

40 DAYS

of prayer + fasting



Day 1 – Avoid the Tragedy of Unbelief

Read - Matthew 13:53-58

Focus - "And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief." – Matthew 13:58

Devotional Thought - This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. It is the account of Jesus going to His hometown to teach. When people heard Him, they were astonished. However, their astonishment did not lead faith. Their astonishment did not cause them to respond in obedience or belief. Their lives, could have been radically changed for the better. However, because of their unbelief no real change could occur.

This is the problem with unbelief. Unbelief shuts the door on the transformational power of Jesus. However, faith opens the floodgates to that same transformational power. In contrast to this passage of Scripture are countless others where Jesus worked miracles in response to the faith present in the lives of people.

Read – Matthew 9:2; 9:22; 15:28; Mark 10:52; Luke 8:48

Personal Reflection - When Jesus looks at your life what does He find? An attitude of faith or unbelief? Do you believe Jesus can do a work of renewal and revitalization in your life and in this church? Do you believe He will?

Prayer - If your unbelief is a roadblock to Jesus working in your life, confess that sin today Ask God to strengthen your faith in Him. Pray for Jesus to bring renewal into your life and this church over the next 40 days?

Day 2 Remember God's Power

Read – Jeremiah 32:17-44

Focus – “Ah, Lord God! You Yourself made the heavens and earth by Your great power and with Your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for You!” – Jeremiah 32:17

Devotional Thought - Now this might sound ridiculous, but sometimes I think we forget how powerful God is, and in doing so we often allow the immensity of our own problems to overshadow the greatness of our God. And when we do this our view of God diminishes to an anemic, powerless God.

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

But creation was just the beginning of God’s mighty display of power. Jeremiah reminds us that this same God led His people out of Egypt with signs and wonders. As we read the rest of the Bible, we are reminded that this same God sent Jesus to be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, die on a cross for our sins, and be raised to life on the third day. Only God could do that! The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is a reminder that God can do anything.

Personal Reflection - Have you forgotten God’s ability to do anything? Today recall the many great things that God has done as recorded in Scripture. Remember the great things He has done in your life, the world around you and the church.

Prayer - Ask God to do a work of revitalization in your life and the church, and for Him to do it in a way that only He can get credit for.

Day 3 – Confess Pride/Embrace Humility

Read – Luke 18:9-14

Focus - “I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” Luke 18:14

Devotional Thought - Pride is a subtle sin. It is not always easy to detect in our own lives. But Jesus paints a picture of what pride and humility looks like with the two characters in this parable. The Pharisee was an example of how pride behaves. The tax collector was an example of how humility behaves. Pride refuses to admit it has a need, while humility on the other hand readily admits it has a need. The tax collector struck his chest and admitted he needed forgiveness. He knew he was a sinner and without grace and forgiveness, he would be lost.

You see, pride has an eagle’s eye for other people’s sins. The Pharisee said, “I thank you that I am not like those other people who are greedy, unrighteous adulterers.” Humility on the other hand sees its own sin. The tax collector declared, “God turn your wrath from me, a sinner.”

Personal Reflection - The main concern for pride is “what do other people think of me?” The Pharisee prayed about himself stating, “I fast twice a week, I give a tenth of everything I get.” Humility’s main concern is “what does God think about me?”

Prayer - Pray that God will reveal any areas of unhealthy pride in your life and show you His way to true humility.

Day 4 – Purify Your Heart

Focus - "The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God." Matthew 5:8

Devotional Thought - Growing up in North Carolina, I used to love when it would snow (which wasn't very often). My room was in the basement and, my window was at ground level. So I would sit backwards on my bed, listening to music and watch as the snow would accumulate on the ground. However, once the snow had fallen it would soon begin to lose that pure white color because of the dirtiness of everything else. This same reality is also true with us. When we entered the world, we were pure of heart, but over time that purity was tarnished by the sin and brokenness of our lives. But this is not the way it was meant to be. Jesus' sacrifice washes us all clean. He entered our lives to make us pure again. And in that purity, Jesus teaches that the pure of heart are blessed because they/we will be able to see God, which is the most awesome blessing of all.

Personal Reflection - When was the last time you saw God? You see, we can never see the wonder of God's presence until we have a pure heart. Satan doesn't mind if we have a little pureness as long as we have a lot of the world's dirtiness. Satan's desire is for us to look like day-old snow. But to see God in the midst of our evil world causes our heart to be purer. As you read and meditate on today's verse, think about your heart's purity? Has your pureness of God been mixing with some of this world's dirtiness?

Prayer - The church needs people with a pure heart to see God at work. Pray for those who have shown you how to have a pure heart. Then pray for God to give you the passion to keep it pure. Pray that God will show you the areas in your heart that are not pure, and to give you the strength to turn those parts over to Him.

Day 5 – Search Me, O God

Read - Psalm 139:23-24

Focus - "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns." Psalm 139:23

Devotional Thought - It's one thing to pray for a larger house, a newer car, or for a salary increase. It's another thing to ask the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to search our hearts and test our thoughts. The word of God reveals that Yahweh is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. In fact, He knows us better than we know ourselves. And nothing catches our Heavenly Father off guard.

But how do we engage in the process of asking God to search our hearts? I like to think about it this way. Health care experts tell us that annual physical exams are wise and necessary. We often don't listen to them, but that is their suggestion. But early detection is key to physical health and personal longevity. In a similar way, spiritual health requires periodic exams, too. Therefore, we should schedule regular times, when get away from the obligations and responsibilities of the world. And in these times we must seek out solitude with the One who can reveal the most intimate things about us.

During these moments of solitude, we should ask the Lord to search our hearts and attitudes. We should ask ourselves "Is Jesus still our First Love? Are we guilty of simply going through the motions of our faith? Do we love our neighbor as Jesus called us to? Are we flirting with temptation? Are we living our lives with an attitude of humility or pride?" Our solitude and transparency with God may lead to personal revitalization. It's documented that a revitalized disciple of Christ, is exactly what God uses to revitalize a church.

Personal Reflection - How long has it been since your last spiritual examination?

Prayer - With an open Bible ask God to search your heart and attitude.

Day 6 – He Must Become Greater

Focus - "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

Devotional Thought - Christian life and service isn't immune from dangers. The enemy loves to see Christians disobey God, divide churches, and destroy ministries. One tool the enemy uses is pride. As Proverbs 16:18 reads, "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall." This is the heart of John the Baptist when he said "He must increase, but I must decrease." He desired to see people focus on the Son of God and the Savior of the world. John wanted the watching world to remember Jesus' and not him.

Unfortunately, many of us have trouble following John's example. For example, when a pastor believes they are irreplaceable; they are positioning themselves to take credit for the church's advancement and growth. But this is not how it is meant to be. Jesus is meant to increase and His servants are meant to decrease. But how do we make this happen in the church? Jesus increases when He becomes the "thread" of every sermon, Bible study, and every conversation we have about spirituality. It happens when Jesus receives the glory and honor that are due Him; when His grace is embraced and given; and when He is followed with heartfelt devotion and surrender.

Personal Reflection - As you reflect on your life and your own personal ministry, are you following John's inspirational example? Where is the spot light shining? Is it shining on you or on Jesus.

Prayer - If Jesus is increasing in your life, praise God and ask Him to continue working in your life. If you are increasing, repent and experience a new beginning.

Day 7 – Take a Soil Test

Read - Matthew 13:1-9

Focus - "Still others fell on good ground and produced a crop: some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown." – Matthew 13:8

Devotional Thought - Jesus addressed a large crowd of people, telling a parable about a person's heart. As the farmer scattered seed, it fell along the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil. Jesus desires for His followers to have hearts (soil) that yield a harvest. So what is the present condition of your heart? In Jesus' parable, He talks about four kinds of soil (hearts):

- (1) A calloused heart. This person lacks spiritual and ministerial expectations, goes through the motions, and relates to God with a selfish agenda.
- (2) A shallow heart. This person is often immature in the faith and busy in ministry. It's possible to be a mile wide and an inch deep.
- (3) A distracted heart. This person battles the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.
- (4) A productive heart. This person lives his or her life to fulfill God's mission. In order to plant a garden, the ground (soil), must first be broken. If you desire to yield a spiritual harvest, brokenness is often what God uses.

Personal Reflection - Are you willing to be broken for God's glory? What is currently breaking your heart and spirit? What kind of soil are you?

Prayer - Ask the Lord today to show you the real condition of your heart. If you have a calloused, shallow, or distracted heart, allow the Lord to change you. He wants you to have a productive heart, meaning a heart that loves Him, builds His church, and expands His kingdom.

Week 1 – Self-Examination

Christians must see their sinfulness the way God sees it... "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit." Psalm 51:10-12

Try this today:

- Praise God for who He is
- Confess your sinfulness and need for cleansing
- Allow His Spirit to draw you near

Ask God to:

- Search through your life and reveal any sin
- Help you be honest with Him about your sin
- Fill you with a deep desire for holiness
- Help you hate the sin in your life
- Help you surrender sinful thoughts and practices
- Help you live more faithfully
- Restore any lost joy in your walk with Him



CREATE IN ME A *clean heart*
O GOD; AND RENEW A *right spirit*

PSALM 51:10

Day 8 – Ask, Seek, and Knock

Read - Matthew 7:7-12

Focus - "Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

Devotional Thought - God answers the fervent prayers of His people according to His will, and we know it is His will for the church to be revitalized and healthy people. But why does that so often fail to happen? Perhaps it lags and fails because we give up on prayer too soon. This reminds me of a story. A small girl watched as her mother smeared cold cream on her face. She asked, "Mommy, why are you doing that?" So she explained that it is "To make me beautiful again." In a few moments, as the mother started wiping off the cream, the child asked, "Are you giving up already?"

We should never give up on prayer as we ask God to revitalize our churches. In fact, we should pray regularly and intensely until the answer comes. The verbs "ask, seek, and knock" are expressed in a form that denotes continuous action. Jesus is literally saying, "Ask, and keep on asking. Seek, and keep on seeking. Knock, and keep on knocking."

Personal Reflection - Do you regularly pray with intensity for revitalization? If you need to be revitalized, whatever you do, do not quit praying until the answer comes. Ask, seek, and knock!

Prayer - Begin your journey of ongoing, fervent prayer for personal revitalization today, then spend some time quietly listening for God to respond.

Day 9 – Value His Name

Focus - "Samuel replied, "Don't be afraid. Even though you have committed all this evil, don't turn away from following the LORD. Instead, worship the LORD with all your heart. Don't turn away to follow worthless things that can't profit or deliver you; they are worthless. The LORD will not abandon His people, because of His great name and because He has determined to make you His own people." 1 Samuel 12:20-22

Devotional Thought - The housing crash of 2008 changed the value of many things: houses, retirement accounts, salaries, etc. There was long lasting effects on the companies and individuals impacted. Value is something that changes. What would it be like if something of great value never changed? The value of something that is priceless remains priceless, and we have the most priceless thing of all who desires to be a part of our lives, Jesus.

These verses in 1 Samuel remind us that even during times when we have sinned against the Lord, we must not turn from HIM. The name of the Lord has great VALUE for us. One of the ways we see the value of the Lord is He will not forsake His people. Not that we have that much value; but because His name and reputation is that valuable.

Personal Reflection - Do you see the value of the name of the LORD? Does your life reflect how much value you see in the Lord?

Prayer - Pray today that the value of God's name would be seen in your life so that a world may see HIM. Pray that the church would reflect the value of the name of the LORD.

Day 10 – Bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Read - Galatians 5:22-26

Focus - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

Devotional Thought - As followers of Jesus, we are to daily yield to the control of the Holy Spirit. And in this passage, Paul encourages us to “live by the Spirit” and “follow the Spirit.” The tangible evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of our life is spiritual fruit. Just as an apple is the outward evidence of the inner reality of an apple tree, so the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the outward evidence that the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives.

When the Holy Spirit is in control, our lives will be characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith, gentleness and self control. God’s plan is to produce all of these qualities in us as we yield to Him. When the Holy Spirit is not in control of our lives we are unloving, joyless, restless, impatient, unkind, and out of control.

Personal Reflection - If the person who knows you best, used the qualities in verses 22 and 23 as a checklist, what words would they choose to describe you? Would they describe you as a loving person? A person characterized by joy? Would they refer to you as a patient person? A kind person?

Prayer - Yield today to the work of the Holy Spirit in you. Ask God to produce in you the fruit of His Holy Spirit.

Day 11 – Forfeit My Agenda

Read - Luke 22:39-46

Focus - "Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me – nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." - Luke 22:42

Devotional Thought - Jesus was fully God and fully man. In this passage we see the humanity of Jesus as He struggles with the will of the Father in light of His imminent suffering and death. Jesus realized that in a few short hours He would carry the weight of the world's sin. The Scripture states that, "He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." As Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed with such intensity that His "sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." On the one hand He wanted the Father to remove the cup of suffering. On the other hand He realized that same suffering and death were necessary for the salvation of precious souls and the fulfillment of the Father's plan for Him. Therefore, He ultimately prayed, "Not my will but Yours be done."

Personal Reflection - More than anything else, Jesus wanted the will of the Father to be carried out in His life, and the same should be true for each of us. Today, spend some time reflecting on your own life and allowing the will of the Father to be lived out in your life.

Prayer - Pray today that you would be willing to lay down your own plans, preferences and agenda so that God's will might be carried out. Pray as Jesus did, "Not my will but Yours be done."

Day 12 – Be Controlled by the Spirit

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

Devotional Thought - I hate to say it, but I love to sit on the couch with my television remote control in hand, scrolling through Netflix or Hulu looking for something to watch. On my remote there are several buttons, one for the streaming services, one for the DVD player, and one for the audio system. Sometimes while I am watching, I will accidentally hit the audio system buttons and then the remote will not be control the tv anymore. It usually takes me a moment to understand that I have by mistake touched the wrong button.

In Romans 8:5 Paul reminds us that by nature we are controlled by sinful desires. But Paul also tells us that those who are controlled by the Spirit respond in a spiritual way. In a normal day, as things happen around us, how we respond shows which we are controlled by; our sinful nature or our spiritual nature. But here’s the thing. We get to choose what controls us. We get to chose whether we will be controlled by our sinful nature or our spiritual nature.

Personal Reflection - How would your life be different if every day you chose to be controlled by your spiritual nature? What about the church? Over these next weeks, ask God to speak to you and guide you to revitalization of your spiritual life.

Prayer - Pray God will show you areas of your life you need to allow Him to control. Also, pray for our elders and ministry leaders to be guided by the Spirit of God. .

Day 13 – Forgive One Another

Read - Ephesians 4:25-32

Focus - "And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ." - Ephesians 4:32

Devotional Thought - One thing we all have in common is that we have all been hurt by other people. Others have said or done things that have hurt us. Sometimes we have been hurt by what someone failed to say or do. The issue in life is not "will we be hurt" but "how will we respond when we are hurt?"

Today's passage sites several possible responses that often accompany the hurts we encounter: anger, bitterness, wrath, malice. When we identify these things in our lives we are challenged to "remove" or "put away" these things. In place of these responses we are called to choose the response of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the way God has chosen to relate to us. Forgiveness is the way God encourages us to relate to each other. Forgiveness means we treat the person in the future as if they had not hurt us in the past. Forgiveness involves refusing to relate to the person out of anger and bitterness. Forgiveness means we choose to extend grace to the person who hurt us.

Personal Reflection - Have you harbored anger, bitterness, wrath or malice toward someone? If so, how long have you been hanging on to it? Take time today to confess your sinful response to that person. Choose, with the help and grace of God, to forgive that person.

Prayer - Ask God to identify the presence of unforgiveness in your life. Confess the sin of unforgiveness. Ask God to produce in your life a humility that honors Him.

Week 2 - Self Examination

Ed Stetzer of LifeWay Research recently responded to research data by stating that spiritual maturity comes through “intentionality in a disciple’s life.” Investing regularly in some aspect of Church outside of Sunday Morning service is an important piece of intentional spiritual renewal plan for a disciple. Just as an ember pulled out of the fire goes out, so also is spiritual progress extinguished when a disciple separates from other believers. Spiritual renewal and progress demands more than just regular attendance. Consider the following actions you can take to raise the level of your investment in the Church which will ultimately aid in your spiritual renewal and progress.

1. Seeking God in a personal Bible study aided by a daily quiet time.
2. Praying for and inviting people to join you are church, either in person or on Facebook live
3. Communicate regularly with people in the Church
4. Intentionally spend some time fellowshipping with church members and visitors.
5. Help church members who are in need.
6. Participating honestly and openly in small group discussions and Bible classes when those resume
7. Actively live out the truth of the gospel in your life, is it will be a living sermon
8. Serving in some way to strengthen the church.
9. Supporting the leaders of the church through prayer and action
10. When you watch one of our live streaming services or another of our videos, like and share it with the people in your life. This is truly the easiest form of evangelism.



BE STRENGTHENED
BY THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

2 TIMOTHY 2:1

Day 18 - Begin with Brokenness

Read - Nehemiah 1:1-11

Focus - "When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Nehemiah 1:4

Devotional Thought - Brokenness is often what God uses to reveal a vision for the situation or the future. Nehemiah serves as an example of someone who was broken hearted over a city and its people. Enemies had destroyed the wall around Jerusalem, leaving the city in a vulnerable position. The people were in great trouble and disgrace. Nehemiah sought God's heart and followed His leadership. And then he made himself available for God to use.

Revival requires boldness. Nehemiah painted a clear picture of what this revitalization looks like. He asked questions. He wanted to know about the city and its people. What questions do you need to ask? Is your faith in need of revitalization? Are you committed to sharing Jesus and developing believers in the faith? When was the last time you baptized, or lead some one to be a new believer? Nehemiah accepted reality of the situation his people were in. He had heard the news that the wall was broken down, and the people were in trouble. Do you need to accept a difficult reality? But then Nehemiah acted. He cried, prayed, fasted, and surrendered. What do you need to do now that will lead to revitalization in your life and in the church? Do you need to cry, pray, fast, and surrender?

Personal Reflection - Are you broken over the "current reality" of the church?

Prayer - I challenge you to ask questions, accept reality, and act now. God desires to use you as a revitalization and revival leader.

Day 19 - Be Salt

Read - Matthew 5:13-14

Focus - "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on."
– Matthew 5:13

Devotional Thought - As followers of Jesus we have the potential to influence others for good. Our lives, when lived for Christ, can encourage others to glorify God (Matthew 5:16). But we also have the potential to influence others in a negative way (Luke 17:1-3). To influence others for Christ is to be "salt." To influence others in negative ways is to be "salt that has lost its taste."

When we face the extremes of warm summers and cold winters, we understand the importance of a thermostat. When a room is hot we adjust the thermostat and it works in connection with the air conditioner to adjust the temperature in the room. We could say that the thermostat influences the room. We can place a thermometer in that same room and the thermometer would be influenced by the temperature of the room. If the room was warm, the thermometer would adjust to the surrounding temperature. As the salt of the earth we are called to influence the world around us for Christ and to not be influenced by our surroundings.

Personal Reflection - Is your daily life and witness more like a thermometer or a thermostat? Do you positively affect the world around you, or are you affect by the world.

Prayer - Pray that God will give you strength and wisdom to be a good influence.

Day 20 – Rely on God’s Power

Read - 1 Corinthians 4:16-20

Focus - “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.” – 1 Corinthians 4:20

Devotional Thought - What gives power to the church? This question triggers different answers. Some may say prayer, some great preaching; others a loving church family, one or two smart alecks might even say electricity. Yet some churches have plugged into sources that will never power a church. The Word of God tells us that the Kingdom of God is not powered by words. We can use words and try to get people motivated, but the reality is that words without action are of no lasting value. Someone once said, “Words are cheap.” One of the great characteristics of God is that He has great power. For our church to have revival, we must plug into the power that comes from GOD! How much God power are you currently using? Throughout His Word we find God using supernatural power to sustain His people, and He still does!

Personal Reflection - So once again how much God power are we currently using? God wants to be the power source of our church! God wants His children to plug into the power of the Word. Are you spending time in the Word daily? God wants us to spend time in prayer. Are you spending time daily talking with God and listening to the instructions that are provided?

Prayer - Pray and ask God to help you make a commitment to be in the Word and to pray daily.

Day 21 - Strengthen Your Faith in the God Who Revives

Read - Ezekiel 37:1-14

Focus - "This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live." Ezekiel 37:5

Devotional Thought - What a scary and challenging vision this must have been. Parched and bleached by the sun, the brittle bones scattered across the valley. This vision brought two words to the prophet's mind—death and discouragement. The only thing more discouraging than the vision itself was the fact that God's own people were represented by these abandoned bones. They had died, and their livelihood required significant intervention by God.

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

In the vision, God did what only the Creator and Sustainer could do. As Ezekiel preached, the bones came together, were wrapped by muscle and skin, and those corpses were resuscitated. The dry bones lived! Likewise, Israel was revived and restored. There is a lesson we need to learn. God delights Himself in revitalizing that which seems to be dry and lifeless.

Personal Reflection - Do you believe that what God did in Ezekiel's vision and for Israel, can be done for you? Do you believe that God can do the same thing for both the global and local church?

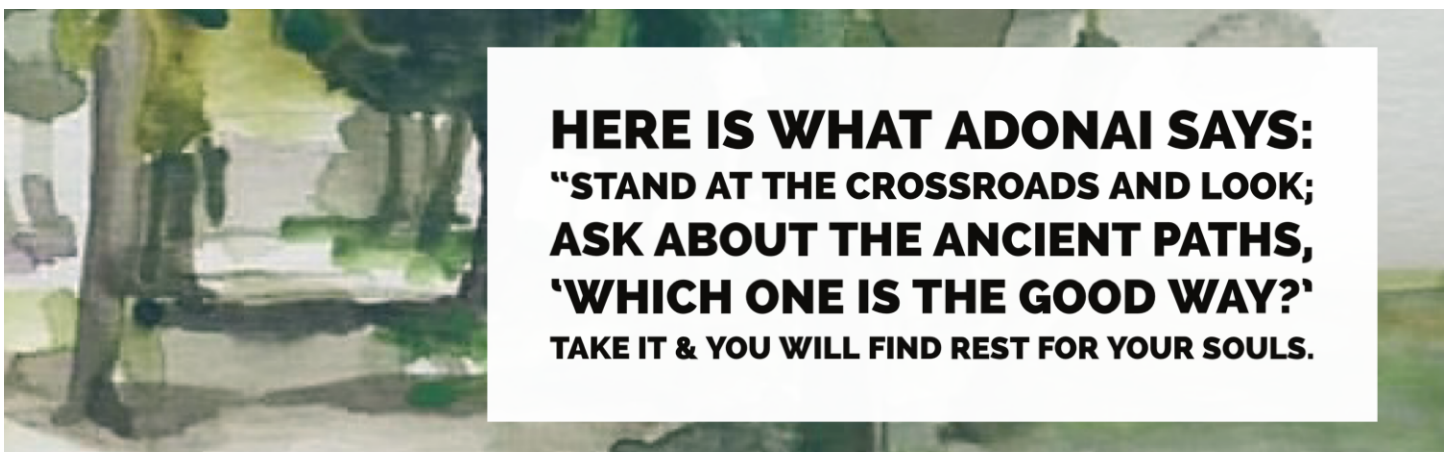
Prayer - Ask God to increase your faith as you continue to pray for revival.

Week 3 – Revival Begins with You

Charles Finney, who was known to be a part of a great revival, said, "The experience of revival is nothing more than a new beginning of obedience to God." Any genuine revival that has ever happened in human history has brought about repentance in the lives of the people, a change in the community, and evangelism to the masses. We need a real revival today—not just an emotional experience and not just a tingle down the backbone. We need to see God work, because as a people, we need it as never before. I like what Jeremiah said: "'Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'" – Jeremiah 6:16.

The early church, the one that Jesus started, turned their world upside down. They set the world on fire. But the church of today is much larger than the early church and has considerable resources, with incredible technology to utilize. Yet it seems as though the world is turning us upside down. Why aren't we setting our world on fire? Because we need a revival. We need an awakening.

We talk about the need for revival and change in the church. But we must each ask ourselves these questions: Am I personally revived? Am I living as a committed, on-fire follower of Jesus Christ? If you are not, then you are part of the problem, not part of the solution.



**HERE IS WHAT ADONAI SAYS:
"STAND AT THE CROSSROADS AND LOOK;
ASK ABOUT THE ANCIENT PATHS,
'WHICH ONE IS THE GOOD WAY?'
TAKE IT & YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.**

Day 22 – Discern God’s Plan

Read - Matthew 6:9-15

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

Devotional Thought - In this passage Jesus teaches us how to pray. Each portion of His teaching gives us an important aspect of prayer. Verse 10 reminds us that God has a plan for our lives and the church. We are a part of God’s kingdom. His desire is that His kingdom would penetrate neighborhoods, communities, cities, and ultimately the world with the gospel.

When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are praying for God to work in and through us and our church to extend His kingdom.

When God views our church, He sees our potential. In the mind of God, He envisions what we can and should become in the future. God loves us and the church so much and doesn’t want it to remain where it is today.

When we pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” what we are asking God is to reveal what He envisions for us. Through prayer we can discern “next steps.” And during this time, the voice we need to hear above all others is God’s, but that only happens through focused prayer.

Personal Reflection and Prayer - Pray today asking God to reveal to you and to other church members what God envisions for the future of our church. Express to him your willingness to yield to what He wants. Prayerfully consider this question: How do you want our church to carry out the Great Commission in our context?

Day 23 - Choose Your Side

Read - Joshua 5:13-15

Focus - "Neither," He replied. "I have now come as commander of the Lord's army." Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship and asked Him, "What does my Lord want to say to His servant?" – Joshua 5:14

Devotional Thought - When Joshua, preparing for the heat of battle, saw a human figure with sword drawn, so he naturally went to the man and asked if he was for them or against them. The man, who Joshua soon discovered was a divine appearance, answered that he was not for them or against them, but instead the Captain of the Lord's army. Joshua appropriately bowed down and worshipped him.

As a church, we start thinking about change, newness and moving forward, it is possible for us to begin to choose sides. We distinguish between those who are for our vision and those who are against. A better route is to make sure we personally are lined up with the Lord. We will know that we are with God when our desires for the church match the desires as seen in Scripture. When we are submissive to God-ordained leadership, and when our actions and attitudes reflect Christ-like character real growth can and will happen.

Personal Reflection - With all this in mind, it would be a healthy exercise to examine whose side are we on. It is easy for us to think we know what is best and to chase after that vision. But what we all need to be focused on is understanding and enacting God's vision for our church.

Prayer - Consider praying today that God will help you align yourself with His vision for the church. Pray that His desires for the church would be reflected through your words, actions, and attitudes.

Day 24 - Pursue the Keys to Healing

Read - II Chronicles 7:12-14

Focus - "(If) My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land." - II Chronicles 7:14

Devotional Thought - Excitement and optimism ruled the day in the passage above. After seven years of construction, the Temple was built and dedicated. But the God's presence was manifested in an unusual way. Fire fell from heaven to consume the sacrifice and God's glory filled the Temple. Later, God appeared to Solomon at night and told him that not every day would be like the day of dedication. There would be days when, in an effort to draw His errant people back to Himself, God would send drought and pestilence. At such a time, God told Solomon His people were to pursue four keys to healing: humility, prayer, seeking of God's face, and repentance.

Personal Reflection - Today, we are God's people and there many indicators that mark the need for rejuvenation, revival and even rebirth. But what are you/we doing to pursue revival. And are pursuing this with humility, prayer, seeking God's face, and repentance?

Prayer - Ask God to help you and others in our church to humbly walk with Him, prayerfully depend upon Him, diligently seek His face, and honestly repent of sin that hinders our fellowship with Him.

Day 25 – Love Jesus above All

Read - Revelation 2:1-7

Focus - "... But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first."
Revelation 2:4

Devotional Thought - The final line of the refrain from the hymn "Oh, how I love Jesus" is, "Oh, how I love Jesus, because He first loved me." Now when I first hear this song, I thought this was a little shallow. Is the only reason you love Jesus because He first loved you. If we said something like this in a human relationship, it would be a questionable statement. But, when sung from a true heart, it really is a beautiful statement. Because our love for Jesus should not only be present in our worship, it should be the motivating factor for everything we claim to do for Him, and we should be doing it because of what He has done for us first

The church at Ephesus outwardly appeared to be a wonderful congregation. Jesus Himself pointed out their hard work, faithful endurance, worthy walk, and doctrinal integrity. The problem was that these works were performed out of duty, rather than out of their love for the Messiah. Even though they did not know it, the Ephesian Christians needed revival. They were running the risk of losing their light for the Lord. Many believers were wearing themselves out with a manic schedule of church programming while seeing few results. In their harassed lifestyle of "Christian" activities they weren't spending time cultivating their love for Jesus. They need a revival of the heart. They need to heed the words of Christ, Remember then how far they had fallen. They needed to repent, and remember their first love.

Personal Reflection - Is your love for Jesus the motivation for your work for Him?

Prayer - Tell Jesus how much you love Him, and if needed, repent for allowing your love for Him to grow cold.

Day 28 – Pursue Church Unity

Read - Psalm 133:1-3

Focus - “How good and pleasant it is when the children of God live together in harmony!” – Psalm 133:1

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

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

Personal Reflection - In what ways are you seeking to promote unity in your church?

Prayer - Pray today that God will help you be a person of peace in your congregation? Consider praying that God will give you a peace-making, conciliatory spirit to aid your church as it moves forward toward revitalization.

Week 4 - Unity Matters

Illustration - When I was younger, my family and I went through a lot a counseling at various times. One of the more memorable experiments suggested by a therapist was the "Compliment Plate." Each night as you sit down to eat supper with your family give one person a special plate. This is the compliment plate. Whoever receives the compliment plate that night gets a compliment from everyone at the table. Rotate the plate so each night someone different will get the special compliment plate, including mom and dad. We were instructed to give authentic words of affirmation not surface level compliments. If used consistently, this simple exercise would teach us to look for what is helpful in building others up according to their needs. Spend some time in the space below thing about practical ways you can build others up to

Focus - Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. - Ephesians 4:29



Day 29 – Love Your Leaders, Don't Idolize Them

Read - 1 Corinthians 3:3-4

Focus - When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world? - 1 Corinthians 3:4

Devotional Thought - How many church leaders have been compared to their predecessor with the comment, "So and so didn't do it that way. They did it this way?" These comparisons are seldom helpful and make life difficult for the leader God has called to that particular congregation. While every church member should be encouraged to show honor to past leaders, we make a mistake when we begin to think that their approach to ministry and church leadership is the only approach God can use.

The Corinthian Christians had division in the church because of different leadership personalities that God had used in their congregational life. The members picked which side they were on to the exclusion of the people who preferred the other leaders. Paul pointed out their error and challenged them to put away carnal favoritism. We would do well today to honor past leaders God has used in the church while at the same time submitting to the Christ-like leadership God has set before us today.

Personal Reflection - What is one thing you can do this week to honor your church leaders?

Prayer - Today is a good day to pray for your ministers, elders and other leaders. Pray that God will fill him with the Holy Spirit, restoring the joy of his salvation, affirming them in his calling, and refocusing them on the mission at hand.

Day 30 – Become a Church Cheerleader

Focus - Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. – 10:24-25

Devotional Thought - The job of a cheerleader is to support the team and call the fans to action. Fans at a ball game can really make a difference as they cheer their team on to fight for victory. In church, while each of us has a part on the team, we also have a part like that of a fan. Sometimes we are in the game, while at other times we are in the stands cheering for those who are working hard for the sake of Christ's mission.

We cheer each other on when we affirm the way God is using one of our brothers or sisters in the work of ministry. We cheer our team on when we amen the truth brought out by the pastor. We cheer the team when we participate joyfully in worship and greeting the guests. We spur the team onto ministry greatness when we shout approval at the positive actions brought forth by church leaders. The positive attitude of one person can make a real difference as that individual vocalizes his or her support of the congregation.

Personal Reflection - What is coming up, or happening now, in the life of the church for which you can offer your vocal support?

Prayer - Pray today that God will show you ways you can support your church vocally with encouraging words as you move toward revival.

Day 33 – Love One Another

Read - John 13:34-35

Focus - "... I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another." John 13:34

Devotional Thought - In the Upper Room, Jesus gave some final instructions to His apostles whom He would soon leave. He began that final lecture by challenging His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. Addressing this issue first speaks to the importance of it.

Love and unity in the church are critical to its health and growth. Jesus stated that all people would know we are His disciples by our love for one another. I believe that many churches are stagnate or in decline due to their lack of genuine love for one another and subsequent disunity. A watching world wonders if it can be loved by a group of people who do not seem to love one another. Francis Schaffer states that "the love of Christ in the lives of believers is what sets them apart from the world." He concludes that "the world has a right to judge the authenticity of Christ's claims to be the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, by what they see in the lives of His followers."

Personal Reflection - Jesus is the One who can change lives, but he often times uses us to do that. This means that the lives of His followers must be different than those of the world. Do they truly love one another in difficult times? Do you live in unity and love with other Christians?

Prayer - Ask God to help you love your brothers and sisters in Christ, and to do so with the love He has for each of us.

Day 34 – Schedule a Church Check-up

Read - Acts 11:19-30

Focus - “The Lord’s hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord”. – Acts 11:21

Devotional Thought - Are your life, marriage, family, career, and church healthy? The church in Antioch was healthy and strong. In fact, it was so healthy that news about this church reached Jerusalem. When the church acts, people take notice and people will talk about the church (good or bad). Barnabas reported that he saw the “grace of God” when he arrived in Antioch. So what are people saying about our church? As people attend in person and online, do they see the “grace of God” at work? What signs distinguish a healthy church?

A healthy church:

1. Expect commitment – Persecution couldn’t stop the witness of early believers.
2. Share Jesus – Early believers didn’t talk about the economy, sports, or Hollywood. Jesus was the subject of their conversations.
3. Welcome change – The church in Antioch saw the Lord change lives, marriages, and families. The church’s message must never change. However, methods need to change as the Lord leads.
4. Serve together – Barnabas needed Saul’s help to teach the believers in Antioch. Healthy churches embrace a “team” approach to ministry.
5. Disciple believers – Barnabas and Saul taught a great number of believers for one year. Healthy churches never separate evangelism and discipleship.
6. Practices generosity – Generosity is a must in a healthy church.
7. Trusts leaders – The Antioch church trusted Barnabas and Saul. Leadership trust is essential in healthy churches.

Personal Reflection - Based on these characteristics are you apart of a healthy Church? If not, what can you do to help make the church a healthier place?

Prayer - Ask God to bless your church with health.

Day 35 – See The Power of Agreement

Read - Acts 6:1-7

Focus - "So the preaching about God flourished, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith". - Acts 6:7

Devotional Thought - Some times we avoid making decisions on issues of importance because we believe those decisions will divide people and give opportunities for problems to occur. These people do have plenty of evidence to back up their practice. Many church splits have happened because half of the congregation wanted to go one direction while the other half wanted to go another.

In Acts 6:1-7 there was a different mindset toward congregational decisions and outcomes. The church needed help with its ministry to the widows of the congregation. A solution was proposed by the leadership and the proposal found favor with the congregation. The result was a unified church that continued to reach out with the gospel and make more disciples for Christ.

Personal Reflection - How can you be a bigger part of the future of the church?

Prayer - Please pray that God will give wisdom to church leaders regarding the future plans of the church and how to bring new people on board.

Week 5 - Using Your Spiritual Gifts

The moment you become a follower of Jesus, God gives you spiritual gifts. But how do you start using the spiritual gifts God has put inside of you? Here are four ways to get started:

1. Discover your gifts – There are three steps: examine, evaluate, and experiment. First, you examine by studying each spiritual gift. Then, evaluate what you're good at. You can start by asking friends what gifts they see in you. Finally, experiment by trying different things. Volunteering for different ministries at your church will help you discover your gifts. For instance, you may be better at organizing than at teaching.

2. Dedicate your gifts to God – Maybe you already know your spiritual gifts, but you're just not using them for the Lord. You're using them for yourself. You need to humble yourself and dedicate to the Lord every gift you have. Push all of your excuses out of the way, and say, "God, I dedicate back to you the gifts that you gave to me."

3. Develop your gifts – Gifts are like muscles: The more you use them, the bigger they get. You can and should strengthen, develop, and grow any gift God has given you. You get better at using a gift by practice, studying, and learning from other people who have the same gift. Peter explains that "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10). When God gives you something, he will give you even more of it if you use it well—more talent, money, influence, relationships, or responsibility.

4. Deploy your spiritual gifts. – "Deploy" means to put into service. You get out on the field and start doing something. Romans 12:6 says this: "We are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have".

What's the best place to discover, dedicate, develop, and deploy your spiritual gifts?



Day 37 – Obey His Marching Orders

Read - Matthew 28:16-20

Focus - "Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" - Matthew 28:18

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

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

Personal Reflection - You and I have been called to attention and given an assignment that can change lives, marriages, families, churches, and our community. Let's not disobey our Commander-in-Chief's marching orders! Reflect on how you've responded to the Great Commission. Have you treated Jesus' command as optional or mandatory?

Prayer - Pray that you will be able to allow the Lord to use you to impact the nations for His glory!

Day 38 – Raise the Temperature

Read - Revelation 3:14-22

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

Devotional Thought - As a result of a bad meal, or a curvy road, or a contagious virus, sometimes we can feel sick to your stomach. Feeling nauseated is very uncomfortable. Jesus challenged the Laodicean church on several points. However, the church's real condition left Him nauseated. A lukewarm church makes Jesus sick to His stomach. What led the Laodicean church to be lukewarm? God's people thought they were self-sufficient. Jesus wasn't really needed on a day-to-day basis. In fact, He was standing outside of the church, knocking on the door, and hoping to be invited back in.

Generally, not in words, but at least in actions, many churches rely on their structures, staff, and strategies rather than on Christ Jesus. Meaning the church's Redeemer is left standing outside the fellowship, desiring to be welcomed back in. There is hope though for a lukewarm church. Jesus gives His people an opportunity to repent and change directions.

Personal Reflection - Would you say the church is currency dependent on the presence and power of Jesus Christ? Or is the church's behavior causing Jesus to be nauseated?

Prayer - Ask God to help you understand what he thinks about the church. Ask God to help you better hear His knock, and the courage to open the door, and invite Him in so that He can fellowship with us.

Day 40 - Evaluate The Church

Read - Revelation 3:1-6

Focus - "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says: I know your works; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead.'" - Revelation 3:1

Devotional Thought - The church is evaluated every week. First time guests who visit us in person and online have an opinion about our church. The senior adults who attend have convictions about the life and ministry of our congregation. The young families have some thoughts as well as the youth. The community in which our church is located also has something that comes to mind when they think of our church. These opinions are varied and may have some merit.

The opinion, or rather judgment, that matters most is the one offered by Jesus, the Head of the church. Jesus has some thoughts concerning our congregation, and the road to growth and revitalization begins with seeking Jesus' view of the church.

Personal Reflection - How does our congregation's perception of our effectiveness differ from the perspective of Jesus?

Prayer - Pray today that God will help our congregation understand how He views us and what He wishes to see happen for us to move into new life and ministry and be an influence for Christ in our community.



1 CORINTHIANS 3:3
FOR YOU ARE
STILL
FLESHLY.