

“That I May Know Him Better”

21 Day of Fasting & Prayer

March 1-22, 2020

Ephesians 1:17-18 says, “*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of **wisdom** and **revelation**, so **that you may know him better**. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you ...*”

I welcome you, my dear church family to a special time in the life of our church and the beginning of my ministry as your pastor. The theme for our time in this period of prayer and fasting is “*That I May Know Him Better.*” Paul records an amazing prayer of his for the precious people that made up the church in Ephesus – the Ephesians.

He speaks of their reputation as having “*faith in the Lord Jesus*” and as having “*love for all the saints*” (Ephesians 1:15). Coming from the apostle Paul, these are words of high praise indeed. In other words, their faith was one that was all in. They were completely surrendered to the Lordship of Christ in their lives. And their love for one another was so impressive in its genuineness that he could not help but mention it. He took note of their unique reputation in a world of such pluralism, materialism and an acceptance of multiple gods. So, Paul used this opportunity to encourage them. And, I believe he would not have spoken this way had they had a half-hearted faith and a lackluster love.

This is the way I feel as your Pastor. I am so honored and pleased that God has called me to make this part of our life journey together. I see your faith and know of your love to be so genuine and impressive. In fact, Paul’s next words in this text are again, a demonstration of how I feel. He said, “*I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers*” – *Ephesians 1:16.*

As we take this journey together, I have put together this 21 day prayer journal as a way to assist you in praying during this time. I will share many scriptures each day with you. I will also give you journaling opportunities to record your thoughts as you seek God in a way to know him better.

If you have questions about how to fast, what to fast or the different options of fasting, please contact me at your convenience. I believe that these 21 days will prove to be revolutionary for you in your faith journey with the Lord Jesus. This will, at times seem like a 1,000 mile journey on foot. You will want to quit. You will question your sanity and mine! When those times come, learn how to lean hard into Jesus. He is the intimate lover of your soul. He will meet with you, comfort you, speak with you and to you. He will love you and you will love Him back in ways that you may have never dreamed possible. In other words, make the commitment to be all in and to stay all in. Be willing today to pay the price in order “*That I may Know Him Better.*”

As you prepare to turn this page to enter a special and private time daily with God, please know that I am praying for you. As your Pastor, I am joining you each step and every day. I look forward, with great anticipation and excitement to knowing my Lord better. And, I can't wait to hear from you! I am counting on God to reveal great things to each of us.

Our church will not be the same. Our community will not be the same. Our worship, our love, and our faith will not be the same. Please consider the following words as we begin ...

Prayer & Fasting is an Act of Worship

*Prayer & Fasting is not for the strong. It is for the weak.
It is for the ordinary people in life who realize that they
desperately need God in their life; that is who praying and
fasting is for. Join me now as we lean into God like never before,
stepping up to say, "God, I want more of you than I've ever had.
I'm coming after you in prayer and fasting so that I may know you better."*

DAY 1

Introduction: Our theme for these 21 days is, "To Know Him Better." It's that simple. I also believe it's that powerful. Again, just so you know, Ephesians 1:15-18 (see page 1) has marked me as I have put this tool together for you. I am trusting God for wisdom, revelation and enlightenment. And, ultimately, I am trusting that God will lead us all to know Him better. So, here we go!

Key Scriptures for today:

James 4:10 says, *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."*

1 Peter 5:5-6 says, *"... All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*

Humbling ourselves is the only place we can begin. There are so many areas of our lives demanding our focus and attention. Oftentimes that means we focus on the urgent. Unfortunately, the urgent is seldom the most necessary. What if we became more intentional? What if we could gain a greater focus; not on the urgent but the important? Consider, if you will the different areas of life that take our attention. See the following list:

Circle the areas that you focus on heavily. Draw a line under the ones that need a much greater focus.

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Work | Extended Family | Personal Fitness |
| Church | Small Group/Friends | Social Media |
| Family | Bible Reading/Study | Entertainment/Fun |
| Marriage | Prayer/Meditation | Health |
| Inner circle/Friends | News/Politics | Rest/Sabbath |
| Financial Pursuits | Volunteering/Community | Serving |

Others: _____

Thoughts & Observations:

It takes humility to recognize areas that are receiving a greater focus than they should. It requires humility to allow God to shift our focus to the areas that should gain more focus. Here is a 2nd question for you on day one: How is your thought life? If we are to change our daily focus, our thought life needs to be addressed. The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that we are to *“to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

One of the great problems people have is that they play around with and toy around with their thoughts. The result of that can be disastrous. That’s where we begin to say things like, “what if” and create scenarios in our minds to fit the thought that should never be considered. This is why Paul says to take **EVERY** thought captive. Corral it, grab it, arrest it, snag it – whatever is required! Once you have, subject that thought to the scripture and to a perspective of being obedient to Christ! So, consider another exercise with me:

Circle the thoughts that need a greater focus in your life. Draw a line under the thoughts that need to be taken to Christ in prayer and dealt with to gain victory in your thought life.

Work	Worry/Future	God’s Word/Bible
Gratitude	Defeating Thoughts	Finances
God’s Promises	Children/Family	Comparison (it’s a trap!)
Enemies	Worship	Doubt
Guilt	Fear/Anxieties	Adulterous thoughts

Others not mentioned: _____

What needs to change ... today?

We live in defeat way too much (Mike’s opinion). The reason is that our focuses and thoughts are often misdirected (not taken captive). Humility is required to identify them and to place them before God to declare our desperate need in His help to redirect them.

The best way to reverse these things is to replace them with greater affections. This is why I had you circle and underline the ones affecting you most. And, if there is one that I did not list, I trust that you have been able to identify it on your own. Begin praying now, in your fasting, to shift your focuses by surrendering yourself to the Lord in these areas that compete for your attention. As you do, take the space below and begin to journal what you will do according to what you have learned about yourself.

Philippians 4:8 says, *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*

Next Steps: What will I do with what I have learned today?

Final Thoughts:

As you fast and pray today, look over all your responses. Ask the Lord to help you shift your focus to one of desiring to know him better. Read the following passages as a part of your prayer times during the day. Pray these scriptures back to God as you seek him today.

Ephesians 1

Philippians 4

Psalms 119:29-40

My Prayer for you:

God, open my eyes to you today; to your wonder. Help me be in awe of You today, alone! Give me your wisdom. I am in desperate need of it. Lord, give me your revelation. I don't have any need for the world's revelation. Enlighten me Lord by connecting my heart with yours. I know that many things distract me from you. I go in so many directions. Give me your thoughts, desires, directions and perspective. My focus needs to be on you today.

More to Pray for:

- Pray for Mike, Luis and Jamie's leadership
- Pray for vision to come to our pastoral team for our church's future
- Pray for the protection of our pastoral team and their families from the enemy
- Pray for wisdom, knowledge, discernment and understanding as God speaks
- Pray for miraculous works of God in the lives of the church family/my family
- Pray for Eufaula and the surrounding area to see God at work and to yield to His call
- Pray for fellow churches to be used mightily by God in their ministries
- Pray for the glory of God to be made known through my own life

End of day reflections:

DAY 2

Introduction: God's ways are not our ways. Now, I know that is not a revolutionary idea for you. In fact, you have probably read that in the scripture as much as I have. So again, His thoughts and ways are very different than ours. Which means if we want to know what God's will is or what He thinks about any situation, we have to know Him personally. This can only happen through being born again by the Spirit of God, being familiar with His Word (the Bible), prayer – speaking with and listening to God speak to us individually, corporate worship and fellowship with like minded believers. And, if we make these a priority, God will grow us up into maturity to where He will reveal to us His ways & thoughts that are otherwise too high to be attained on our own.

Key Scriptures for today:

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.
“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9*

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of Gods’ mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be 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*

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” Ephesians 4:14-15

Questions:

1. Would you rather try to work things out your way? Would you rather do things yourself? Or, would you rather get God in on things and discover how He would do things?
2. Would you rather use your own brain power to try to figure God's will out? Or, would you rather be able to consistently understand, and know God's thoughts on the matter?
3. Are you ok with being tossed all over the place when you hear contradictory teachings, wisdoms, and opinions of those who use crafty words? Or, would you rather “grow up” in Christ with a firm knowledge of His truth and desired direction for your life?

I know the above questions seem a little silly and rhetorical. But victory/defeat is at stake with our answers. Unfortunately, our answers are usually found in our actions and not our words. So, go through the following exercise prayerfully and honestly with God.

Personal Evaluation:

- “Seeking” God encompasses everything from reading and studying God’s Word to prayer, private worship, gratitude, church attendance and focus (etc). Rate yourself on a scale from 1-10 for the following statement:

“I seek God during the course of each week.” Rate yourself from #1 being not at all to #10 being endlessly each day. Circle your answer.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- What would it take to move that score closer to a 10?

- Now, list the top three things that are keeping you from moving your score closer to a 10.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If we are completely honest, it is far too easy to leave Jesus at the church doors waiting for us to return next week. In fact, we have probably done that far too many times to count. As we do this, we enter our week trying to work things out and figure things out our way. We use our own brain power to discern the “tea leaves” and to figure out all the why’s and how’s” of life. And, the result is often a feeling like we’ve been tossed about for an entire week on the high seas of life. Then, we return to church wondering why this whole “church thing” isn’t working out any better! Many people give up on God altogether. The rest of us settle in with a substandard belief about the Christian life – that it’s meant to be this way. But it’s not! How could this experience be what it’s supposed to be when we are promised so much more by God in His Word?

This is why we are fasting and praying. As we lean into Jesus at this time, may we commit to knowing the thoughts and ways of God. May we allow him to weigh in on our lives. May we give our brains a rest and simply make ourselves a living sacrifice – fully available to God; and to hear from God on the matters of what is on his heart. Maybe then, the waves of each week will not seem like some crazy tempest/storm! Maybe then, as we grow up in him, we will discover more of the fullness of being in relationship with the God of all creation.

Final Thoughts:

As you fast and pray today, look over all your responses. Ask the Lord to help you shift your focus to one of desiring to know him better. Read the following passages as a part of your prayer times during the day. Pray these scriptures back to God as you seek him today.

Isaiah 55

Psalm 19:7-10

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 4:14-16

Next Steps: What will I do with what I have learned today?

My Prayer for You:

Lord, you have done so much for us! Would you remind us afresh that your thoughts and ways are so much higher than ours and that there is no illustration capable of describing the difference. Your purposes for us are so far better than anything we could ever imagine or dream up in a request. You are the greatest need we have – period! May we be reminded that on our best days, we are in desperate need of you. As we pray and fast in this season, open our eyes to your thoughts, your ways, your will, your solutions, your answers and your directions. We earnestly seek you for the direction of Parkview Baptist Church with our whole heart.

More to pray for:

- Pray for Pastor Mike to know your vision for our church
- Pray for our whole pastoral team to be unified in leadership
- Pray for committee heads to sense and know God's leading in areas of ministry
- Pray for your SS teachers to know the power of God in their planning and preparations
- Pray for our students and children to be impacted by the role models of parents
- Pray for a brokenness over Eufaula, AL and a God-sized dream & heart for reaching our city

End of day reflections:

DAY 3

Introduction: After a couple of days of fasting, you begin to rethink the things you laughed at before beginning, don't you? Some thoughts seemed entertaining on the other side before the effects began to be felt. Also, you will (if you haven't already) begin to consider what a little "cheat" day may look like and how that will affect your ability to stick with the commitment that you made. Whether you are feeling the need to "feed" a headache, or a desire to check your Facebook, or whatever; you could use some encouragement early on. So, let's consider the power of God for today's prayer time.

Key Scriptures for today:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

Romans 8:11

Before you throw in the towel and give up on your 21 day journey, I want you to consider something. Have you ever given up on a dream? Did you ever feel like you quit something too soon and were never able to go back and do it over again? Perhaps it was at a time that you were not following God. Or, maybe you were a Christ follower and never fully understood the power of God that was at work in you through His Holy Spirit.

Let's look forward now since there is nothing we can do about the past. What do you want to see God do in your life? Your family? Your job? Your church? Your community (Eufaula)? Please know the following ...

- You are not limited to your past experiences
- You are not limited to your current circumstances

You have heard me say for 2 years, that *"who you are, where you are, and why you are there has all been ordained by God on purpose; and for His purposes."* Do you believe that today?

So, why not try to pray some of the following:

- Lord, show your power today as in the days of old.
- God, demonstrate your power in me today, around me, and through me. I want to be used by you.
- Lord, by your power, I want to finish my 21 day journey and know more of you in my life.
- God, create in me an excitement and a joy for what I can expect from you working in and through our church.

As we consider the power of God at work all around us, let me ask you the following personal questions. Your answers should represent your heart as a response to our mighty and all-powerful God.

1. What would you attempt for God if you were guaranteed you would not fail?
2. If you had unlimited resources (\$), where would you give it and why? (It is ok to list more than one thing)
3. When you look at the world, starting from Eufaula and moving outward, what breaks your heart when you see it? Why?

There is no higher calling on your life than where you are right now. Therefore, who you are, where you are, and why you are there is all ordained by God on purpose, and for His purposes.

IF the above statement is true, consider the ramifications – especially when the power of God is at work in you, for you, around you and through you.

Pray for the following today:

- God, give us supernatural power to do kingdom level work
- Lord, give us resurrection power to bring life to dead things: marriages, relationships, situations, dreams, churches, the lost
- Lord help me to know your power is already available, all-sufficient and capable to accomplish more than I can ever ask
- Lord, empower Mike, as our pastor to lead fearlessly with a vision of kingdom expansion
- Lord, give Jamie a strength and endurance necessary to lead out in the reaching of the next generation.
- Lord, fill Luis with a power and wisdom to lead us to know you better in worship

Pray these scriptures back to God:

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- Isaiah 40:25-31

Next Steps: What will I do with what I have learned today?

My Prayer for you:

Lord will you open our hearts to the reality of your power? I believe we give up on so much way to soon. Help my church family to stay strong in their commitments to you at this time. We will never know of your power if we give up and give in too soon. Give us staying power! Give us resurrection power! We already have your Holy Spirit! Help us know him, recognize him, listen

to him and obey him. Help us rest in your power and know that your power is fully sufficient for all things. We declare our need in you today – and every day! But especially now as we deny ourselves of the physical at this time. We want to align ourselves with you. We are in desperate need of you today God. We ask for and rely upon your power. Thank you, God for not leaving nor forsaking us at this time. Your love is amazing God!

End of day reflections:

DAY 4

Introduction: On our first day, we spoke of what has our focus and what seems to dominate our thoughts. Today, I would like for you to think about the word “vision.” After all, a vision for our future is what this is all about. And, at this point, making sure we keep our eyes on the future is paramount since we are now in the “grind” of denying our flesh of the things we love. Why? So that we can hear from God on the things that matter most! The things that should have our focus and thoughts as opposed to what is being felt in our bodies at this moment!

Key Scriptures for today:

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish ...”
Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)*

*“Then the Lord replied: Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. 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.”
Habakkuk 2:2-3*

*“While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, Simon, three men are looking for you. So, get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”
Acts 10:19-20*

*“During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, Come over to Macedonia and help us. After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”
Acts 16:9-10*

*“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city. So, Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.”
Acts 18:9-11*

Right now, I hope that your desperation for God is beginning to replace your desperation for whatever you have given up. My prayer is that a vision for the future is indeed more important. My prayer is that it grows with greater intensity each day. My desire for you is to discover such a passion for the things in life that need God’s attention that a clear vision is realized. So much hangs in the balance!

What areas are you burdened for the most?

A Family Member	The Unchurched	The Unconcerned
Corporate Worship	The Glory of God	Men’ Ministry
Youth Ministry	College Ministry	Young Adults/Parents
Elderly	Hunger/Poverty	Women’s Ministry
Social Justice	World Evangelization	Eufaula’s Lostness

Others: _____

Pray for vision for what God is laying on your heart. And, if God is placing something new on your heart, humbly accept it. Thank God for revealing it to you. Ask Him to make it as important to your heart as it is to His! Add to your prayer list everything God is revealing to you. Thank Him continually, for entrusting a vision to you. Commit to Him a whole hearted approach to chasing the visions He gives. Record everything as Habakkuk said. Return to these burdens constantly throughout today as well as the days ahead!

“Write down your revelations, make it plain upon the tablets ...”

Final Thoughts:

Thank you so much for your prayer for vision today! In preparing this for us, I have also been reminded of the prayer meeting in Acts 1:14 where we read, *“They all joined together constantly in prayer.”* Right now, I am humbled and excited that we are all constantly praying. Both individually and when we gather corporately. I cannot yet imagine what this time will yield. Only God knows and time will reveal that. Thank you for doing the hard work of prayer. Prayer is not preparation for the work – it is the work! Thank you for loving me, this church, our community, your families and all the burdens you carry to work this hard to see a move from God. Read the following scriptures today as an encouragement in your prayer.

Acts 1-2

Acts 11

Revelation 2:1-7

End of day reflections:

DAY 5

Introduction: It may be a good day to talk about being thankful! You agree? At this point, you may be wondering (Again!), “why did I do this?” Your energy level may be down. You may be drawn to return to what you have laid aside for these 21 days. You may be asking if this is really worth it? “Why is this necessary?”

If so, let me strongly encourage you that great victories await us on the other side of the sacrifices you have temporarily made. One way to be encouraged is to begin every day with a thankful spirit – an “attitude of gratitude” as some say.

Key Scriptures for today:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:6

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone ...”

1 Timothy 2:1

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Psalms 100:4

Attitude makes all the difference in the world. A thankful approach is synonymous to a faithful approach. Knowing that the battle has already been won makes me grateful! It makes the enduring of tough battles worth it. It keeps me energized even when I am weak in my own flesh. Why? I know that God is fighting the battle for me! I know good days are coming! I know victory is coming! Jesus tells us in John 16:33, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

Look at that verse again: In Jesus, we have _____

In this world we have _____

And, which one (Jesus or the world) overcomes the other?

We should live with the most grateful hearts; filled with great confidence in the fact that no matter how much trouble the world can bring our way, we are overcomers in Christ! So be grateful today – no matter the lies, manipulations and trouble that the enemy plagues you with today.

Personal Evaluation: Rate yourself – not how you want to be. But where you actually are

My attitude is a ... (1 means I am a negative person and 10 means I see every situation as an amazing and awesome opportunity)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why Is your score what you say it is? _____

Are you satisfied with where you scored yourself? _____

What can you do to change that? _____

Do I live with an attitude of thankfulness toward God? Others? My life situation?

List the top 10 things you are grateful for:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

I believe that grateful people are those who experience breakthroughs! Here’s why: negative and unhappy people are too focused on their problems and life issues. I believe their choice is representative of the level of faith they live by. Therefore, they cannot see the breakthrough or the opportunities that God has set before them. Living in a grateful way is more than a way of life, it is the right choice. Again, Jesus said about himself – “I have overcome the world.” And, if in Jesus we have peace as opposed to the trouble that the world brings, why wouldn’t we approach all of life with hearts of praise and thanks towards our loving Savior?

Next Steps:

Start with the list of ten things you are grateful for and let your prayer time today be laced with thankfulness. Watch your list grow as you pray. Add them to your list. You may even put this time of prayer and fasting on your list because of all God is showing you!

Prayerfully read the following scriptures:

1 Chronicles 16:8-36

Psalm 107

My Prayer for You:

Lord you are amazing! You are good. You are gracious. You are kind. You are merciful. You are loving. You are longsuffering. You have met every need. You bless me so abundantly! Your promises never fail. Your attributes cannot be fully described. You are more than enough. On my best day, I desperately need you. On my worst day, you are always near. I am so thankful for your presence in my life. May this be enough for me – always! Then, I will be even more thankful.

More to pray for:

- Continue to pray for vision for the future of Parkview
- Continue to pray humbly, for a laser focus on the things God wants to reveal
- Pray for God’s ways to be made known at this time
- Pray for God’s power to be released through His church
- Pray for an ever-increasing thankful heart (daily)
- Pray for Holy Spirit Revival to sweep our church
- Pray for a spiritual awakening (for lost souls to be won to Jesus) in Eufaula, AL

End of day reflections:

DAY 6

Introduction: I love the image of “pressing in” to Jesus. A “pressing in” seems to happen when things have gotten desperate. So, let me ask you, do you have any desperate situations around you at this time. I do! I desperately need to hear from God on how to effectively lead Parkview Baptist Church into the future of 2020 and beyond. I desperately need to press in to Jesus for my answers. The world, and even conventional church wisdom has a lot to offer me today. But I have seen the results of much of that already in my life. It has left me wanting. It has left me empty and frustrated. I want more. In fact, I desperately need more. Therefore, I **MUST** press in to Jesus. Come with me!

Key Scripture for today:

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12-14

“... A large crowd followed and pressed around him (Jesus). And a woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal ... instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus ... she thought, If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed. Immediately ... she was freed from her suffering”

Mark 5:24-29

What do you need to press in to Jesus for today? I am quite sure there are problems that surround you today; issues, difficulties and seemingly hopeless situations. As you fast and pray today, I want you to learn more about pressing in to Jesus for your needed answers.

The full story:

Mark 5:21-42

This passage is literally about 2 desperate stories and those who pressed in to Jesus. The contrasts are obvious: one official, one nobody; one young daughter, one older woman. However, both helpless and desperate; both believing that Jesus could change everything. But for today, let's focus on the woman who literally pressed in to Jesus, through the crowd in order to find hope and healing.

For many Christians today, their faith is a passive experience. Believing in Jesus is a mental exercise and an “academic” pursuit. But this woman is an extraordinary example of an active faith. A faith that expressed its belief in an active pursuit of needing Jesus personally involved in her life – as opposed to Jesus being somebody she simply “studied” about. Knowing Jesus meant more to her. She was desperate, and she decided to do something about it!

Personal Evaluation: Go through the following statements that describe this amazing woman and evaluate yourself in your faith journey. Ask yourself, “Do I press in to Jesus in hard times?” Or, “Do I give up and give in when things aren’t happening?”

- This woman was out of options and facing insurmountable opposition. Yet she did not back down or back off. Do I pursue God by pressing in to him in the midst of opposition? Or, do I quit too easily?
- Her faith would not wait. She fought for what she desperately hoped for. Her faith honored God. Is my faith easily deterred? What have I given up on that I need to press in to Jesus for?
- Her faith was supernatural. She had no strength left. This was not a religious faith, but faith in a person! How would you describe your faith today?
- Her faith would not be denied! Her faith knew no barriers! She wasn’t concerned with what was impossible any more! How quickly do I “tap out” when oppositions are tough?
- Do I surrender my circumstances to Jesus in faith? Or, do I just surrender in defeat?
- She pressed through sickness! If anyone had an excuse to stay home, she did.
- She pressed through disappointment. No “expert” gave her hope.
- She pressed through hopelessness. Her financial situation left her destitute.
- She pressed through shame – an outcast. Don’t you know the devil shamed her all the way to Jesus, telling her she was doing wrong by touching all these people.
- She pressed through the crowd. Many tried to deter her and stop her.
- She pressed in. Not just physically, but spiritually.

Next Steps: What must I do in light of this information/knowledge

Faith demands action. This woman pressed in and pressed on. Before moving forward in your day today. Take the above action step seriously. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal to you the level of your faith. Where have you given up? Why haven’t you pressed in to Jesus more? What obstacles, oppositions and circumstances do I need to turn over to God in faith?

Final Thoughts:

1. This woman was not looking for Jesus to touch her. She believed that “IF I” could touch him, I will be healed. Instead of praying for a miracle today, pray for a breakthrough! Press in to Jesus with faith.
2. Jesus knows when we break through. Jesus felt her despair, her hopelessness, her fear and her pain. But he also felt her faith! It was a supernatural faith! And God stopped in his tracks. What have I been treating so lightly in my life that needs such a miracle? There is power in desperation! Press in to Jesus for your answers!

My Prayer for You:

Lord, make us desperate for you – like never before. Help us to get over ourselves, our fears and our inhibitions to come to you in a desperate manner as this woman did. Give us an active faith like hers. One that sees hope in you so much that the crowd around us is never in focus.

More to pray for:

- Press in to Jesus for vision for Parkview
- Press in to Jesus for the lost to come to Christ
- Press in to Jesus on behalf of your spouse
- Press in to Jesus on behalf of your children
- Press in to Jesus on behalf of your neighbors, friends & co-workers
- Press in to Jesus on behalf of our government leaders
- Press in to Jesus on behalf of our fellow churches & pastors in Eufaula
- Press in to Jesus and enjoy the intimate love relationship He has always intended for you

End of day reflections:

DAY 7

Introduction: Here we are, one full week into our time of prayer & fasting. I trust that you are indeed growing in an intimate and deep relationship with God. Remember our theme from the introduction – “That I May Know Him Better” (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Today, we are going to deal with something that you may have already experienced this week. And that is, coming face to face with sin. This is completely expected in a prolonged time of prayer and fasting – realizing afresh our sinfulness in the presence of a holy God. Let’s spend some time today getting “real” before God in this area of confession and repentance. Remember, the closer you get to God, the more it reveals who we are.

Key Scriptures for today:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24

“I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.” Isaiah 44:22

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51:17

Sin is not always some big, overt “thing.” For some it’s very private; hidden inside. Whether hidden in your home or just in your heart. For some, sin is simply unforgiveness & bitterness. In other words, nursing old wounds and stewing over old hurts that have never been released. What do your eyes need to be opened to today? What toxin do you need to let go of today? Sometimes, you may even need help – ask God to show you!

Questions to wrestle with:

1. Just you and God – in what areas do you struggle with sin? Remember, it may feel small and insignificant to you. To God, it’s a barrier of intimacy.
2. What one or two sins seem to “have your number?” Things you can’t seem to shake.
3. To what extent are you willing to allow God to deal with you on these?
4. What blind spots do you have that seem to be easy snares for Satan to trap you with?
5. Again, how far are you willing to go to have God expose your blind areas to bring about greater victory over sin?

The above questions can be tough to deal with. I encourage you to not gloss over them. Spend time here knowing that victory over sin is crucial in developing the kind of intimacy with God that always seem so far away from reality. Finally, remind yourself that ALL sin required the death penalty of Jesus on the cross. That includes what seems insignificant to us as we are typically harder on others sins than on our own. Spend time with the following questions. List what needs to be brought out of the darkness and into the light.

- **What do I give an inordinate (excessive) amount of affection to in my life?** Examples would be money, materialism (more stuff), entertainment, leisure.

- **What am I refusing to “kill” in my life that has a stronghold on me?** When doctors prescribe antibiotics, they always tell us to take them for the full amount of days prescribed. But, if you are like me, you stop when you have some relief. The problem is lingering bacteria that can come back and even grow stronger. What must be eliminated in your life? What have you been sorry about but haven’t killed? Make a list below of what God would have you fully rid yourself of; not just be sorry over.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Final Thoughts:

In your prayer/fasting today, look over your responses above. Give them all serious attention as you consider the very nature of your heart – *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)*. Pray through the following scriptures as well:

Psalm 51

Romans 6:1-14

Romans 8:1-11

1 John 1:5-10

End of day reflections:

DAY 8

Introduction: As we begin week 2, you may be thinking, “I’m done ... this isn’t working ... I don’t feel well ... I am not enjoying this ... At least I gave it an effort.” Let me encourage you, don’t give up and don’t give in. You won’t be more holy if you keep going. God won’t love you more or less depending on your perseverance. God is not demanding you continue. But I do believe this – God is pulling for you to keep pressing in! He desires for you to know Him more and to grow in your intimacy with Him. This is a strategic moment in the life of our church as we lean into God corporately. Be encouraged! Something is happening! God is enjoying you and your time with Him! Jesus hasn’t gone anywhere! Don’t look back now. Press on and press in! He awaits your presence today. He longs for it; more than you do! He is a loving Father who welcomes the presence of His children. Lean in now – Be encouraged!

Key Scripture for you today:

“But Jesus immediately said to them: Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid. Lord, if it’s you, Peter replied, tell me to come to you on the water. Come, he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, Lord, save me! Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. You of little faith, he said, why did you doubt? And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.” Matthew 14:27-32

Just in case you are discouraged today:

One of the best things to do when you find yourself discouraged is to purposely fill somebody else up! If you are weary in the fast, purposely invest in another today.

- Encourage somebody – anybody!
- Come alongside somebody else and pray for them.
- Lift someone up with joy!
- Be the fruit of the spirit for others to partake of.
- Call one another, check in, be prepared to listen, give hope to each other!

If you are experiencing struggle today in your pursuit of “making it” 21 days, take this scripture and pray it back to God as you seek His help.

“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

God is never far. Sometimes he may seem silent, but he is always near. He will never leave nor forsake you! Even if it feels like you are in a season of silence, lean in yet again. Remember the promises of Jesus in the sermon on the mount; He will reward what is done in secret!

Prayerfully read the following scriptures:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Matthew 14:22-33

Psalm 46

2 Corinthians 4

My Prayer for you today:

Lord, give us strength to lean into you. To trust you. To find refuge in you. Lord you are good! You are preparing so much more for us than we can even fathom. Thank you! Prepare each one of us now to receive all you have planned for our church and our homes. May we praise you in all times for all things. You are worthy to be praised! Bring revival to us; regardless of what that means for me today. May I subject myself to you and to your ways without hesitation. I am yours. Use me according to your perfect will.

Other things to pray for:

- Vision for Parkview
- For the lost to come to Jesus
- For my witness to be God exalting, Christ focused and loving to the sinner
- For Pastor Mike to be spirit led
- For Jamie to have favor with students & children
- For Luis to walk in the spirit as he leads us in worship
- For wholehearted committed deacons
- For Sunday School teachers to teach with power
- For the encouragement of the saints!!!

End of day reflections:

DAY 9

Introduction: I preached a message several weeks ago entitled “*How Bad Do You Want It?*” That phrase sounds a lot like a coach who is trying to motivate his team at half time. Well, it’s day number nine and I figured it was time to ask this question again; “How Bad Do You Want It?” Life’s grind is tough enough when it’s normal (what’s normal, right?). But we have embraced a new normal for these 3 weeks. It’s harder. Encouragement is needed some times more than others. Let’s revisit Jehoash and Elisha today.

Key Scriptures for today:

“Get a bow and some arrows,” and he did so. “Take the bow in your hands,” he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. “Open the east window”, he said, and he opened it. “Shoot!” Elisha said, and he shot. “The Lord’s arrow of victory over Aram!” Elisha declared. “You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek. Then he said, “Take the arrows,” and the king took them. Elisha told him, “Strike the ground.” He struck it three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times.” 2 Kings 13:15-19

The image given in this scripture continues to amaze me. Let’s consider this in bullet point style:

- The King comes to Elisha for a final blessing before the prophet’s death.
- The prophet (Elisha) is more than willing to give it.
- The King had to participate though!
- Elisha put his hands on the King’s hands (representing the hand of God coming on Jehoash), showing the king that success can only come from God
- The promise of victory was shown before Jehoash had to prove himself. This represented what God wanted for His people through the leadership of Jehoash.
- Verse 18 shows the test of Jehoash. He failed the test.
- The result was now small, limited victories. Not a complete victory as was God’s desire.
- God was ready to give complete victory. But God chose to grant victory based on Jehoash’s response.

Possible Reasons for Jehoash’s Weak Response:

Complacency	Laziness	Indifference
Too Casual	Half-Hearted	No Zeal
Too Flippant	With Contempt	No Flame
No Real Commitment	No Real Effort	Yawning in God’s face
Passionless	Going through the motions	Trivial Approach

Jehoash stopped short of a full commitment to what God had called. He was going through the motions with a heart that was not “all in.” He didn’t want it bad enough. He had small faith. He literally believed God for small things. And, God was totally displeased with his effort! Why? Apparently, Jehoash took for granted that because he was with the “prophet” (Elisha), that this was a slam dunk. He thought, as long as I go through this ritualistic game with God’s man, I will be able to check off this box and go on. He, and the people he led paid a high price for his poor choice.

Go back to the list of terms that described Jehoash. Write below the ones that seem to plague you and your pursuit of God in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Parkview! Let’s take an up close and personal look at this for a minute. First, if I led you in this way, I would be sacrificing your hopes and dreams for this church on the altar of lazy leadership! You should never settle for a pastor with a half-hearted, indifferent, casual, flippant, contemptuous approach to his calling! Going through the motions is simply not acceptable. Secondly, what about the people who look to you. Yes, you lead others. Even when you don’t think so! You are respected, watched and even emulated by those around you. People we say we will pray for; how badly do we show God, others and ourselves that we want their situation to be different?

- Are you willing to settle for little things – like Jehoash?
- Is going to church to sit, listen and leave ok with you?
- Are you too afraid of being labeled a fanatic or weird?
- Too much is at stake!

Final Question for the day:

How would you conduct yourself if I told you the next prayer you prayed would determine your answer? Consider your answer as you read through the following scenarios.

What solution are you looking for?

What answers are you seeking?

What relief (pressure) is needed?

What crisis needs fixing?

How desperate are you for a
Deeper relationship with God?

How badly do you want to see
Eufaula reached with the Gospel?

What loved ones need to be saved?

Who do you want to see healed?

How badly do you want PBC to
Reach its full potential?

How bad do you want it?

Next Steps: What will I do in light of all that God is revealing to me now?

Final Thoughts:

Look again at your responses. At the same time, consider the following scriptures and rate your passion to pray fervently on a scale of 1-10 (one is low and ten is high).

2 Kings 13:14-19

Jeremiah 29:13

2 Chronicles 16:9

Psalm 42:1-2

Ephesians 3

My Prayer for You:

God, give us passion today. Not once in Your scriptures have I found that you are looking for talented, gifted people. But I see everywhere that you are looking for those who believe and exercise their faith in you. Lord, help us overcome ourselves today. May we be willing to be labeled as fanatics for you and your kingdom. Nothing else matters! Lord, may we be embarrassed from this day forward for not praying with expectancy, joy, hopefulness, eagerness, and with a glowing hot passion for your name to be made known in this world. Help us to not be so easily content with the motions and the mundane. Help us to break out of the “religious” and break in to heaven today to experience all you have for us. Lord, I boldly ask you for healing, solutions, vision, relief, restoration, salvation, redemption in the lives of all that are being lifted up now. May your Holy Spirit be freed and loosed in our lives to reach new levels of boldness and courage. May we never be accused of being lazy, half-hearted, complacent and satisfied. Have your way with us God! Really, have your way! This is not just a cool sounding end to a prayer. Have your way God!

End of day reflections:

DAY 10

Introduction: For a couple of Sundays now, you have heard me preach about anticipation. I love this word as it describes an expectation and hope. So much of our lives are lived in anticipation. Each work day, we anticipate the clock striking 5 o'clock. Each week, the most anticipated day is Friday; the weekend is here! In the spring, we anticipate the Easter season & spring break. Then it's the long-awaited summer vacation of a lifetime. Finally, the greatest one it seems like; Christmas. I thought it would never get here (kids talk!). Our lives are literally lived in this mode daily. After breakfast, I eagerly anticipate lunch. And, before lunch arrives, I'm already making my dinner list for the evening. Anticipation follows us everywhere.

Let's look at anticipation from another angle though. I've run and participated in several half-marathons, sprint triathlons and one full marathon. My dad even tried to get my brother to talk me out of the marathon as he was worried that I would, well, you know ... die!

Anyway, preparations were necessary for many weeks in advance for each of these. All in anticipation of the one main event. Most of the preparations involved proper physical training as well as a fasting (abstinence) of certain foods for the best possible preparedness. In any case, as the calendar marked off the days/weeks, anticipation grew. Hope and expectation of personal bests followed.

Now, back to us at Parkview. What are you looking forward to? What are you asking God for? Hoping for? What are you anticipating and expecting to come out of this? Write down these things below. People, circumstances, community, church, etc.

Key Scriptures for today:

*"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."
1 Corinthians 15:9*

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."
2 Peter 1:3-4*

When we talk about anticipating heaven, I think we all get it for the most part. We believe that God has forever intended to have us join him for all eternity in one day. It's still hard to imagine. I can't really fathom it. But I get it; basically. But what about while we are still on this earth? What do we anticipate God to do? Anything? What are our expectations as we live this thing called the "Christian Life?" My fear is that our expectations center around the fact that we get to go to church again next Sunday. Hear another sermon. Sing more songs. Drop some money in the plate and go to lunch. Here's my question; is that worth living for?

Reread 2 Peter 1:3-4 before considering the following. Peter tells us that “... *He (God) has given us his **very great and precious promises**, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature ...*”

Imagine below what participating with God should look like; what it could look like. Ask God for clarity and record your answers:

When I start imagining answers to the above exercise, I go back to my imagining of running, swimming, biking ridiculous distances. Enduring and pushing myself to a new limit. Experiencing the exhilaration of crossing the finish line and saying, “I can’t believe I did it!” Don’t leave this section too soon. Keep praying and asking God, what should the church be doing? How should we push ourselves to new levels of required endurance. I have a feeling that participating God in his divine plan means SO, SO, SO much more than just going to church! Pray here for a while. My prayer for you is that you have to add paper to write down grand new visions and dreams of how to spread the gospel powerfully. I am praying now that the 6 lines above is woefully inadequate to record all that God tells you! Take time to listen to God now!!!

Consider the following questions/scriptures to complete your prayer time today:

1. How can I make better use of my time on a daily basis? I know that God has given me his “very great and precious promises” to have me join Him. **Read Ephesians 5:15-17.** May I quit praying for safety/security/serenity. God help me be bold, eager and expectant with the time you have given me on this earth. Starting today!
2. God, help me anticipate all that you have in store for me at work/school. Help me see myself as a paid missionary where I work every day. **Read Colossians 3:23-24.** Lord, help me embrace the truth that Mike always says, “*That who I am, where I am, and why I am there is all ordained by God. On purpose & for His purposes.*” Help me God begin praying differently about my job. Starting today!
3. Lord, in the storm, help me know of your presence and anticipate the greatness of your plan that will be revealed coming out of the storm. **Read Psalm 91:4.** Spend time thanking God for such a vivid image of His watch care over us in this passage. Then, commit to God to quit waiting for everything to be perfect. It never will be! And, that I will anticipate God working. Even in the storm. Starting today!
4. God, help me to simply anticipate having a deep, personal, intimate relationship with you. Help me discover it beyond the church walls. May I never be the same after spending so much time with the one who redeemed me and made me a new creation! Lord, I look forward to my heart being transformed more & more. Starting today!

My Prayer for you:

God, would you fill me with the kind of anticipation & excitement about my relationship with you as I have for so many other things in this world. God, today I rid myself of such weak, meager, small and insignificant expectations as your disciple. Here I am, a follower of the most-high God, and I settle for so little when it comes to participating with you in your divine nature. I repent of my lack of excitement & partnership. Lord, I want to be fascinated again with your presence, your power, your protection, and your demonstrations of love, grace & mercy. Lord Jesus, I am believing your promises to be true, anticipating your leadership to require courage and boldness of me, and I am leaving the world of the mundane and ho-hum expectancy of just marking another Sunday off as completed. Starting today! I love you Lord, and I lift my voice to you to praise you above all things.

End of day reflections:

DAY 11

Introduction: Do not underestimate this – The last thing Satan, your enemy wants you to do is pray. He will fight it, He will do whatever it takes to keep you from praying. And, when you pray, he will use whatever is possible to distract you. Satan knows that he and his agenda is in trouble if you learn to pray. He knows that prayer initiates the power of God. He literally hates it when you and I pray. But, do not be afraid – God is far more powerful than Satan! 1 John 4:4 reminds us that “... *greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*”

Key Scriptures for today:

“As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side, one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So, Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.” Exodus 17:11-13

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

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose.” Acts 16:25-26

There is so much power in prayer – we have no idea! Also, there are so many stories in the bible about the power of prayer, it was hard to choose scriptures to share with you. And, even though we know these things, prayer is still unnatural to us. Think about it; from birth we have been learning the rules of self-reliance as we strain and struggle to achieve self-sufficiency. Prayer is an assault on our human autonomy. Prayer is an embarrassing interruption to our independent living. Prayer is alien to our proud human nature. Finally, if you’re like me, you often have so much to do that you say something really stupid like, “*I just don’t have time to pray.*” Yes, I can be that stupid! But here’s the reality – we are all too busy NOT to pray! I think Paul wrote the following for busy people ...

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

So, here’s the best question I have for you. Prior to our 21 days of prayer and fasting, what has kept you from praying? Write it down.

Now, the second best question for you; were the reasons listed above worth giving up the power of heaven and the God of all creation?

NO, Never in a million years!

I went ahead and filled that blank in for you! Self-sufficiency and self-reliance are very real to me. I bet you're a lot like me. We are pretty well resourced, educated, gifted, talented and experienced. But until we do something pretty radical like, Pray, we'll never know the power that God would love to reveal to us!

Consider the following ways that God's power is released:

- Wisdom – an idea you desperately need and can't come up with yourself
- Courage – more than you can muster
- Perseverance (staying power) – through the difficult storms of life
- A changed attitude – towards a spouse, child, parent, co-worker, boss
- A changed circumstance – beyond your ability to control
- An outright miracle – healing of the sick/dying, restoring a relationship, salvation!

Prayerless people cut themselves off from God's prevailing power, and the frequent result is the familiar feeling of being overwhelmed, overrun, beaten down, pushed around, defeated, anxious, worried, and stressed! Surprising numbers of people are willing to settle for lives like that. Don't be one of them. You don't have to live like that!

Once Moses made the connection (Exodus 17) between prayer and God's power, he determined to spend the rest of the day praying for God's involvement in the battle. The problem was he grew weary. When his weariness dropped his hands/arms in prayer, the enemy began to prevail. Help was needed from caring brothers who were as desperate as Moses was for God's power to keep flowing. And Israel won the battle that day.

What are your current battles?

- **At Home:** _____
- **At Work:** _____
- **In Private:** _____
- **Finances:** _____
- **In Church:** _____

Why go another day putting “victory” off? Each day we remain prayerless, victory is postponed even more. Maybe, your weariness requires help. You’re praying but feel like you’re tired and worn in the battle. What’s keeping you from summoning an Aaron and a Hur (Exodus 17)?

Who can you call today to be your prayer partner(s)? Record those names right here. Call them. Today! They may call you first. No matter, partnering for victory is necessary. It was for Moses. You are no different. We all need help carrying the burdens of life sometimes.

Final Thoughts:

Victory hangs in the balance. Go back and read Exodus 17:8-16. Being tired in the battle is not a sin. If you did not write down a name previously, go back now and do so. Enlist partners to the battlefield of prayer with you. Read the additional scriptures below. Pray through them and know that God is more eager than you for victorious living!

Acts 16:16-32

Acts 2:41-47

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 5:12-16

My Prayer for you:

Oh God when I read the book of Acts I get so excited as I think about the church today, specifically my family here at Parkview! I know we face battles each day of various kinds. The scriptures are full of your people facing struggles, fights, and battles. May we lean hard into you today with humility and prayer. May we say no, forever, to self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Destroy our pride today that says I can go it alone! Satan not only wants to keep us from praying, he wants us to be misguided by our belief that we don’t need each other. Lord lay on each of our hearts special names to rely on you with. We need you Lord! We also need each other. Thank you for the church. Thank you, God, for answering prayer and showing your power!

- God, we need vision
- God, we need direction
- God, we need wisdom, understanding, knowledge & discernment
- God, we want to reach this city like never before
- God, we need your help in all things, desperately!

End of day reflections:

DAY 12

Introduction: Often, when I speak with people about their issues in life, they say something like, “Well, I know others have it worse than me.” How do you respond to that? First, they are right. When we rank life’s happenings, we typically categorize things based on severity. For example, someone who has lost a child definitely has it worse than someone who is getting over the flu. So, from this standpoint, it is an accurate assessment. However, I never leave it at that. And here’s why; you are still going through a circumstance in life that may be stressful, anxiety filled, or painful. That’s why my response always includes an encouragement for whatever it is that the person is trying to figure out. In other words, it’s still important. It’s still a struggle. No matter how bad another may have it compared to you. Here’s another thought; God thinks it’s pretty important too! He’s not only intimately aware of it already, but he wants to be intimately involved with you in it. No matter how small it seems in comparison to what others are facing.

Key Scriptures for today:

Matthew 11:28-30

Luke 18:1-8

Jesus, in Matthew 11 (above), gives us the great invitation to come unto him. It is a beautiful word picture of the heart of God; that all are welcome, that all will find rest, and that God does not put any burdensome requirements upon us for doing so.

Take a longer look with me today at the parable of the persistent widow found in Luke 18:1-8. As you read this story of our Lord’s again, let me ask you if have ever thought or spoken something like this before ...

- God is too busy with the things of the world to be concerned about my little life.
- God has much bigger fish to fry than me and my concerns
- I don’t want to be selfish and pray for things in my life. That wouldn’t be right.
- I know the “cattle on a thousand hills” belong to God, but that’s just an expression in the bible.

If any kind of thought like these has entered your mind – that your prayers are too small for a big God to fool with, that your needs pale in comparison to those of others, or that you need to never pray for things related to you, then pay attention to the following story of Jesus.

Luke 18:1-8

- There was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men
- There was a widow who kept coming to him for justice to be served
- He continued to refuse to even hear her case, much less respond to her
- Finally, after non-stop pestering, she gets him to give her justice. Even though he didn't give a rip about her or God!

The two main characters in the story:

The desperate widow: No education, no job, no money, no property, no status, no power. With no man in a widow's life to care for her (son, brother, etc.) she would often become a street beggar and a social outcast.

The widow's problem: Some local, unnamed villain who was harassing her. Her adversary was winning and she was losing. She had no good way to protect herself. No man to help, no government assistance. She had one hope; the judge.

The unjust judge: Two basic statements described him; he did not fear God, and he had no respect for any human being. Therefore, he felt no accountability to anyone. He had no regard for the word of God. He had no fear of any future reckoning. He simply did what he wanted

The bottom line: The widow gathered her wits, and with grim resolve said to herself, "This judge is my only hope. And with no money for any kickback, she pestered the judge until he couldn't take it any more. He gives in and provides her with justice – not out of the goodness of his heart, but because she wore him out.

Points to consider:

1. You are NOT like the widow! We are the total opposite of her. She was poor, powerless, forgotten abandoned. She had no relationship with the judge. To the judge, she was simply an item on an already too long "to do" list!
2. You are rich, have direct access to the power of God, loved, cherished, and an adopted son or daughter in God's family. Therefore, you don't have to tiptoe around to find the secret of attracting his attention!
3. God, our loving heavenly father, is nothing like the judge. The judge was crooked, unrighteous, unfair, uncaring, disrespectful and preoccupied with personal matters.
4. You don't have to figure out how to wrench a blessing from him. Nor do you have to try to pester him so that he will throw his hands in the air to give you what he would rather keep for himself.

5. He loves you deeply! His nature is that he is a giving God, a blessing God, an encouraging God, a nurturing God, an empowering God, a merciful God, and a loving God!
6. God cannot wait to hear from you today! Throughout the day! He eagerly awaits your presence and to hear your heart.

Additional Reading: (Don't miss these!!!)

Leviticus 26:3-13

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Psalms 34:8

Matthew 7:7-11

Final Thoughts:

It is your Holy Father's delight to hear from you today! Your voice makes his heart leap as you enter into his presence. You are not like the widow. God is not like the unjust judge. Jesus interprets his own parable with the following words in Luke 18:7-8a,

“And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.”

My Prayer for you:

Lord, may we bask in your presence today, and every day; knowing you desire to hear from us. God we thank you that we are not an imposition upon your time. Thank you for never acting frustrated when we call your name. Thank you for never putting us off and saying wait just a minute. Thank you for your invitation to boldly come into your presence to receive grace. You are so good to us God. You are truly a good, good father! Thank you for your offer to have an intimate relationship with you. You are never too far away. There is nothing too big for you or too hard. You are never too busy or distracted. May we never take your gracious offer for granted. We get direct, instant access to the throne room of God! Thank you!

End of day reflections:

DAY 13

Introduction: Yesterday we talked about the willingness of God to hear from us and to act on our behalf. Today I want us to consider the ability of God. So, let's begin with this question today: If you could ask God for one miracle today, knowing he would grant your request, what would it be? To put your marriage back together, to change a circumstance at your job, to bring home a wayward child, a healing for your body (or someone else), to straighten out your finances, or to bring someone to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Here's the second question behind whatever your one request would be – Can God handle that request?

You know that God can handle anything (I didn't have to ask you that). If so, how have you prayed about that one thing lately. How often? How fervently? Or, do you get busy in life, faint-hearted over it, find your mind wandering when you do pray and give up eventually. Allow me to challenge you here. We say we believe God can handle anything. We know his abilities are unfathomable, and that nothing is beyond Him. So, why do we pray so faint-heartedly?

Key Scriptures for today:

“Then the Lord said to Abraham, why did Sarah laugh and say, Will I really have a child now that I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.” Genesis 18:13-14

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.” Jeremiah 32:17

“Jesus looked at them and said, with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

WARNING! This could get exciting. Let's do a quick survey of some incredible stories in the bible and be encouraged by all that God has done. Read each story with the imagination of a child again. Let the wonder of God inspire you as you are once again, awestruck by all that God CAN do.

1. **God decided rivers and seas needed parting – Exodus 14, Joshua 3**
2. **God chose to feed his people miraculously – Exodus 16, John 6:1-13**
3. **God's power made shy Moses a great leader – Exodus 3-4**
4. **God's power broke hardened Pharaoh's heart – Exodus 11:1-8, 12:31-36**
5. **God turned Saul (a fanatical persecutor) in to a globe-trotting apostle – Acts 9**

What is your one request? In fact, list more that you are praying for! God can handle it. Use this space to write them out, then pray through the following scriptures and allow God to encourage your heart as you reconsider his awesome power!

- Malachi 3:6-7 says, “I the Lord do not change.”
- Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
- Isaiah 40:28-31 says,
 - “The Lord is the everlasting God”
 - “He will not grow tired or weary”
 - “His understanding no one can fathom”
 - “He gives strength to the weary.”
 - “He increases the power of the weak.”
 - “We may stumble and fall...”
 - “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength”
 - “They will soar on wings like eagles” (Just imagine that!)
 - “They will run and not grow weary”
 - “They will walk and not be faint”

WOW! Just WOW! As I type this for you, I am looking for someone to high five and jump around with. Is there any reason for us to ever doubt our God? Should we not rejoice in our prayers as they are being offered, even when we don't have the answer up front.

Final Thoughts:

I know there has been a lot of scripture today already. But I hope you have had as much fun as I have going through God's word that is full of encouragement. But I have one last story for you to enjoy today. Let me set it up for you with this one question. ***Is there any “impossible” situation or circumstance that you are facing right now?*** You may not be literally facing it. But maybe you have thought you needed to be praying for an “impossible” circumstance on someone else's behalf. If so, read the following passage over as many times today as you can stand. I've already done so 6 times as I'm writing this for you. Focus on, and repeat **verse 5** aloud over and over again to allow God to impact your heart. Are you ready?

- **Acts 12:1-17**

My Prayer for you:

As I try to pray for you now, I'm overwhelmed with my own deficiency of faith & belief.

God, we all “know” that you can do anything. Lord, we have all been in church long enough to know the “Sunday School” answer to the question presented to us today. Yes Lord, I believe you can do all things. I believe that there is nothing outside the scope of your abilities. Help my prayers to reflect what I claim to believe. God, with the church earnestly praying right now (Acts 12:5), may I not be the weakest link! Lord Jesus, I want the word “earnestly” to describe my prayer life. And, when you answer, may I never declare to anyone else, “You're out of your mind” (Acts 12:15). May I expect answers! May I anticipate your response! Thank you in advance God for how you are going to move in life of our church as a result of our earnest prayers. We love you God!

End of day reflections:

DAY 14

Introduction: The subject I would like for you to deal with today is this: “*Only by prayer will breakthrough be possible.*” No breakthroughs come to those who spend their lives playing in the shallow end of the pool. The adventure is in the deep end. That’s where the big fish are. And your faith is rarely tested on the shore.

The first time I went tuna fishing with my buddy Jay, Lori was concerned. When Jay told her we would be 50 miles off shore she asked Jay, “Why not go out only 5 miles or so?” To which Jay replied, “If Mike goes overboard 5 miles out, it still won’t matter. He won’t make it back!” Jay instinctively knew that Lori was worried about the distance along with my safety. But the best fishing required something far more than a 5 mile journey. By the way, I brought home the biggest tuna that day on the boat. And our tuna steaks were amazing!

How far are you willing to go for a breakthrough? Or, honestly, are you content with where you are and what you are doing for the Lord, through His church.

Key Scripture for today:

“Lord, if it is you, Peter replied, tell me to come to you on the water. Come he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.” Matthew 14:28-29

- Would you have been that bold/daring?
- Remember, ALL the other disciples were content (and afraid by the way).

Ephesians 3:10 tells us, “In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”

Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence ...”

The list below represents 4 fears I have based on the fact that typically we approach God apologetically instead of boldly (confidently). In prayer, we act as if we are orphans rather than children of the King! We feel like we are imposition. By the way, if you still feel like this, go back one day and re-read all the scripture in Day #13. But here are my fears ...

1. We limit what God does in us and through us
2. We limit what God does though our church
3. We limit our influence on the next generation
4. We limit our impact on the community

I am convinced that when Jesus looks at the current condition of the church in America, he marvels at our unbelief; much like he did in **Mark 6:6** with his own people.

When are God's people going to be willing to go into the deep water of prayer for a breakthrough? The follow up question to that is this, when are we going to grow dissatisfied with riding in a boat filled with fear, but ok with Jesus passing by?

Breakthroughs will come when we change the focus of our prayers!

- John 14:13 – “Whatever you ask in My name ...”
- John 14:14 – “If you ask anything in My name ...”
- John 15:16 – “Whatever you ask the Father in My name ...”
- John 16:23 – “My Father will give you whatever you ask for in My name ...”
- John 16:24 – “You have asked for nothing in My name ...”
- John 16:26 – “In that day you will ask in My name ...”

If we were honest with God, others and ourselves, we would have to admit that most of our prayers have this kind of tone to them ...

“Lord, give me ...” “God, let me ...” “Jesus, I want ...” “God, I need ...”

One more, **James 4:2-3** says, *“You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”*

Sometimes a shift in our words is necessary. For example ...

- God, show me ...
- God, speak to me ...
- God, demonstrate to me ...
- God, reveal to me ...
- God, make known to me ...
- God, I am listening for your voice ...
- God, I am watching for your hand ...
- God, I am waiting for you to move ...

Read Acts 3:1-10

Please notice 4 things about this event:

1. First, Peter and John noticed this man. Most likely, he had been there for years. In fact, he had been there during their other previous visits to the temple. But today, they noticed him (with spiritual eyes).

2. Second, they spoke to him. They engaged the man because they had a new sensitivity to the things of God – hurting people.
3. Third, they reached out and touched him.
4. The result = breakthrough.

Final Thoughts:

In his book *The Theory of 21*, Chuck Reaves writes, “For every one person who will say yes, there will be 20 who will say no. For a positive response, you must find the 21st person.”

The problem with most of our praying today is that we simply don’t go out far enough. When other quit, we throw in the towel too. We’re not willing to stand alone. Our belief falls short. Our confidence in God is not what it’s claimed to be. And yet we wonder, when will God bring revival again? When will he move across our community with a great spiritual awakening? Could it be, we are content with the shallow waters when the big fish are out in the deep?

- Who needs to be saved today? Are you willing to out into the deep for them?
- Who needs healing today? Are you willing to step out of the boat for them?
- I (Mike), desperately need wisdom as your pastor. Will you go out into the deep for me?
- Our community needs a church with a fresh vision to reach out? Do you care enough of those outside of any church to go into deep waters on their behalf?

My Prayer today:

God, what must I do today to move out of the shallows and into the deep? Reveal to me my fears, selfishness and even my arrogance that is keeping me in the shallow water. I’m ready for breakthrough’s God. I’m tired of mediocre. I’m tired of the motions. I want to see you move mightily. I see so little victory today God. And I am convinced that I am the problem. The problem is certainly not you. Move me God in the direction of your choice. Mold me and shape me into the man you can use. Change my thinking. Give me the strength to alter my ways. I forsake comfort God. I renounce my selfish desires for what is on your heart. But God, I can only do these things by the power of your Holy Spirit! Help me please. I am desperate for you today. I desire to see a breakthrough created by you in Eufaula, AL.

End of day reflections:

DAY 15

Introduction: Welcome to week 3! You have made the final turn toward home of our 21 day fast. I do not know what you have chosen to give up during this time. But I trust it pales in comparison to what you have been discovering with God in your time of prayer. I also say thank you from the bottom of my heart for the investment you have made at my request. Our church will be stronger for it. I know I will benefit greatly as I seek to lead you into an exciting future. As we consider today's material, it will be a review for some of you as much of this is what you heard me preach last week. For others, it will be brand new. But as I type this even before preaching it, I hope this day encourages you greatly. Especially if you are feeling a little normal.

Key Scripture for today:

“On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so, they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

John 2:1-11

What a wonderful picture of how our Lord Jesus works in the lives of ordinary people. “Normal” is His specialty! What you call the mundane, or the ordinary, Jesus calls an opportunity. Consider all the opportunities as you go through today's time of prayer.

John 2:1-11 Thoughts

1. Jesus works in ordinary problems – Wedding host has run out of wine.
 2. Jesus takes ordinary request – “Hey, Jesus! A little help please”
 3. Jesus works with ordinary people – Common wedding feast
 4. Jesus works with ordinary stuff – Water (He uses what you have)
- * I hope you hear this loud and clear today. If you are looking for the miraculous, astounding, staggering, spectacular, stupendous, eye-popping, thrilling, dramatic events in order to see where Jesus is working, you will miss so much of what He does!!!

Consider one more thing in this story. Even though Jesus relishes opportunities to work in the realm of the ordinary, nothing he does is ordinary. When the wine was tasted, the master of the banquet was shocked because the wine was extraordinary. By this time in the celebration, the wine was usually swapped out for the cheap stuff. But not when Jesus is around.

So, what are you overlooking in life right now because you think it's too ordinary for God to care about? In other words, what are you not believing God for because it's too small, too normal, not anything worth wasting God's time for? It just may be what God wants to surprise you with today. List some things you have put aside as not worth praying about, or too "small" to bring up.

* Don't rush past this exercise too quickly. I am guilty of this myself. Breakthroughs, answers, and solutions we've talked about in previous days could be coming if we would just bring the simple & ordinary to God.

Think about this as a possibility. I don't think Mary was necessarily asking Jesus for a miracle. The text tells us that this was the first of Jesus' miraculous signs. So, it's legitimate to say that Mary had not yet seen anything like this as a point of reference. Some have said that she only hoped for Jesus to calm the crowd possibly. Or, to encourage the master who would have been humiliated for his error in running out of wine. Could it be that Mary simply went to Jesus, knowing he cared, with a simple statement of the circumstance and a believing faith that it would work out with Jesus in the house? I believe that's entirely possible. So, back to you today. Go back up above and list everything, no matter how small & insignificant, and present it all to God! The miraculous could show up in the mundane!

Maybe it's time to create a new, simple, ordinary prayer list

1. Is there a broken heart that needs mending?
2. Is there a mind that is struggling and needs to be restored?
3. Is there a relationship that needs to be reconciled?
4. Is there someone downcast that needs to be lifted up?
5. Is there one who is depressed that needs encouragement?
6. Is there one broken that needs healing?
7. Is there one looking for forgiveness and needs hope for eternity?

Final Thoughts:

I want to leave you today with some thoughts I have shared months ago in messages way before I thought I'd ever be your pastor. I hope they encourage you ...

“There is no higher calling on your life than where you are right now. Therefore, who you are, where you are, and why you are there is all ordained by God on purpose. And, for His purposes.”

I hope you believe this simple but profound thought. To not believe it calls everything into question about the sovereignty of God. He loves you. He knows right where you are. He put you there. He has ordained every circumstance and situation you are having to navigate. He stands ready to help you at each and every turn. So, normal is ok with Him. He wants to help you through it

Some Good Reading

2 Corinthians 12:7-10
1 Kings 19:9-18
Romans 5:1-11

My Prayer for you:

Lord, help us to look for you in the simple and the mundane. Help us to know you are Lord over the normal, everyday activities of my life. Show us where you are at work right under our noses. Lord, we don't have to go to China to see you. We don't have to be in the bush of Africa to know you. Help us to know you have ordained everything about us for this very moment. Help us to see that a journey with you is exciting right here! Lord help Parkview today see Eufaula, AL as a worthy investment of time, resources, energy and love. There are people lost and dying in the shadow of our own steeple. Give us opportunities. Better yet, help us see the simple opportunities that exist already. We need your eyes. We need your heart. Thank you, God, for being the God of the ordinary.

End of day reflections:

DAY 16

Introduction: It was in 1933 when newly elected President, FDR gave his first inaugural speech where he uttered those famous words – “*The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.*” In 1933 the depression in our country was at its height. People were very worried/fearful about things I have never thought twice about in my lifetime. FDR, the new President of the United States of America was intent on doing all he could to alleviate the fears of his countrymen. While at the same time, he was set on what needed to be done practically to end this awful time.

So, what are you afraid of today? What is it that puts you on edge? Fear is a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger. Sometimes that threat is real. Sometimes it is imagined. But in either case, it is real to the one who is afraid. Anxiety, worry, and fear are all addressed by God for us in his Holy Word. You know what the remedy is every time? You’re right. Faith!

I have come back to rewrite today’s material as a result of widespread fear that is growing in our current day around this new thing called the “*Coronavirus.*” As I share things for your benefit in the following pages, I want you to understand a little bit more of who I am. I am an eternal optimist. I am not an alarmist in any way. I actually despise the way our media gets away with promoting such fear among people about whatever the latest “killer” will be in our life. When this fear finally subsides, it will be something new. When I was a kid, it was the next ice age. Now it’s global warming. I want to just say, “Come on people.” I don’t give in to hype and hysteria. I trust God! It’s that simple. He is sovereign over all. We are not. However, in light of all that’s going on. Let’s consider some things specific to us at Parkview and possibly to your own personal lives in this day’s material

Key Scripture for today:

Matthew 6:25-34
Philippians 4:6-9
Psalm 23

Apparently some 365 “fear not” passages throughout the Bible!

Fears; List them here:

What are some of the things that plague you today? Honestly, before God, what cripples you because of your anxieties, worries, concerns & fears? We all have them. Put them down here so we can come back to them in prayer shortly

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Read Numbers 13:26-14:30

What a great study for us today on fear. It will have to be short for now, but please read & study this for yourself beyond what is in front of you today.

In this portion of scripture we find God's people on the cusp of entering the "promised land." The spies are bringing reports back of great fruit. They spoke of all they saw as "a land flowing with milk and honey." They even brought back samples to show off and to share. But then the tone changed. Fear not only became the main theme but it took over with a vengeance. In fact, the fear grew so far out of proportion that the ones who were fearful threatened to stone those who were attempting to lead the people to believe God for the land (Numbers 14:10a). So, what can we take away from this today?

The things we fear:

1. We Fear our adversary: Numbers 13:28-33

Walking by faith does not mean you will not struggle or fail. The life of faith is often marked by intense struggle and failure. Is that going to keep you from believing God today for what He wants to do in and through your life?

Have you ever given up on anything because your adversary – whatever was staring back at you scared you into retreat?

2. We fear our leaders/allies: Numbers 14:1-5

Fear is gnarly folks. It turned the Israelites against their own leaders. Fear creates distrust of one another. Even when their leadership, friendship and companionship has been consistent, fear can make you turn on once precious relationships.

3. Lack of fear for God: Numb14:6-10

When you read this section, you see an impassioned plea from Joshua and Caleb to trust in the fact that God brought them there and would continue to lead them. The result, verse 10, shows that God's own people were so against believing God that they would consider killing both Joshua and Caleb. Hysteria! Fear can take you to places you would have never dreamed!

Questions (not rhetorical) for you from your pastor concerning Parkview Baptist Church

- What are you afraid of God asking you to do?
-

- Where are you afraid God will ask you to go?

- What are you afraid of having to give up?

- Are my fears really valid? On what do I base my fears?

My Prayer for You:

Lord, as I dwell on this passage in Numbers, my request is for you to help keep my eyes on your provision/future. God, I so often take my eyes off what you are doing, where you are leading and how great it is to trust you all along the way. I know there will be great struggles to get anywhere you lead. I also know that failure will accompany me because I am woefully human. But you are bigger than any of that God! Help me to never look back in time and wonder if I made the right choice to follow you. I have! You are trustworthy! There is no “Egypt” in my past that I want to return to God! Help me know that all I have forsaken, left and given up for you pales in comparison to the surpassing riches of knowing you, walking with you and experiencing the God of all creation fulfill His great plans in me and through me. So, I give you my fears, my worries, my anxieties. When they rear up in my life, help me to take those emotions, and thoughts captive and subject them to the obedience of Christ in Your word. What an exhilarating time to be alive God! Thank you, in advance, for all that you are about to lead our church in to. I can’t wait for the struggles and the failures along the way. They will be worth it as we press in to you. Even when I am fearful in the journey Lord, I will lean in to you!

Final Word: I humbly ask for your continued prayers for boldness, courage and clarity.
Leading is hard. Pleasing people is always a temptation. Pray that I please God alone as I seek to lead you. I love you and am filled with hope for the days ahead!

End of day reflections:

DAY 17

Introduction: As our time of prayer & fasting is coming to a quick close, I hope that you have been awakened to the presence of God in your life; possibly like never before. I am sure the fasting has not been pleasant. I can surely speak to that as well. But I hope you are in the middle of saying something like, “Yeah Mike the fasting has been tough. But walking with God like I have for this time has been worth any and every pain of what I have given up.” I hope you have written down your experiences with the Lord these weeks. Like a photo album, I am going to ask you to go back through over the final days to come. I want you to show me and tell me (as if you are going through vacation pictures) all that you have experienced. I’d love to see the smile on your face and hear the emotion in your voice of what it was like to be in the presence of the Lord the way you were for these 21 days.

Key scriptures for today:

“If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.” The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” Exodus 33:13-16

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” Psalm 139:7-10

“... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.” Psalm 139:16-18

Question #1: If you could sit down with anyone in the world (living or dead), and spend some time with them (one day), who would it be? And, why? It can be more than one person.

Question #2: Famous or not, I bet the reason is you would love to hear something great from them. So, my second question is this; how much talking would you do (versus listening)?

Communication between friends isn't really communication if only one person does all the talking. Far too often, that is how we pray though. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone where you could not get a word in to save your life?

- If you wanted to learn about golf while talking with Jack Nicklaus, how much time would you tell him about your game as opposed to listening to him tell you about the game?
- If you wanted to learn about Civil War history from Abraham Lincoln, would you tell him all you have read on the subject? Or, would you ask for his personal account of those days?
- If you wanted to understand more about being an astronaut from John Glenn, would you show him the mobile of planets you made in first grade or simply take in the stories from someone who's been there?
- If you were sitting in the office of the President of the United States of America, how and when would you speak while in the presence of the leader of the free world?

The story lines could go on and on. So, here comes questions 3 & 4.

Question #3: How much have you heard over our days of prayers and fasting? How much have you written down to record your visits with God?

Question #4: Have you done all of the talking while in the presence of the one who created all things – missing all that you could have learned from the one who is the Alpha and Omega. He is the first and the last. He is everlasting to everlasting!

Final Thoughts:

Go back to the introductory page of this devotional. This material was created with the theme of "That I May Know Him Better." The 3 main words I highlighted in Ephesians 1:17-18 were **wisdom, revelation, and enlightened.**

How do you get to know a person better? _____

How do you gain wisdom from another? _____

How much revelation do you gain from talking? _____

How does enlightenment come to the seeker? _____

Proverbs 1:5, "let the wise **listen** and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance."

Proverbs 1:8, “**Listen**, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.”

Proverbs 4:10, “**Listen**, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.”

Proverbs 5:7, “Now then, my sons, **listen** to me; do not turn aside from what I say.”

Proverbs 8:6, “**Listen**, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right.”

Proverbs 8:33, “**Listen** to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.”

Proverbs 8:34, “Blessed is the man who **listens** to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.”

Proverbs 12:15, The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man **listens** to advice.”

My Prayer for you:

Lord Jesus, will you make us listeners. Would you help us understand that in your presence, we have nothing to say. Father, keep Proverbs 8:34 ever before us – we will be blessed by you when we listen. What a visual God, for us to embrace from your word as that verse continues. Help us to watch daily at your doors; to wait at your doorway. God, you are the only one worth listening to. You are the only one who has something to say. Give us a passion to listen. To wait. To watch. To hope & expect you to speak. We give you all the time you desire to speak.

End of day reflection:

DAY 18

Introduction: Did you know that the average person spends more than 2 hours on social media each day. That means that if you are 16 years old – are you ready for this? You will spend 5.33 years of your life scrolling through various forms of social media. Over 1,900 days of your life spent using your thumbs to swipe up on a screen in your palm. Let that sink in for a minute!!! If you have ever wondered about conspiracy theories, let me settle that question for you right now. There IS one! Satan is “full on” conspiring to waste your time, deflect your time, and distract you from spending any time with the God of the universe.

Key Scriptures for today:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2

“But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:40-42

Consider this ... your life is too valuable to be given over to the distractions of life that produce no good thing! A full 5.33 years (Minimum!) of the average life, in the current culture we live in, will be given over to an inanimate object as opposed to living in the world of real relationships face to face! I believe the writer of Hebrews has the best idea yet – “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” And, Jesus uses a little different language when he calls us to a realization of being distracted, worried about, and upset about many things that just aren’t needed – except one – to sit at the feet of Jesus and enjoy a relationship with the savior of the world!

List all the positive experiences so far from the 21 days of Prayer/Fasting (Hopefully you will need more paper!!!)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now, list some of the things that God has been revealing to you that you can “throw off.” Have you been able to identify things that are a distraction in your life; maybe even some things you have been fasting. As Jesus said, many worries that are upsetting. What should I get rid of in order to enjoy the relationship with Jesus that he has always intended?

***“Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.
Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.
Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.”
Proverbs 4:25-27***

This is how Solomon tells us to deal with distractions. Treat them like temptations. When you know what tempts you, don’t go there. Purpose to have “fixed” eyes (on Jesus). Walk straight. Don’t turn. Call one of the prayer partners you listed on Day 11 as accountability to help you.

So much is at stake. I can’t get this figure out of my mind – 5.33 years! I know your time with the Lord these days has been precious. Why go back to a life of distractions after 21 days of joy with the Lord?

In fact, pause now and pray over the two lists above. Thank God for all the blessings that have come out of this special time. I bet you end up listing more now (get more paper!). Then, commit yourself to Proverbs 4:25-27. Ask God for the help you need in “throwing off” the things that hinder. Give him your worries and the things that upset you like Jesus encouraged Martha to do.

One More Exercise:

Think with me about Parkview Baptist Church (as a whole) for this exercise. What do we as a church need to “throw off?” In other words, what is hindering us? It may not be a sin that is entangling us. It may just be something that is holding us back from running the race. This is a difficult exercise I know. It may reflect your opinion. But we as a church need to be humble enough to consider a “whatever it takes” approach to being all that God wants us to be. A runner, a cyclist, race car drivers are all alike. They try to reduce the drag that keeps them from running as fast and efficiently as they possibly can.

Final Thought: The above exercise may also bring to your mind what needs to be added or brought to the ministry of our church. I am positive that God is always doing something new! Record your thoughts. I can't wait to discuss all this soon!

Read: Hebrews 12:1-13

Luke 10:25-41

Psalm 27

Proverbs 4

My Prayer for You:

Lord, it is so easy for us to get weighed down with what does not matter. We are so quickly distracted from what is most important. We need your help God! We have allowed so much in this world to attach itself to us that there is no wonder we are filled with anxiety and worry, like Martha. Help us today – afresh – to know that the most precious place to be is at your feet, enjoying a personal & intimate relationship with you. Help me to know Lord, that when I walk away from you for something that is “important,” that I have actually left the most important. Lord, I know we all have responsibilities in this life that must be attended to. Would you help us God, to prioritize and to remain focused on you through it all. Would you order my steps? Would you give me the faith to trust you with my schedule, my calendar and my “to do” list. You are fully trustworthy God! You are fully capable of taking all that vies for my time and sorting it out, if I would only allow you to take over what I have clinched fist over. Thank you, God, for being all I need. Help me now to know, that you are all I should ever want!

End of day reflections:

DAY 19

Introduction: Three summers ago, Lori and I took a week and went to Acadia National Park on the coast of Maine in Bar Harbor. It was an amazing trip. We saw the beauty of God's creation in a way we had never seen in person. It was truly mesmerizing. We took so many pictures believing that there was no way to capture it all on our phones. Each day brought a new adventure on hiking trails, up Cadillac Mountain, and even making a crossing to an island on foot based on the low tide schedules. Our bed & breakfast host was an amazing guide. He was a remarkable chef. Each morning was new with breakfasts' that were beyond any restaurant. And then, he would pour himself a cup of coffee and sit with us for a few minutes. He would tell us of places to go and draw out the maps that would take us to places that the average tourist did not know about. And true to his word, when we found these treasures, nobody else would be around. It excited him so much to find out that we did indeed discover each place and landmark he told us about. I now want to go back!!!

So, what adventure do you need to go on with God today. Do you think God is as excited about showing us where to go find so much of his treasure (his will) as our tour guide was in Maine? Oh, if we only knew ...

Key Scriptures for today:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

“However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him”

1 Corinthians 2:9

One More Story

A couple of years ago, while in Pigeon Forge, TN, Lori and I stopped in this hiking store and struck up a conversation with the owner. The day before we had hiked this amazingly difficult path up to Rocky Top and back down. So, we were being lazy this particular day before trying another adventure. The owner of the store asked us, “would you like to go somewhere that nobody else knows about.” I said, “sure, we are always up for an adventure.” He pulls out another map. He helps us get our bearing on where we will go to park and start this hike. As he describes landmarks to us, it is hard to visualize because we had never been that way before. But we trusted him. Then he told us, once you pass all those marks, there is an unmistakable switchback. That is where you have to leave the trail, he told us. Well the next day we're off. We do everything by the book. We come to the switchback and then the adventure got more fun. It was tough, tight, up & down, and slippery. But the prize was waiting. We came into this opening with a waterfall that was amazing and looking up to a canopy of trees that was breathtaking. Our guide told us that if we found that waterfall, we would more than likely be the

only two people that day that enjoyed such an amazing prize. And again, we took so many pictures thinking there was no way to capture it all on our phones.

Why do I tell you these stories? The answer is simple: I want to challenge you. Do you truly want to give God permission to do anything with your life that he wants? If so, I want you to consider spending some time praying today these three simple statements ...

- God, I will go anywhere you send me!
- God, I will go any time you want me!
- God, I will do anything you tell me!
- There is no telling what the Lord will do with the person that declares their willingness to God in these ways

“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9

If Lori and I could trust guides who we had never met before, we’ve never known in any way or knew whether what they were telling us was true or not, certainly we can trust God, right?!

1 Samuel 13:22-14:23 (READ THIS AMAZING STORY!)

- Jonathan & his father (King Saul) were the only ones in the army with a weapon (sword)
- Jonathan convinces his armor bearer (who has no weapon) to go with him – ALONE – to the battlefield
- Jonathan’s only reassurance to his young armor bearer was “Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf”
- The armor bearer doesn’t even blink! His response was, “Do all that you have in mind ... I am with you heart and soul!”

I WANT TO MEET THIS ARMOR BEARER!!!

As you read this whole story, consider the incredible outcome of 2 people believing God’s call to an adventure. As God mapped out His vision for Israel that day, here are the results:

1. 1 Samuel 14:21 – Those who had betrayed the cause, returned to God. They came home/back. Sounds like a little revival to me.
2. 1 Samuel 14:22 – The fearful and the dysfunctional came out of their hiding and were infused with great courage to join the battle (“*in hot pursuit!*”).
3. 1 Samuel 14:23 – The Lord rescued Israel that day.

Somebody may be waiting on you to step out and step up to an adventure; to see something you have never seen, to do something you have never done, to go somewhere you've never been. Are you up for an adventure today? Remember the 3 things I asked you to pray today?

- God, I will go anywhere you send me!
- God, I will go any time you want me!
- God, I will do anything you tell me!

What will I do with what I have learned today?

My Prayer for you:

Lord, going on adventures are so much fun. To do new things is exciting and often exhilarating. God, help me to be as excited to go on such journeys with you as I am in this world. Help me to trust you more than I would a perfect stranger. Lord I know you have great plans for me. I know that your desire is to walk with me and to have me join you in what YOU are doing in this world. I need faith God! I need increasing faith! Lord, help me to know you are never about the status quo. Help me to realize you are about gaining new territory, reaching more people with the gospel, showing me more of who you are. Lord, I know you are eager to show yourself strong on my behalf. But I must step out. I must embrace the unknown, "perhaps!" I am ready now God; I will go anywhere you send me, I will any time you want me, and I will do anything you tell me! Amen, you are my Lord!

End of day reflections:

DAY 20

Introduction: You can see the finish line from here! You can taste it (no pun, well maybe!). I recall in some of the races I have run at Fort Benning, the final turn to the finish line is the parade of flags at the infantry museum. It has a celebrative look to it. It is where family and friends are waiting and cheering the most. An announcer calls your name as you are about to cross the line under the big clock as they place the medal around your neck. I have heard family and friends call my name in encouragement. Your step picks up no matter how many miles you have suffered through. I think about God's word in Hebrews 12:1 that says, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses ..."*. Stay strong my friend! Lean into Jesus again & again. Celebrate with God about all He has shown you and taught you these 3 weeks. But let us not take our foot off the pedal. Finish strong with me for 2 final challenges and reminders that these 21 days are truly just a beginning of a new way of living for us

Key Scriptures for today:

"You do not have, because you do not ask God..." James 4:2

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:2

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasure." James 4:3

*"If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered."
Proverbs 21:13*

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do." James 1:5-8

The 6 scriptures listed above will serve as the main reading for the following outline. This may feel like a sermon today instead of devotional, but consider this subject with me today: **"What are the prayer busters in my life?"** Each point below corresponds with the scriptures above.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Prayerlessness | 2. Unconfessed Sin |
| 3. Unresolved Relational Conflict | 4. Selfishness |
| 5. An Uncaring Attitude | 6. Inadequate Faith |

Before I go over these with you, which of these do you struggle with? You may need to circle more than one. And, the reason I am giving you this material today (and what's coming tomorrow), is to challenge you to not only run "through the tape" at the finish line, but to encourage you to not hang up a life of prayer after an intense period like we've experienced together. This needs to become a way of living for each of us. So, do your self-evaluation on these six first. Then, join me below ...

- **The most common cause of unanswered prayer is prayerlessness – James 4:2**
How often does it go like this – you decide to pray about something. You tell a friend you will pray. You think about it from time to time, but you rarely if ever pray. Listen dear family of Parkview, God isn't answering prayer because we so rarely pray purposefully, fervently or expectantly. Have you ever heard that if you bring a thimble to God, he'll fill it. If you bring a bucket to God, he'll fill that. If you bring a 50-gallon drum to God, he'll even fill that. Why don't we pray?!
- **The 2nd reason for unanswered prayer is unconfessed sin – Isaiah 59:2**
God expects us to pursue a holy life; separated from the world unto him. Micah 6:8 says, *"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* What sin do you continue to tolerate in your life? As long as you do, prayer is wasted breath. I would also encourage going back to your prayer partner list and confess to them and ask for their help (See James 5:16).
- **The 3rd reason for unanswered prayer is unresolved conflict – Matthew 5:23-24**
There is no point in trying to pray if we are engaged in ongoing conflict with a family member, a coworker, a neighbor, a friend, ANYONE! Romans 12:18 says, *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."* Let me ask you this, do you really want to restore that relationship? Or, would you rather nurse your pain, blame them for your hurt and live in bitterness? Why? Make it right!
- **The 4th reason for unanswered prayer is selfishness – James 4:3**
I was asked one time, "How would you feel if your prayers were made public, displayed on a billboard?" As I try to get real with myself here, I realize how many of prayers are self-centered and all about me, keeping me pain free, trial free, make me happy O God! I'm also reminded here that God's plan for my life is not to make me happy, but to make me holy!
- **The 5th reason for unanswered prayer is an uncaring attitude – Proverbs 21:13**
Now may be a good time for a quick "side" bible reading. Go to Isaiah 58:3-9. Read this passage several times. In light of our current fast, this is convicting! Does our heart resonate with God's? You may say, "What can I do Mike? I am just one person." Listen! You may not be able to change the world. But you can change the world for "One Person!" You can show care right where you are.

- The 6th (final) reason for unanswered prayer is lack of faith – James 1:5-8
We've covered this a lot in these days of devotional. So, let me just ask you again, Is God able? Is he all powerful & sovereign over all?" If you don't believe these things you might as close up shop now.
- Go back now through each of these "Prayer Busters" and confess to God where you need help. He already knows of course. But take it to him in confession. Ask him for forgiveness and for Holy Spirit power to overcome this in the days ahead.

Final Thought:

None of us can understand how much God wants to change that impossible circumstance, touch that untouchable person, move that immovable mountain in our lives. We matter to him at a level that we will never comprehend.

My prayer for you:

Lord Jesus, nothing is more motivating than answered prayer. We rejoice, celebrate and can't wait for such times. But God I find myself being the biggest roadblock to hearing from you on anything! My prayerlessness Lord is simply unacceptable. Please forgive me for simply failing to pray fervently, earnestly and persistently. Lord I also guard the things in my life (My SIN!) in a way that blocks you from hearing from me. May I seek holiness and righteousness more than anything else today. Fill me with a love for everyone. Even those I have contended with. May I make things right immediately. Give me your heart God for the poor, disenfranchised, the down & out and those who have great needs. Lord I lay my selfish desires before you now and declare that I desperately need your help in not following my own desires. Finally, God, help me believe you in such a God-honoring faith for all things. May it never be said of me that I lacked faith in the one true God to do absolutely anything. I want answered prayer today! You have shown me, clearly, what gets in the way all too often. I am leaning into you today for Holy Spirit power to help me in all these areas. Without you God, I will continue to fail. My trust is in you O God. You have always proven yourself faithful. I have no reason to not believe you for all things.

End of day reflections:

DAY 21

Introduction: We made it! Here we are crossing the finish line of an amazing time spent with the Lord. I have crossed many finish lines over the recent years. Each time I cross the line there is a mixed bag of emotions. There is the joy that comes from finishing with a best time. I beat last year's finishing time! There is often a sigh of relief as I head to the food and beverage area to fill up after a long mileage endurance race. And then there's the emotion that says, "I will never do that again! What was I thinking?" I remember cheering on my friend up the parade of flags at the infantry museum in Fort Benning. As he crossed the line of his marathon (26.2 miles) I hugged him wildly and filled him with all the encouragement I could muster. The only thing he could do at that time was repeat the following over & over again: "Mike! I never want to do that again, I never want to do that again, etc., etc."

I don't know how you feel, but thank you from the bottom of my heart for going on this journey with me. I am humbled and excited to see all that will come out of this for us at Parkview. But for now, I want to issue you one last challenge before we close the final page. Here it is – **Don't Cool Off On Prayer.** Just because we are finishing, don't ever cool off on prayer.

Key scripture for today:

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name." Exodus 20:7 (NIV)

*"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."
Exodus 20:7 (NKJV)*

One of the dangers on a day like this is that we would "Cool Off on Prayer." The project is now over. The race is now completed. We've done our job! We learned a lot, experienced some great time and growth, but now let's return to normal; life as we know it. That is actually one of the worst things we could do. For example, you have discovered (I hope) additional time to spend with God in prayer each day. Regardless of a specific church activity or not. You may have also discovered that whatever you "fasted" could be continued or at least modified moving forward to maintain a special time with God like you've been experiencing these last days. In either case, why would we ever consider moving back away from God after leaning in to Him so desperately for 21 days.

One Final Challenge:

You've noticed that I only included one key scripture for you (above). The third commandment found in Exodus 20 is simple, yet profound and farther reaching than you may have ever imagined. Consider this, this commandment to not take the name of The Lord your God in vain is not just about cursing or flippant language by non-Christians. This command also includes our behavior as Christians. We have taken the name of Jesus Christ upon ourselves as his disciples.

We are called Christians. In essence, we bear his name in who we are. Therefore, we can become guilty of breaking this commandment based on how we live. Treating the name of The Lord our God flippantly as a “casual Christian” is indeed grievous to God. Have you ever thought of that in this particular command? It’s true! In fact, I would dare say (my opinion) that as followers of Christ, this is more of grievance against God than a lost person using God’s name to curse something or someone. The reason I have that opinion is that we should “know better!” We’ve experienced the love, grace, mercy and forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. Nothing in our lives should ever be a ho-hum approach to being Christ-like. And to treat our Christian living so casually in our culture is a direct affront to God as a taking His name in vain! Think about this. Let this sink in.

- How do we live away from the church house?
- How do we speak away from the church house?
- What is our integrity like away from the church house?
- Do we really trust in God for all things? Or, is that just an answer in Sunday School?
- How often does he hear from us apart from a 21-day church fast?
- Is His word really a treasure to us; a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path?

All these ways, and so many more are ways we misuse the Lord’s name and take it in vain. Let’s consider a definition of “vain” from our current dictionary:

- **Vain** – without real significance, value or importance; baseless or worthless.

So, using that definition, here’s the question. Does the name “Jesus” have any real significance to you throughout your daily routine? How much do you value the presence of God with you moment by moment. Is His name, His will, His kingdom truly important to you above all other things. Or, is church just an activity; making Jesus’ name really just a baseless and worthless name to you when it’s all said and done?

These are heavy thoughts to consider for each one of us. But here’s the real reason I present these thoughts to you today – **I don’t want you to cool off in prayer** – just because we are finished!

In what ways may I be taking The Lord’s name in vain? Treating it without real significance, value or importance.

Final Thoughts:

I’d love to hear from each of you personally. I hope you have taken notes; journaled your thoughts and findings. I really believe that as I hear from you, it will help shape the vision of

this church for years to come. I am convinced of this! What an honor to be your pastor. What privilege that humbles me beyond words to express to live this faith journey with you all at Parkview. I believe a fresh wind of God's moving is coming to Eufaula through you. I believe neighbors of yours, coworkers of yours, guests, visitors and random encounters will notice something so different that they will not be able to help but ask, "What's different about you?" I believe God has been and will be honored by your desire to lean in to him strongly & desperately. I believe we live in the most exciting time ever! I believe people want to know God and they just don't know how. I believe that we as a church, will show them how to have that most exciting relationship of all time. I believe as we watch God unfold great and mighty things before us, we will experience times of struggle, pain, and even failure. But I also believe we will be resilient and steadfast as we persevere in the Lord together. I believe we are different today than we were 21 days ago. I hope we never go back!

My Prayer for you:

God, I thank you for the church. I thank you specifically for my church. These are your people and I know they are far more precious to you than to me. Thank you for calling us all together; from so many walks of life, so many backgrounds, so many different gifts, personalities and talents. I know Parkview is a beautiful tapestry to you. I thank you Lord, for calling me to join them at this time. May you have your way with us; totally. May we be surrendered to you; fully. May we worship you in spirit and truth; mightily. May we unwaveringly go into the world as the salt of the earth and, the light of the world; daily. May your Word be proclaimed; boldly. May we go into this community with an unction and desire to win them to Jesus; lovingly. May we never get off our knees in prayer as we depend entirely on you; fervently. Thank you, God for such a time of prayer & fasting. May we return to such times with you – expectantly & constantly. God, on our best day help us to realize we are in desperate need of your presence, power and grace. We love you Lord! Thank you for salvation and forgiveness of sin. Thank you for making us whole and righteous through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May you receive all the honor, glory, and praise from each one of us all the days of our lives! Amen!

End of day reflections:
