *God of Hope, at GSLC You have turned our dreams into a vision, and our vision into reality. We pray for our leaders, asking that You will give them an extra measure of Your wisdom, insight, discernment and hope as they tackle the challenges of today’s field of dreams.” Protect our Church, Lord, from the wiles of Satan as we use our time, talents, and treasures to Your Glory. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

When Your Dream Is Delayed

“Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him...Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.” Genesis 37:19-20

Joseph found out what every dreamer finds out – not everyone is happy about your dream. Joseph found out that people would envy your dream, conspire against it, speak against it, and even attack your God-given dream. Joseph’s brothers put him in a pit and then sold him as a slave to go to Egypt, in part because of his God-given dream. Don’t you imagine that at that time, Joseph wondered just what in the world God was doing and if his dream would become a reality?

Remember that every God-given dream must die a human death. That is, every dream from God will come to a place where it is impossible to accomplish the dream in human ability alone. God is sovereign and His timing is perfect. Remember Habakkuk 2:3b tells us to wait for our God given dreams to come true for, “the revelation awaits an appointed time... wait for it... it will certainly come and will not delay.” Therefore, when we run out of resources and get to a place where we realize that the dream God brings to us cannot happen unless God steps in, then God alone will get the glory when the dream is accomplished. His ways are not our ways, and He does not delay a single day.

Our prayer over these 40 days is for the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s will, God’s plan, God’s dream for our congregation and our lives. Like Joseph, we may encounter resistance to God’s dreams for our congregation, but our prayer is for God to strengthen us, especially when we face opposition to God’s dream for us.

Prayer for today: *Heavenly Father, our mission is to reach out into our community, nation and world. And now, our dream is to serve our community so You, Lord Jesus, may be glorified as people come to know You as their Savior. Energize us as we pass milestones along this journey of faith. May Your spirit encourage and enlighten us so that we may not be discouraged when the evil one surprises us with roadblocks along the way. Following Paul may we count it all joy! Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Don't Stop Short Of Your Dreams

“The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered.” Genesis 39:2a

In 1930, two young brothers named Dick and Maurice McDonald moved from New Hampshire to California to pursue the American dream of being successful. After a few failed ventures, they struck gold when they opened a small drive-in restaurant. By the mid-1950's, their annual revenue was \$350,000, and the brothers split \$100,000 in profits.

You might think, yes, the rest is history. But you may be surprised to know the rest of the story. In 1954, a man by the name of Ray Kroc came into the picture. Ray Kroc saw potential that the brothers did not see. In 1961, Kroc bought the exclusive rights to McDonald's for the sum of \$2.7 million – now with 21,000+ restaurants worldwide, the rest of the story is history indeed.

Christians look to Joseph as the role model for dreaming big. Genesis 39 holds important lessons for all dreamers. As followers of Christ, we need to remember our God-given dreams come true in God's timing, not ours.

so, when we are following our God-given dreams: 1) Know that God is with us (verses 2, 21, & 23). 2) Know that God is aware of our actions (verse 9). 3) Know that God can make the bitter things in life sweet (verses 21-23).

Prayer for today: *Lord Jesus, please help us to be faithful to our God-given dreams like Joseph was so we at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church can pursue our God-given dream to the fullest potential. Please prepare us for what we will be doing. Show us where we are stopping short of Your dream for us and give us the courage to make a choice to faithfully follow You. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Can You Trust God?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

This was one of my mom’s favorite scriptures and she quoted it frequently. I lost my beautiful Mom on January 5, 2021, not even a year ago. She was my best friend and an inspiration to me. After she went to be with her best friend, Jesus, my sister and brother and I divided up her things. One of the items I was fortunate to receive was the cross that my mom wore every day. My sister and I had given it to her on one of her birthdays and she never took it off.

Earlier this year, I was wearing Mom’s cross while shopping. I walked from my car to the store, walked all around the store, got my things, went back out to the car and went to work. Just after I got to work I realized that the chain holding my Mom’s cross had broken and the cross was not around my neck or anywhere on me. I went out to the car and searched but to no avail. As I drove back to the store, mom’s favorite scripture came to mind. Throughout my searching, I wasn’t worried or upset. I just told Jesus that I would like to get my Mom’s cross back, but more importantly I wanted His will to be done in my life that day no matter if I got the cross back or not.

I parked close to where I had parked earlier that morning and walked into the store the same way I had before. I walked up and down the same aisles. I also found a sweet lady who worked there and told her my story. Turns out, she was a fellow Christian and I prayed with her about something that was on her heart. I didn’t find the cross in the store. I walked out and followed the same steps I had taken earlier in the morning and as I got to the door of my car, I looked down and there it was RIGHT BY MY DOOR! God is so good!

These verses reveal some important things about trusting God: The matter of trust is an all or nothing thing. Notice how many times the word “all” is used. The command to trust precedes the promise. Blessing comes after trust is expressed. The promise is conditional. Unlike many of the unconditional promises in the Bible, this promise of direction is given only to those who exercise trust in God.

Prayer for today: *Prayer for today: Dear Jesus, Emmanuel, please help me to trust You even when it’s difficult to see how the circumstances can be turned around for good. Give me eyes to see where You want to use me to help others. Please give me boldness to acknowledge You to others. Help me to give You my worry and relax in Your love. In Your holy and wonderful name, Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

A God You Can Trust

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

As God’s people, we are expected to trust Him! Sometimes that sounds like an easy task, other times it seems completely daunting to me! “How can I trust you Lord? How do you really know how much this means to me or how difficult this is for me?” I get stuck in my own head and spend many sleepless nights. I rely on my own understanding and forget that the God of the Universe knows infinitely more than I ever can. I forget my God has promised whenever I put my life into His hands, He won’t drop me on my head (Psalm 31:5 MSG).

First, I have to surrender all my understanding and knowledge. I get to be willing to trust Him! When I surrender all my best thinking and trust He has all power and He desires all things to work for His glory and purposes, then I can rest assured. As it is written in the Contemporary English Version, “With all your heart you must trust the LORD and not your own judgment. Always let him lead you, and he will clear the road for you to follow” Proverbs 3:5-6. As I let go of my understanding, He always comes through with any situation, at the perfect moment, with the perfect solution to my hurt or dilemma. He fights for me and, indeed, makes all my ways straight!

Prayer for today: *Dear Lord Jesus, may all at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church truly know Your trustworthiness. You are our Rock, our Shield, and our Fortress. You are our Creator who created all we are, and all we have. You are our Father, our Good Shepherd and our Savior. Thank You, Lord, that You are so generous and patient and loving. Thank You, Lord, for who You are. Thank You, Lord, for Your direction of our church’s path. Thank You, for Your direction of my path as I surrender to your plans for me. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Learning To Trust Him

“Trust in the Lord...Fear the Lord...Honor the Lord” Proverbs 3:5-9

The Bible is filled with encouragement for us as we learn how to trust God. As we pray for God to teach us to trust Him, we turn to God’s word to help using the power of His Word as we meditate on Scripture.

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand

Psalm 28:7 - The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Matthew 6:25 - “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

Psalm 9:10 - And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Hebrews 13:8 - **Jesus Christ** is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 8:28 - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Psalm 112:7 - He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

Joshua 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous.** Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Mark 5:36 - But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”

Isaiah 26:3 - You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Prayer for today: *A Prayer When You Struggle to Trust God Pray:*

Lord, You see the circumstances I face today, and You know the fear and anxiety I feel. Forgive me for letting worry overtake my thoughts. Pour out a spirit of belief over me, so I can choose to trust You. There is no God like You, awesome in power, working wonders. I praise You for the faithfulness You have shown me so many times in the past. Lord Jesus, even though I feel worried, I will choose to trust You. Help me remind myself today of Your great love and power. Help me identify fearful, anxious thoughts and lay them at the foot of Your cross. Give me the grace and power I need to meditate on truths from Your Word instead. Help me also speak positive words that will inspire others to trust You as well. You are my salvation. You have already saved me from sin, and I know You have the power to save me from my troubles now. Thank You for being with me. I know You have plans to bless me and work for my good. Lord, You are my strength and my song. I will worship You today and sing Your praises, even if I cannot quite understand what You are doing. Thank You for putting a new song in my heart. Amen

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

A Prayer For Direction

“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.” Psalm 119:133

The Bible gives us several affirmations, such as Romans 8:28, Psalm 119:133 and other verses, that no matter how lost we may feel, God can guide us in the right direction. If you're feeling lost, I encourage you to pray or have others pray with you. God is never far away. Take comfort that in the end, God will work out all things for those who love Him. Today the Holy Spirit invites us to mediate on the following verses:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” -Romans 8:28

“My ways are higher than your ways.” Isaiah 55:9

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” Psalm 32:8

“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.” Psalm 37:23-24

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” Proverbs 16:9

Prayer for the day: *Loving Father, you have told me to ask you for whatever I need. You said that if I ask, it will be given. If I seek, I will find. If I knock, the door will be opened to me. I ask you for guidance and direction now, Lord, and pray that you would answer my request. You are a perfectly good Father who only ever gives good gifts to his children. You love to give good gifts to those who ask. As your humble child, I ask for the gift of wisdom today. O Lord, my God, help me to trust you with my decisions and my future. Let me lean on you with all my heart instead of relying on my own imperfect understanding. Give me clear guidance in my life, Lord. As I submit myself to you, I know that you will direct my paths and I can have confidence that your direction is always the best way to go. Hear my prayer, Father. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Discover Your Destiny...Like Abraham

“Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.” Genesis 14:20b

Chapter fourteen of Genesis records for us a significant event in the pilgrimage of Abraham. This godly man becomes a warrior as he joins in defeating four kings who have united against five kings of the valley. War would not have interested Abraham, except for the fact that Lot, his nephew, was captured and taken into captivity. Today’s text picks up with Abraham returning as a conquering hero. His high esteem, already in the eyes of others, has gone higher. He is now known throughout the land.

At this point in his prosperity, he is faced with a significant choice. In fact, his future destiny hangs in the balance of this choice. This choice is a spiritual battle, and it is a greater battle than the physical one he has just fought. Will he become worldly with all these possessions, or will he become rich in God’s eyes because he is a giver?

Life is all about making choices. In this Bible passage, Melchizedek (King of Salem and Priest of God Most High) is a picture of Jesus Christ. With that in mind, you can see that Abram made a wise choice by giving back to God a tenth of what God had given him. In all that God gives to you each day, do you give any back to Him? Your time, finances, your gifts and talents? Spiritual growth will result from worshipping the Lord through giving.

Prayer for today: *Dear Lord, as the wonderful Provider of all our needs, help us to faithfully and cheerfully give to others. You have blessed us with gifts of time and skills and income. May our hearts be full of gratitude as we share Your love and blessings with all people everywhere. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Discover Your Destiny...Like Rebekah

“Drink, my Lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘I’ll draw water for your camels too...’” Genesis 24:18-19

Chapter twenty-four of Genesis details the marvelous narrative of the servant of Abraham who seeks out a bride for Isaac. Most interpreters see a story behind the story in these verses. Abraham appears to be an example of Father God, Isaac is a picture of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the servant who goes on the journey to find the bride corresponds to the Holy Spirit.

This unnamed servant, when looking for a bride for the Father's son, had one characteristic in mind that she must possess. It was not natural beauty, even though Rebekah was naturally beautiful. It was not strength, even though she was strong. The servant was looking for a person who had the spirit of giving, for a giving person would bless the son, Isaac. When Rebekah gave him a drink and then offered to water his camels (which might take hours, by the way!), he knew that he had found the one for Isaac.

Rebekah was willing to give. She was going to the well to take care of her needs. It was her water, but she gave it away. (Genesis 24:18)

Rebekah was willing to go beyond the ordinary. If you are willing to go beyond the ordinary for God, He will go beyond the ordinary for you. (Genesis 24:19)

Like Rebekah, there are times when going beyond the ordinary means trusting that God will send the Holy Spirit to us. Going beyond the ordinary means trusting God that the Holy Spirit well waits in the background until He sees the spirit of giving in you. Then He pulls out the riches and gives you revelation of the Father's plan. The Holy Spirit is watching and waiting on your response to the opportunities to give in your life (Genesis 24:12) The Holy Spirit will graciously confront you with opportunities to give. (Genesis 24:17)

***Prayer For today:** Heavenly Father, please bless the church body at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with a joyous spirit of giving. Lord, help us to realize the joy You receive when we live with a giving serving spirit. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Discover Your Destiny...Like Jacob

“When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it...and this stone that I have setup as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.’” Genesis 28:16, 22

Today's passage finds Jacob running from the consequences of his actions and falling asleep at a place called Bethel. While he was asleep, God revealed Himself to him in a personal way. It was then that the God of his fathers became his personal God too.

Before we see how this destiny moment changed his perspective about giving, let's look at the point where God showed up in Jacob's life.

God reveals Himself when we are at the end of ourselves. Jacob's scheming and trickery had brought him nothing but failure and rejection. When he stopped running and fell asleep at Bethel, he had nothing. It is when you are at the end of your rope that God reveals Himself to you in a personal way.

God reveals Himself when we are alone. God came to Moses when he was alone with his flocks in Midian. God came to Isaiah while he was alone in the temple praying. God uses the times we are alone to reveal Himself, for usually, that is when He has our undivided attention.

Jacob was forever changed at Bethel. When God became personal to him, he immediately vowed to give God a tenth of everything. This personal encounter with God changed Jacob from a taker in life to a giver. Personal encounters with God result in changed lives.

Prayer For today: Lord Jesus, we pray that each of us at Good Shepherd will experience a personal relationship with You. Help us so that our lives will be transformed by Your grace. Reveal Yourself to us, so that our faith will deepen, and we will obediently and gladly give of ourselves and our possessions to further Your Kingdom. Amen.

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Discover Your Destiny...Like Jacob

“When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it...and this stone that I have setup as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.’” Genesis 28:16, 22

Today we continue our look at Jacob's encounter with God. Because of this experience, Jacob went from being characterized as a taker, to being known as a giver. It was all due to meeting the living God personally. Look at the God he met: God is a Dream-Maker (Genesis 28:12). God came to Jacob with a dream for a glorious future. God always puts dreams about the future in our hearts. Jacob awoke to a wonderful truth. Beforehand, he did not know that he was at the house of God and the gate of heaven. God delights in giving us dreams and then seeing them come to pass.

God is a Promise-Keeper (Genesis 28:13). God reveals Himself not with just a generic name for God, but the covenant name of Yahweh. God is a God who makes promises and keeps them. He does what He says He will do.

God is a Work-Giver (Genesis 28:13). He speaks. The verse says, “and He said.” God reveals Himself clearly to His people through the Bible, which are His oral words in written form. Jacob had been stumbling around wondering, until he heard the voice of God.

God is a Living God (Genesis 28:13). God does not identify Himself as, “I was the God of your father Abraham.” But rather He says, “I am the God of your father Abraham.”

Prayer For today: *Great and Awesome God, thank You for being our Lord and King! You are so merciful to us. We are enlightened with hope by the dreams You place in our hearts. Your word is truth, and the promises You make sustain us. Thank You God, for blessing our souls. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Discover Your Destiny...Like Joseph

“... when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back the spirit of their father Jacob revived.” Genesis 45:27b

Joseph’s older brothers had meant harm for him. They had been hurt and angry when he told them about his dreams which he suggested meant they were to bow down to him (Genesis 37). Their solution was meant for his disaster, at the very least, being sold into slavery. But God had different plans! As I read Joseph’s story in Egypt, it seems an unlikely journey for him to one day be able to save his own people. Yet throughout that hard journey Joseph stayed close to the Lord in his heart and in his walk. He was blessed with God’s favor in difficult situations when falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and even when imprisoned. Joseph was an instrument for saving his father’s people because he endured and trusted God. Jacob was Joseph’s father, and his heart was revived when the carts arrived from Egypt. Jacob knew then his beloved son’s God-directed destiny had been fulfilled.

Am I willing to stay close to my Lord when difficult situations or circumstances arise? Have I been willing to trust Him with my own destiny? His promise in Jeremiah is His plans for us are “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV). I, too, have had difficult situations in my past. Situations where it was not easy for me to stay close to God. Today I have been blessed to experience the desires of my heart. Today I chose to be close to Him and to make a difference in the world for Him. May you discover your destiny by trusting God and knowing He has great plans to keep you close to Him and grow His kingdom!

Prayer For Today: Heavenly Father, fill our hearts, spirits and minds with the desire and passion to build Your ministry at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Remind us to focus on Your will, whenever we envision plans for the future. Keep our pastors, staff, leaders, and all believers strong, as we continue to build on Your dream for us. Amen

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

How Much Is Too Much?

“She broke the jar and poured the perfume on His head.” Mark 14:3b

The story of the Bethany anointing is one of the few stories of Jesus’ life that is contained in all four of the gospels. So impressive was this event that it was indelibly written upon the disciples’ hearts so that they never, ever forgot this act of devotion. Mark uses it as a prelude to the passion events. It contrasts the hatred and rejection that Jesus was receiving at the hands of the rulers and the people. This act of worship and devotion stood out as an act of love that the Lord deserved from all, but was only given by a few.

May this deed be received as a call to worship for us today. May this deed make us ask ourselves the question, “How much is too much? This woman’s act set a standard of sacrifice, which none can better, but all can match. That alabaster bottle was very valuable. It was worth a year’s wages. Plus, it was to be saved for the most important occasion of one’s life. What is the most extravagant thing you have done for the Lord? What can we learn from this Scripture?

- Real love is always extravagant
- Extravagant love is always criticized.
- Jesus always comes to the defense of those who are criticized for being extravagant in their devotion towards Him.

Prayer For Today: *Dear Jesus, all that we have been given by You. Please lead us in turning these gifts of time, talent, and treasures into blessings to serve our church. Lord we thank You for Your constant generosity and we wait for Your guidance. Lord, help us to give of our best, because You gave of our best: Your life! Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Power!

“... His incomparably great power for us who believe...That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the Heavenly realms...” Ephesians 1:19-20

One of the greatest needs in the church today is power; not political power, not manipulative power, not fleshly power, but heaven-sent, Holy Spirit anointed power. The source of all power is the Work of God. The Bible tells us in Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” The Bible continues to state this truth again in I Corinthians 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

If the Bible is the source of all power, and there are lots of copies out there, then why are there not more changed lives? How is it possible to read the Bible and yet be unaffected by it? The root of the issue is what you define as truth. Do you believe that everything in the Bible is true and that it is from God? For the Christian, power and truth are inseparably linked together. Paul says in Ephesians 6:17, “Take the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” God gives us the power through Scripture. Consider today's devotional a challenge to memorize a new Scripture verse. Then you can claim the promise of its power.

Prayer For Today: *Dear God, please help the people of GSLC to be a “powerhouse” for God. Teach us through Your Word, everything we need to know to live Holy lives filled with heaven-sent power. Enable us to expand Your vision through our time, talents, and treasures. Focus us beyond our own needs, and propel us into the world, so that with Your help, lives will be transformed in every corner of the earth. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Power For The Future

“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today...The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still’ Exodus 14:13-14

God's power does not operate until we move beyond the realm of our possibilities. As long as we can do it in our own strength, there is no need for God to display His power. We must move beyond our abilities if a watching world will ever see the power of God. This feat is seen dearly in our text as the recently freed Hebrew slaves found themselves surrounded by impossibilities. Before them was a sea that could not be crossed. Beside them was a barren wasteland. Behind them was an enemy that desired to capture them and take them back to where they had been. In this difficult situation they had three options:

- They could go back.
- They could stand still
- They could go forward.

So, for the children of God, there is only one real option -go forward! As we move forward under God's direction and by His power, we must be careful. Around us are many roads that can only lead to defeat and death. Doctrinal deviation, isolation, cowardly compromise, and division are to be avoided. Before us there is a future. There is a land that flows with milk and honey. This future is as bright and powerful as the promises of God that we find in Scripture.

Remember, God can do amazing things with you when you decide to go forward, toward God's will. Reach out to God and ask what “the future” looks like for you. Going forward could look like volunteering at church, praying with family or with strangers, inviting someone to church or setting a time to talk to Jesus every day.

Prayer Focus: *Lord we pray that Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will not be afraid to move forward with You. Your Power is beyond our comprehension, Lord. Help us to move beyond the realm of our possibilities so we can experience Your power. Please help me Lord to move forward with, _____ (an area of your life: where you need to move forward). Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Powerful Jesus

“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’” Mark 5:30

In Mark, chapter five, we have three important incidents in the life of the Lord Jesus. It is within the context of these events that Jesus revealed Himself as the powerful Son of God. In the first event, Jesus revealed Himself as more powerful than demons. He went along with His disciples to the most demon-possessed man in all the country. When Jesus showed up, the demons immediately began to beg for mercy. With one word the demons left this man, never to return. We also see Jesus revealed as more powerful than death in this passage.

When Jairus’ daughter fell ill, he sought Jesus out to come and heal her. But before they could arrive, the girl had died. Jesus, nevertheless, restored her life by the power of His word. In the middle of these two great revelations, there is a rather small incident where Jesus showed Himself more powerful than disease. It falls almost as parentheses to the greater event of the raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead, but there are still some important truths about the touch of faith.

This healing event shows us that we should not only have spiritual life, but we should also have spiritual health individually and in our corporate church body. Many have received salvation and have spiritual life but are not well. Jesus says in John 10:10, “... I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” The way to experience spiritual health is the same way to experience spiritual life -that is to come into the presence of our Lord and Healer, Jesus Christ.

As we continue our 40 days of prayer journey may we reach out and touch Jesus and seek healing, wholeness, and freedom from oppression through our all-powerful Savior!

Prayer Focus: *Jesus, You are the core of life. All things radiate from You. Your touch defies death, Your goodness mocks evil. We pray Lord, that our corporate church body will have spiritual life and spiritual health through You. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Power To Transform

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves.” Colossians 1:13

What is the power to transform? And what is the dominion of darkness that Jesus rescues His people from? We receive the power to transform when we are born-again and receive the Holy Spirit. He is the power of God that transforms, works miracles and supernatural acts! It was through His power that Jesus was born, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, cast out demons and was resurrected from the dead. And it is the Spirit’s presence within, that enables us to be transformed into the image of Jesus and do whatever He commands.

The Holy Spirit is the Power to Transform! He is also our helper, teacher, counselor, guide and best friend and He is *Holy*. But sadly, some people out of ignorance, fear or false doctrine reject and disdain the supernatural, transforming gifts of the Holy Spirit declaring them to be void, passe’ and no longer needed, like “yesterday’s news.” How will Jesus respond to such persons?

Jesus taught that the dominion of darkness is the kingdom of Satan and hell. But thanks be to God, *“for He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves!”* Jesus’s kingdom is the diametric opposite of Satan’s kingdom. It is astoundingly beautiful and thrilling! Its atmosphere is filled with perfect love, effervescent joy, amazing wonders and indescribable peace. And Jesus shares it freely with all those who believe, love and obey Him. *“Whoever has my commands and keeps (obeys) them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them.” (John 14:21)*

Prayer for today: *Holy Spirit, help us to eagerly seek and gratefully accept any supernatural gift You want to give us. Help us to trust You and never reject, offend or speak against You. You still perform miracles, and we need them now more than ever! Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Power Of Love

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:8

As Christians, we know that we are to walk in love but only the blood of Jesus can cover sin. So, how does our deeply loving others play into this spiritual mystery?

Walking in love is to walk in the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This is God’s holy, perfect love that is for us, and not against us. It is kind, respectful, patient and other-centered. It is willing to overlook offenses, forgive and forbear with others to maintain the relationship. It keeps no record of wrongs, but instead prays for difficult people and strained relationships. This love recognizes that our battle is not against each other but is really against evil spirits who are putting hateful thoughts in our minds to destroy relationships and hinder God’s people in every way! So, instead of taking offence (the devil’s bait) and falling into Satan’s trap by judging, berating or disrespecting others, a Christian must resist the devil and fight back with the most powerful weapon there is—God’s gracious love! (Ephesians 6:10-18)

When we do things God’s way, good things happen. I have seen wayward children and backslidden spouses return to the Lord, because they were so convicted by the Christian’s gracious behavior toward them. They felt the presence and power of the Lord reaching out to them from that Godly person and wanted that kind of relationship with Him for themselves! When we obediently walk in Godly love, a multitude of sins are covered over including: the sins of the wayward person when they repent; our own trespasses when we forgive them (as promised in the Lord’s Prayer); and the sins we may have committed had we taken the devil’s bait!

In James’ epistle, he shows us how our obedience to this precept can save a person from death and hell: *“My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins”* (James 5:19). When we love enough to reach out to those falling into sin, our loving obedience may snatch them from the devil’s trap!

Prayer for today: *“Our gracious and loving Father God, we ask You to help us be more like You and Your Son, Jesus Christ. May Your perfect love guide us and draw others to You, Jesus, that their sins may be covered over by Your precious blood! Amen.”*

Personal Prayer: **“Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”**

Changed By The Power Of God

“As the body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without deeds is dead.” James 2:26

Jesus taught that a person cannot see God’s kingdom unless they are changed by the power of God and “born again.” This happens when the Holy Spirit enters your body, causing your spirit to come alive. This is the grace of God, who grants you faith to believe in Him and His Son, Jesus Christ. But you also have a part to play in this divine encounter. You must first hear the gospel, believe its message and respond to it. When you believe that Jesus Christ is God the Word and the only Savior of mankind, you must confess that belief, confess your sins, and ask Jesus to forgive you and become your Lord and Savior. When you do, the Holy Spirit enters and begins transforming you to become like Jesus!

As you begin reading God’s word, the Bible, you realize it’s the truth your soul has been yearning for. And the deeper you go, the greater your love becomes for God, Jesus and His teachings. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within you! Then as you obey God’s word, you become a different person as the Holy Spirit produces His gifts and fruits in your life. And before long, others will see and acknowledge that you have been changed by the power of God, bringing glory to the Lord Jesus!

This is what James is talking about in our subject scripture—displaying the evidence that you are who you claim to be— a transformed child of God! Using the analogy of a body and spirit, he illustrates how essential the marriage of faith and good works is for salvation. It’s easy to claim you’re a Christian but James is saying, “show me the proof—what are your good works?” According to the apostle Paul, we are saved by grace through faith, *to do good works* (Ephesians 2: 8-10). And Jesus said that those who don’t produce good fruit (works) the Father will cut off from the Vine! (John 15:6). He also taught that we cannot simply be “hearers,” we must also be *doers* of His teachings! (Matt. 7:24-27)

So, Jesus, James and Paul agree on this doctrine, although some people think Paul taught that works is antithetical to grace. However, a careful study of Paul’s teachings reveals that he was very much in alignment with Jesus and James that grace and faith, given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, are vital for salvation that produces good fruit in our lives. But as Peter said, Paul’s teachings can be hard for certain people to understand! (2 Peter 3:15-16)

Prayer for today: *Lord Jesus, please help us believe and obey Your teachings, and not be misled by doctrines of men that distort the truth. Help us to walk in the Spirit and produce good fruit! Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

All Power

“Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Matthew 28:18

The Roman Empire was at one of *its* greatest moments in terms of size and influence. The borders of the empire were larger than ever before. Their elaborate governing system was in full operation. Tax money was coming in at a higher rate than ever. Truly the Roman Empire was operating in one of its finest hours. It was the most modern civilization the world had ever known.

If it were possible for the leader of this great empire, Tiberius Caesar, to have looked from his palace in Rome all the way to a distant remote mountain somewhere in Galilee where eleven men were gathered around their leader, and if he were able to hear what this leader was saying to these eleven men, there is little doubt that he would have laughed out loud. The leader said to His disciples, “I have been given complete authority...”

However, if Caesar could have seen about 350 years into the future, he would have been aghast to see his successor naming Christianity as the official state religion. It took less than 400 years for Christianity to conquer the great Roman Empire. History would later show that this act of being made an official religion of the empire would be a blight rather than a blessing to Christianity. However, it is still significant to see how a church of only eleven impacted the entire known world in such a short time.

How were they able to achieve this feat? It was through the power - Holy Spirit, God-given power. We can impact our world because we have the same Holy Spirit living within us, thus the same power.

Prayer Focus: *Almighty and all-powerful God, we thank you for the power that rose Jesus from the dead and lives in us if we are born again. Holy Spirit, please fill us with Your power so that we may be bold to share Jesus with those we meet. Breathe on me, breath of God, speak to me, voice of God. Comfort, heal, and restore with Your love. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

The Anointing Brings Harmony

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even lift forevermore.” Psalm 133

Remember the television show M*A*S*H? It was based on an American emergency medical unit in the Korean War. This group of people was composed of some very different personalities. There was Hawkeye Pierce, B.J., and Father Mulcahy. There was Colonel Potter, “Radar, and Hotlips Houlihan. They were always playing jokes on one another and arguing over different political views and the war. But there was always one thing that brought these characters together. It did not matter what particular argument was going on or what particular practical joke was being pulled, when they heard the sound of the choppers bringing in the wounded, they always were united in the O.R.

In our day of hurting and wounded people, we cannot afford to be one more church that spends all of its time arguing over things that will not matter in the light of eternity. We must bring our differences together and allow the Lord to merge them in unity of the Holy Spirit.

Just as Aaron, the high priest was anointed on his head and the oil ran down his body, so the Holy Spirit descends from our great High Priest, Jesus Christ who pours His healing oil upon each of our hearts. Remember, anointing always brings harmony.

Prayer Focus: *“Lord, Your presence in our midst at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church compels us to live in unity. Help us Lord, to continue to experience genuine harmony as we reach for the dream that You have given us. Lord, please show each of us what we can do to promote a unity of believers in our congregation. Amen.”*

Personal Prayer: *“Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”*

The Corporate Anointing

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as of the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life for evermore.” Psalm 133

This Psalm was written on the occasion of David's coronation as King over all of Israel. And what a struggle it was between the times he was anointed king by Samuel until the day of his coronation when he ruled over a united twelve tribes. It was David who united these warring tribes. David understood that harmony could only be achieved when they practiced the unity of their faith. These days of unity for Israel under David, and later his son Solomon, were without question the most glorious days of their history. Never has Israel possessed all of the land that God gave her except in these days. Even in our current time, Israel is but a shadow of what she was, despite her being in a united state. In fact, Israel will know no greater glory until Jesus rules in regal splendor from His throne in Jerusalem

There is a message in these verses for the church. For as the people of God united under one king in the Old Testament, so the people of God must unite today under the King of Kings. As they experience great glory in this unification in the *Old*, so we will experience a greater glory in the New. As they experienced great glory and a tremendous victory over their enemies because of unification, we too can enjoy greater glory and freedom from the enemy's control as we unite together in Christ.

Unity is not uniformity. You can tie two cats' tails together and have unity but not peace! Seek ways to be harmonious.

Prayer Focus: *Father, help us as a body of believers at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church to live and act in unity so that we can win the world for You. Lord, show each of us what we can do to live in harmony and help unify our church. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

From Defeat to Victory

“I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.” Joshua 1:3

Abraham Lincoln is widely recognized as one of the greatest presidents in the history of our country. He stood tall and strong in a very critical and decisive time in our history. We certainly would regard him as a successful man. But this man also experienced failures throughout his life.

When Abraham Lincoln went off to the Black Hawk War he was a captain. Through no fault of his own, he returned a private. That brought an end to his military career. His little country village shop “winked out” as he used to say. So he failed as a businessman. As a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, he was too impractical, too unpolished, and too temperamental to be successful.

Turning to politics, he was defeated in his first attempt to be nominated for Congress and in his application to be Commissioner of the General Land Office. He was defeated in the Senatorial election of 1854 and in his aspirations for the Vice Presidency in 1856.

Finally, he was elected President of the United States and fulfilled his destiny and the destiny of a nation. Although maybe not as dramatic, Lincoln’s experience is the experience of many of God’s people. The enemy of our soul comes to us after repeated defeats and whispers in our ears, “You’re a failure!” He tells us we will never win, we are trapped forever where we are, and we will never fulfill our God-given destiny.

The first chapter of Joshua tells the story of God’s people who escaped the cycle of defeat and moved into the new day of victory. As we move into this new year, let us pray to be guided by God’s voice filled with promises of victory instead of our enemy’s voice filled with defeat and failure.

***Prayer For today:** Dear Gracious Lord, we pray today, seeking Your guidance and wisdom, as we ponder how Good Shepherd Lutheran Church can serve the people coming to learn more about You. We need Your help Lord, to claim victory over evil for our church and ourselves. We pray that as a church, we may hear Your voice louder than the voices of fear, anger, confusion and defeat, so that, together, we can love You, love each other, and know how You want us to move forward as a church during this time. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Are You Dangerous?

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

When we are called by God our Savior out of sin’s bondage, we begin to journey with Him. We follow Him as our Captain and Leader into the promised purpose of the future, our destiny. Along the way, God will stretch us. He will enlarge the horizons of our vision. Jim Elliot, the great missionary who gave his life trying to reach the Auca Indians said, “Am I Dangerous?”

If we are honest with ourselves, we may find that we are utterly ordinary and commonplace. We profess to know a power the world cannot reckon with. We are all sitting on the sidelines, coaching and criticizing the real wrestlers, while content to sit by and leave the enemies of God unchallenged. We are often spiritual pacifists, conscientious objectors in this battle to the death with principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The world cannot hate us; we are too much like its own. Oh, that God would make us dangerous!

How do we get there? According to Joshua there are several principles:

- Choose to be strong!
- Choose to be courageous!
- Choose to be obedient!

Read Joshua 1 and write down everything God commands him to do. Then reflect how these commands compare with what the Lord is calling you to do.

Prayer For today: *We ask You Lord to stretch our human thinking and give us Your vision for the future of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Give us strength to follow the path You have placed before us. Give us courage to stand strong in our faith. Lord, mold our strong wills as we work to be Your obedient servants and submit to Your plans for our future. We pray all of these things for each member of our church and for ourselves.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

We Have Never Done It This Way Before!

“He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” Mark 2:12

Ancient sailors recorded many times that in the midst of a coming storm the top of their ship’s mast would be circled with a mysterious circle of light. Many times their hair would begin to stand straight out from their heads as this light appeared. They called it St. Elmo’s Fire. Any experienced sailor knew it was then time to take cover because the air was so electrically charged that a lightning strike was imminent.

“The air must have been so charged in Capernaum at the time this Scripture passage took place. There was a crowd, and this crowd was curious about the ministry of Jesus. Scribes surely were scowling as they watched this new Rabbi closely, hoping that they could catch Him in an error. The room was charged with excitement. Everyone knew that something dramatic was about to take place. It was not St. Elmo’s Fire; it was the King of King's fire. For when He is present, something miraculous is going to happen.

Sure enough, excitement mounted as four men began to tear up the roof in order to let a friend down in the presence of Jesus so that he could be healed. The Bible says they literally “took off the roof.” When our group of believers gather, it ought to be a “roof-raising experience.” And we too should be able to say, “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”

According to this passage, three things are needed to have a “roof-raising” experience with Jesus:

- We must have a Savior who can save.
- We must have a preacher who can preach
- We must have a flock who has faith.

Prayer For today: Dear Gracious Lord, today we ask You to let us be on fire with the excitement of Your good news. We ask for Your guidance as we spread Your word in our community, nation and world. Fill our church with people of faith who are beacons to others in this community, drawing them to Good Shepherd to learn more about You and the wonders of Your love. Show us Your vision for Good Shepherd, so that we may do everything possible to transform more lives and help them grow in Your love. Amen.

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Can Jesus Do A Mighty Work Here?

“He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.” Mark 6:5

Here we have a sad picture. Jesus came to church but could do no mighty work because of their lack of faith. It was not a good first year of ministry for Jesus as far as His reputation among the hometown people of Nazareth was concerned. He experienced a tremendous amount of rejection. Nazareth was where the Scriptures say, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

It started out well enough when He took the pulpit on a Sabbath and read from the prophet Isaiah, the 61st chapter. This event, (recorded in Luke 4:16-30), tells how they “were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.” (verse 22) But when He told them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (verse 21), they became enraged.

In fact, they ran Him completely out of town to a cliff where they wanted to kill Him by casting Him off the edge. “But He walked right through the crowd and went on His way.” (verse 30) Talk about rejection! Most preachers would have dusted their feet off and pronounced judgment, never to return. Jesus, however, is not like most preachers, thank God. He still had a burning desire to do a mighty work among them.

Jesus still has a burning desire to do a mighty work through His church and people today. Are you willing to live by faith and have a prayer relationship with Him? For He is ready, willing, and able to perform powerful works through us. Our faith will either turn the switch on or off. Jesus will either do a mighty work here, or He will go elsewhere to do His mighty work. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

Prayer For today: *Dear Father, we pray today that everyone at Good Shepherd keeps a strong faith. Give each of us a burning desire to do Your powerful work through our church. Transform our lives so that we may live by faith and do the work You desire us to do. Lord, if there is a roadblock in our hearts or a tiny bit of unbelief, please wipe it away and replace it with a strong courageous faith. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

An End Time Church

“The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 1 Peter 4:7

“Are we there yet? This has been a long journey!” Can you hear all the prophets, apostles and people of God in heaven echoing that refrain? Every generation since Jesus left has been anxiously expecting Him to return in their lifetime. And we are much closer than Peter was, so the odds are in our favor! How does that thought strike you? Eager anticipation? Fear and dread? Or ridiculous foolishness? Few people today are in the eager-anticipation group. Many are in the fear-and-dread camp. And until recently, most thought it was ridiculous foolishness.

What Peter is referring to in this statement is “the Great and Awesome Day of the Lord.” The Day that Jesus prophesied about, Old Testament prophets saw in visions and dreams, and the apostle John described in astonishing detail in the book of Revelation. John’s vision begins with Jesus addressing seven specific churches in Asia, that also serve as archetypes for what Christianity will be like in the end-times. He admonishes them to repent, telling each of them what they are doing right, what they are doing wrong and what their fate will be if they continue as they are. Every Christian needs to study these letters in chapters 2 and 3 and do what Jesus commands. We should also study the entire book of Revelation because these are Jesus’ last words to His people with important promises, warnings and essential information about the end-times. Ask Him to open your spiritual eyes, ears, mind and heart to understand!

So, are we there yet? Are we the end-time Church? I believe we are. When one studies Biblical prophecies and gains understanding about what is really happening in the world today, the dots are all connecting. For those who follow Jesus, that’s good news because the Bible says these people will never taste death! But they may go through difficult times, as the battle between good and evil progresses. However, those who love and obey the Lord will be protected, as Psalm 91:9-13 promises: *“Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”* Jesus also promises the Philadelphia church in Revelation 3:10: *“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”*

Prayer for today: *Wonderful Lord Jesus, we love and trust You! Help us watch for Your return and prepare for the Wedding, that we may hear You say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your lord.”*

Personal Prayer: **“Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”**

God's Great Relocation Project

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’ Numbers 13:30

God is in the moving business. He is always in the process of moving His people. Although we are often content where we are, God loves us enough not to leave us there. Sometimes we can get a little stubborn about changes that He has in mind for us.

A good illustration is found in the children of Israel as they were moving from Egypt to the Promised Land. God sent miracle after miracle to get them out. But then, they did not want to go on in and possess what He intended for them. In fact, they said in Numbers 14:3, “...Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” It seems God could take His people out of Egypt, but His people couldn't leave Egypt behind.

The old song says, “I have decided to follow Jesus -No turning back, no turning back.” Paul says in Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” God has begun a spiritual project for His people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. May we take heed of the lesson we learn from the children of Israel going to the Promised Land. May we be wise enough to realize that God began this great project, and He will continue this work until completion.

Prayer for the day: *We praise You Lord, for allowing us to experience the many blessings that we have received while attending Good Shepherd. You are a great God who is always expanding our horizons. As we see Your new vision for us, we pray that You remain the Light that guides us. We pray that You will be our strength to overcome all the obstacles that will come in our path. Thank you, Lord, for not wanting us to stay as we are, but wanting us to experience you more completely. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

You Make the Call

“Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” II Timothy 3:16-17

Baseball umpire Durwood Merrill tells of his rookie year of umpiring in the majors the first time he had called balls and strikes with the famous pitcher, Nolan Ryan.

The second pitch of the game was so fast, Merrill never saw it. He froze, unable to make the call. Finally he yelled somewhat tentatively, “Strike!” The batter backed out of the box and said, “Ump, don’t feel so bad, I didn’t see it either!”

This story is a good illustration of what is happening in the world today. Change is occurring so fast that none of us can see it clearly. Yet we have to make vital calls and daily decisions about very important things, all the time wondering if we are making the right ones.

There has never been a time when we have needed a standard more in our lives than today. We need a fixed point, a true north, an unchanging standard on which we can base our decisions and not have to worry about changing them. God has given us such a standard. It is the Word of God, the Holy Bible. It contains the rock-solid, never changing, always relevant truth.

Unbelievers might say the Bible is irrelevant and outdated. Believers know that “...the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) You make the call.

Prayer for today: Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your Word. Let it be our daily guide in all we do. Through the Scriptures, You communicate Your plans for us, so that we may have richer spirit-filled lives. We ask Lord, that You soften our minds as we read Your Word that it may become food and water for our hearts and minds. Let it change us, so that we learn to live in a right relationship with You and with our fellowman. Help us to become people of purpose, teaching others about You through our character and our actions. Amen.

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Watch Out For the Dream-Stealers

“ so I sent messengers to them with this reply: ‘I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?’” Nehemiah 6:3

Dr. Haller Nutt of Natchez, Mississippi, had a dream. He wanted to build one of the greatest plantation houses in all of the South. Being a doctor and cotton farmer gave him the wealth needed to accomplish this dream home. He made his sketches and searched the nation for the best architect to make his dream a reality. He found Samuel Sloan in Philadelphia to design it. It was going to be an octagon-shaped mansion with eight rooms on each of the six floors all grouped around a middle piece, a six-story rotunda that would be capped with a 16-sided Byzantine onion-shaped dome. It was going to be beautiful with nothing else like it in all the South. Dr. Nutt went all over the world to purchase the very best furnishings for this masterpiece however, as soon as construction had begun, tragedy struck. The Civil War erupted. All the workers left to fight. Dr. Haller Nutt lost everything during the war.

Eventually, he moved his family into the basement of this grand mansion so they might be safe and have shelter. Dr. Nutt died in 1865 before the war was over. The family continued to live in the basement. In fact, they lived there for over a century, 111 years! Finally, some relatives donated the plantation to the local historical society and still to this day, it stands as a monument to an unfinished dream.

In chapter 6 of Nehemiah, enemies tried to stop God’s prophet from completing the dream God had laid on his heart –that of rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. But Nehemiah stayed focused. He completed his God-given dream in record time to the praise of His glory. He is a role model for us today.

Are there any unfinished dreams God still has for Good Shepherd to accomplish? What about in 2022 and beyond? Today in our prayer time I encourage you to seek God’s wisdom and discernment for the dreams He has for our congregation.

Prayer for today: *Dear Father; You have visions and dreams for GSLC beyond what we can imagine. As You did with the people of Nehemiah, instill in each of us, Your vision for our future. Help us keep our eyes, hearts, and minds on You so He will accomplish His plan within us. Help us to increase Your Kingdom in such a way that the surrounding community can see what a wondrous thing You have done so they will want to experience it too. We know that the enemy will try to distract us. Fill us with Your Spirit to keep us focused on the plan You have for us. Help us to use the gifts You have given us -our time, talents, and other resources -to glorify You. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

The Absurdity of Going Back

“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” Galatians 3:3

On Thursday, August 1, 1985, a room full of America’s top intelligence officials gathered outside the office of the director of the CIA for a farewell reception for a retiring colleague. However, the topic was not about the retiree. Whispers were flying around the room that the highest ranking KGB agent, Vasily Sergeyevich Yurchenko, had defected. He was most important because he was in charge of all KGB operations in the United States and Canada. Now, he would be able to provide extremely important information about Soviet spies in America.

After presenting himself to the American Embassy in Rome, he was quickly flown to the United States in a military plane. Once in the U.S., he was taken to a “safe house” in northern Virginia where he was interrogated for hours and provided very sensitive information.

The most startling and amazing part of this story took place three months later on November 2nd. Yurchenko had been spurned by a girlfriend in Canada and was growing increasingly impatient with his situation. During the evening he persuaded the CIA agent to him to take him to Georgetown for dinner and a movie. During dinner Yurchenko asked the agent, “What would you do if I got up and walked off? Would you shoot me?” The CIA agent replied, “We don’t shoot defectors.” Yurchenko countered, “I will be back in 15 to 20 minutes, if I am not, it is your fault.” With that he walked out of the restaurant and presented himself to the Russian Embassy where he un-defected.

The world watched in amazement a few days later as this man boarded a Russian Aeroflot jet, stopping briefly on the boarding steps to wave good-bye to freedom. He then returned to the confines of communism. Why would anybody who had enjoyed freedom return to communism? Yet that which amazes us in the political arena is met with welcome acceptance in the spiritual arena. Why would anyone who has tasted the freedom streaming from the grace of God return to the confines of legalism regulating that relationship? What kind of relationship do you have with the God of grace?

Prayer for today: *Dear Heavenly Father; we pray you make us a people of faith, relying on Your Spirit to teach us Your will for our lives. Through prayer, fellowship and reading Your Word, guide us into a deeper relationship with You. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we may live each day as a blessing to others. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

A Contribution or A Sacrifice?

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -this is your spiritual act of transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -his good, pleasing and perfect will”

Romans 12:1-2

Did you hear the story of the chicken and the pig who were walking together down the road? They came upon a beggar who was nearly starved to death. He had not eaten in days. The chicken and the pig decided to help him. The chicken said, “I have an idea. Let’s fix him some breakfast -some ham and eggs!” The pig thought about that a moment and then said, “I don't like that idea very much because it only requires you to make a contribution, but for me it is a complete sacrifice!”

As the Apostle Paul writes our Scripture passage, he is making a turning point in his letter to the believers in Rome. He is finally giving an application to the truths that he has been telling about in previous chapters. He is stating how we should respond to the knowledge that God has procured our salvation and saved us from the wages of sin through Jesus Christ. He’s telling us to lay it all on the altar for God. He is telling us we need to surrender our lives completely over to our Lord Jesus. In other words, don’t simply make a contribution like the chicken but sacrifice all like the pig.

***Prayer for today:** Dear Heavenly Father, You know the temptations that we face every day. Give us the Spirit of discernment that we can know Your will for us and not fall into the traps of this world. Strengthen us so that we can keep our eyes upon Your Son, Jesus who made the ultimate sacrifice for us. Jesus, in light of Your sacrifice, help us to completely give our minds, our souls and our bodies to You. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Don't Drop Out Of the Battle

*“In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: “Flee like a bird to your mountain.”
Psalm 11:1*

In the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, there was a memorable event in the women’s 3000 meter race. Two premier long-distance runners were entered: Zola Budd, a South African running for Great Britain, and Mary Decker from the U.S.A. During the race, the two collided. Budd landed awkwardly and was cut deeply by Decker’s spikes but was able to continue. She finished a disappointing seventh. Mary Decker suffered a pulled left hip stabilizer muscle and her injury put her out of the race.

In a spiritual sense, there are many Mary Decker’s today. Wounded, they have quit running the race. Among the many images of life found in the Bible, are the image of the runner and the image of the warrior fighting in battle. As believers in Jesus Christ, we discover quickly that this journey we are on is a spiritual battle. It is very difficult to persevere in a battle. In 1 Kings, chapter 22, the Bible records the time when King Ahab of Israel joined with Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, to battle against Syria. In the midst of the chaos, Ahab is struck by an arrow. He groaned to the driver of his chariot, “Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I’ve been wounded.” (Verse 34)

There are many like Ahab who have been wounded in the battle for souls and have forsaken their place. The Bible is full of these warnings and admonitions such as in Galatians 5:7 that reads, “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?” A disturbing part of our culture today is an aversion to any kind of commitment. Our society is short on longevity and long on short-term, quick, instant “what have you done for me lately” attitudes. However, God teaches us differently through His Word to persevere.

As we continue our 40 days of prayer, let us cry out to Jesus to strengthen us and help us to stay in the fight and “keep running”. Show us Your plans, Your dreams, Your visions, and Your future for us and draw us near to Your heart.

Prayer for today: *Father, please give us the courage to persevere with the vision You have entrusted to us. Help us not to be defeated by difficulties and challenges, but to keep our eyes on the path that You set for us. In You Lord, we take our refuge and strength.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Conversion = Changed Life

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful appointing me to his service.” 1 Timothy 1:12

In 1 Timothy, the Apostle Paul is encouraging Timothy in the faith to cherish, protect, and preach the Gospel. The reason is that the Gospel's message changes lives. Indeed, at Good Shepherd the Gospel is preached so that our goal of making more and better followers of Christ can be met. We have been called to be shepherds, His hands and feet, for our Lord Jesus' lost sheep. Ezekiel wrote, “I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak” (Ezekiel 34:16 NIV). Today Good Shepherd has been commissioned, like Peter and Timothy, to strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bring back the strays, and seek the lost.

When I was broken, the world did not care. But those who were faithful to Christ Jesus our Lord did. They strengthened me and brought me back to Jesus so I could be healed by Him. They reminded me of His forgiveness and His abundant love. Today I am blessed to be a part of Good Shepherd, a community of believers who I can trust to strengthen the weak and help others grow close to Jesus so they, too, can be healed.

Prayer for today: *Father God, we pray Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will always be a place that positively impacts others for Jesus. Help each one of us to join in helping to expand God's Kingdom and achieve Christlikeness by faithfully cherishing, protecting, and preaching the Gospel. Amen.*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Truth and Freedom

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

In a day before politicians decided truth according to polls and partisanship, Abraham Lincoln made decisions based on principle. His most notable act was the Emancipation Proclamation. It was New Year's Day, 1863, when this decree was first publicly stated. It would be almost two years later, after his death, that his convictions were made official in the Constitution. Lincoln took a stand without compromise that would nearly rip our nation apart and cause much bloodshed. He knew there were some things that were worth standing for, even if it meant a fight. Personal freedom for everyone is such a thing.

An unusual thing happened after the war. Even after an amendment to the Constitution, slaves continued to live as slaves. Shelby Foote records for us what one Alabama slave said in 1864, “I don’t know nothing ‘bout Abraham Lincoln ‘cep they say he set us free. And I don’t know nothing ‘bout that neither.” How tragic. Strange as it may seem, man preferred the security of slavery to the uncertainty of freedom.

It is tragic when someone does not exercise his personal freedom. Even more so are God’s people who have been set free spiritually but who are content to remain in slavery. Jesus Christ is the Great Emancipator who has paid the ultimate price for His people to be free from the bondage of sin.

Consider these verses: “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 “For we know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. For when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin.” Romans 6:6-7 “Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2

Prayer for today: *Father, thank You for being our Great Emancipator who paid the ultimate price to set us free from the bondage of sin. Help us to be discerning believers, standing firm in the Truth, and claim our Christ – earned freedom. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

Why Pray?

“... The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

Can prayer really make a difference? Can my prayers actually change things? Is it possible for the will of God to be thwarted because I don't pray? These are legitimate questions. The answers you give them reflect the very foundation of your relationship with the Lord. On one hand, if God is Sovereign, He's going to do everything the way He wants, so why pray? On the other hand, if He is waiting on my prayers to execute His will, then I had better get serious about praying really quick. How does His Sovereignty and my prayers go together?

God uses prayer to make the impossible, possible and the ordinary, extraordinary. Prayers make our efforts effective and help us to define God's will more clearly.

C.H. Spurgeon said, “Whenever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray.” Faithful praying releases the Holy Spirit to act and allows us to see God in His full glory.

Someone once said, “God does things when we pray that He does not do when we do not pray.”

In Ezekiel 22:30, God says, “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”

In Genesis 18:17-33 Abraham talked with God on behalf of Sodom. By the end of the conversation, God agreed that even if 10 righteous men were found there He would not destroy the city. Our prayers are also heard by our gracious God who longs to release His blessings upon us if we would only ask. May today's devotional be an inspiration for you to seek the Lord in prayer. Let this help you become endeared to prayer and to realize just how vital prayer is.

Prayer for today: *Father, teach us to realize how vital and precious prayer is to You. Thank You for hearing all the prayers that have been lifted up on behalf of our congregation, and for answering them. As Your children, encourage us to pray more than ever so that everything we do as a church will be bathed in prayer. Amen*

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

He Is Faithful

“They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:23

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church a vision for the future. As we have explored forty days of prayer and fasting in pursuit of this dream, we have found Him to be a faithful promise keeper. Today’s devotional is dedicated to praising this aspect of the Lord for this aspect His character.

Prayer for today: *Father, we praise You and honor You for who You are. We praise You with this Hymn:*

Great is Thy faithfulness (text by Thomas O. Chisholm, Music by William M Runyan)

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with 10,000 beside!

Personal Prayer: “Lord, I want to please You! What do You want me to do to help make the dreams of our church come true?”

