

LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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In order to listen and read at the same time, you need to select the day page then right-click the date and set your screen for two separate windows

August 2022

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Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

Month of August 2022

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August 01 2022 (click for audio)

You See Bones

Today is Monday the 1st of August, and we are continuing to explore the theme of hope. This week we are focusing on God's hope for the future.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in the way that God leads me, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 23...

*He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
Psalm 23:3-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

For the next three days, I will be reflecting on a passage from the book of Ezekiel, the prophet...

*The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'
I said, 'Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'
Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am*

the LORD.”

Ezekiel 37:1-6 (NIV UK)

The Spirit of the Lord could have set Ezekiel on a hillside overlooking the valley, which probably would have made it a lot easier for him to see just how many dry bones there really were. But instead, the Lord took Ezekiel deep into the valley. And there, while up to his ankles in lifeless dry bones, Ezekiel heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Prophesy...’

What strikes me most about this passage is that the Spirit of the Lord didn’t simply want Ezekiel to see this vision from a distance, but to participate in it.

Ask

What has the Spirit of the Lord been showing me recently? How might the Lord be leading me to participate?

Pause and pray

What ‘valley’ has the Spirit of the Lord set me in? Perhaps it’s a school or college, a workplace, or a local community. As I imagine myself walking to and fro in this ‘valley’, I pray...

Hear the word of the Lord, dry bones! The Sovereign Lord will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine myself in the valley. How would I have responded to the Spirit of the Lord’s question?

The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’

I said, ‘Sovereign LORD, you alone know.’

Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones and say to them, “Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”’

Ezekiel 37:1-6 (NIV UK)

When the Spirit of the Lord asked the question, ‘Can these bones live?’, I wonder if Ezekiel paused to look around him before responding. Perhaps he noticed that the bones were ‘very dry’ and realized that there was no hope of life left in them. But I wonder if it was when Ezekiel turned back to face the Spirit of the Lord that he realized there was hope after all.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Spirit of the Lord, I choose not to focus on the dry bones of my circumstances, but to fix my eyes on You instead. Only You know what is possible.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew's gospel:

There are some things people cannot do, but God can do anything.

Matthew 19:26 (CEV)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 02 2022 (click for audio)

I See An Army

It's Tuesday the 2nd of August, and throughout this week we are exploring the theme of God's hope for the future.

Together we will pray (**P.R.A.Y.**) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

And so, as I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice that God gives and sustains life today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 104...

*[The things you have made] all depend on you
to give them food as they need it.
When you supply it, they gather it.
You open your hand to feed them,
and they are richly satisfied.
But if you turn away from them, they panic.
When you take away their breath,
they die and turn again to dust.
When you give them your breath, life is created,
and you renew the face of the earth.
Psalm 104:27-30 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am continuing to reflect on Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. The Spirit of the Lord had led Ezekiel to and fro among the bones and told him to prophesy to them...

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared

on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live."' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Ezekiel 37:7-10 (NIV UK)

Sometimes things look alive, but they aren't really alive. The reconstructed bodies in Ezekiel's vision had the appearance of life – they looked alive on the outside – but they lacked one essential ingredient. They had no breath in them.

The Apostle John says that after Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to His disciples and 'breathed on them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit."' (John 20:22)

Ask

I close my eyes for a few moments and take a deep breath, asking Jesus to breathe on me.

Holy Spirit, I want to be fully alive, sustained by Your breath. Revive me today.

Pause and pray

Turning my attention outwards, I focus on places in the world where the life of Jesus is desperately needed, and I pray...

Come, breath of God. Come from the north, the south, the east and the west. Come and breathe upon these places and these people, that they may come alive and experience life in all its fullness.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live."' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Ezekiel 37:7-10 (NIV UK)

Sometime during September 1999, while Pete Greig was in the very first 24-7 Prayer room, he wrote a prayer-poem that referred to this Bible passage onto one of the walls. 'The vision is an army of young people', he wrote. 'You see bones, I see an army.'*

*<https://www.24-7prayer.com/about/about-us/the-vision/>

I pause briefly to name some of the young people I know, and to pray for them – that they may be filled with the breath of God and rise up to become a mighty army!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Spirit of the Lord, my hope is in You and not in what I can see. And so, like Ezekiel, I choose to be obedient, to say the things and do the things that You are calling me to.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's gospel:

I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full.
John 10:10 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 03 2022 (click for audio)

Then You Will Know

Today is Wednesday the 3rd of August and this week we are exploring the theme of God's hope for the future

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice that I can put my hope in God today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 42...

*"O God my rock," I cry,
"Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I wander around in grief,
oppressed by my enemies?"
Their taunts break my bones.
They scoff, "Where is this God of yours?"
Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—
my Savior and my God!
Psalm 42:9-11 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am continuing to reflect on Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. For a second time, the Spirit of the Lord tells Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones...

Then he said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off." Therefore prophesy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have

spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.”
Ezekiel 37:11-14 (NIV UK)

The Spirit of the Lord tells Ezekiel that the bones are the people of Israel, a nation in exile. ‘We are dry and lifeless,’ they cry. ‘We have no hope anymore. We are cut off, isolated and far from home.’

If I could hear the bones of my own nation – the place where I live, or the people that I belong to – what would they be crying out right now? I take a few moments to wait and listen.

Ask

I make this cry my own, and I pray for the needs of my nation, my people.

Pause and pray

‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says...’ prophesies Ezekiel. What might the Sovereign Lord want to say to my nation at this time? Maybe it’s a verse from Scripture or a picture. Maybe it’s a word of encouragement or challenge. I speak these things out, prophetically, over my nation.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Then he said to me: ‘Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.” Therefore prophesy and say to them: “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.”’
Ezekiel 37:11-14 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

I noticed that the phrase, ‘Then you will know that I am the Lord’ is repeated twice in this short passage, and again earlier in the same chapter. It’s as if God really wants me to hear this; whatever the circumstances, however dry and lifeless I feel, however hopeless, however alone, I can be sure of one thing: that He is the Lord.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Father God, You are the Lord of everything, but I acknowledge You as my Lord once again today. I yield all that I am to You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Ezekiel 37:

‘I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’
Ezekiel 37:6b (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 04 2022 (click for audio)

Making Things New

Today is Thursday the 4th of August, and this is our final week exploring the theme of hope. This week we are focusing on God's hope for the future.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's plans to renew all things today, beginning with words from the prophet Isaiah...

*"Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth,
and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.
Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation!
And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness.
Her people will be a source of joy.
I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and delight in my people.
And the sound of weeping and crying
will be heard in it no more."
Isaiah 65:17-19 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

The Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos in 95AD, nearly 800 years after Isaiah's words were spoken. Today, I am reflecting on the vision that John had, which brought Isaiah's prophecy to life...

Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death" or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

Revelation 21:1-5 (NIVUK)

'The closing scene of the Bible,' writes theologian NT Wright, 'is not a vision of human beings going up to heaven, as in so much popular imagination, nor even of Jesus himself coming to earth, but of the new Jerusalem itself coming down from heaven to earth... What God did in Jesus, coming to an unknowing world and an unwelcoming people, he is doing on a cosmic scale. He is coming to live, for ever, in our midst, a healing, comforting, celebrating presence... Heaven and earth were joined together in Jesus; heaven and earth will one day be joined fully and for ever.'*

* NT Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, (London: SPCK Publishing, 2011), p.187-188.

Ask

According to the Apostle Paul, I am already a citizen of this new heaven (Philippians 3:20). I am of this new heaven – I belong to it and I am called to live by its values – even while I am still in the world today (John 17:15-16).

Lord Jesus, help me to live according to my citizenship – to live on earth as it is in heaven today.

Pause and pray

Sadly, there are many places in the world today that are more like 'hell on earth' than 'heaven on earth', places where there is poverty and oppression, violence and death.

Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come, may Your will be done – may heaven come into these specific places on earth in some way today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death" or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

Revelation 21:1-5 (NIV UK)

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

I am struck by God's tenderness and affection in this passage. I can imagine God leaning down and gently wiping the tears from each and every eye. And I can imagine the smile on God's face and hear the kindness in His voice as He whispers, 'There will be no more death... no more mourning... no more crying.'

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, I confess that I am not only in the world, but I am of it much of the time too – shaped and influenced by the values and priorities around me, instead of by Yours. I yield myself to You and to Your great hope – Your great plan – to make all things new.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah:

Pay close attention now:

I'm creating new heavens and a new earth...

Look ahead with joy.

Anticipate what I'm creating.

Isaiah 65:17a,18a (MSG)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 05 2022 (click for audio)

God's Light

Today is Friday the 5th of August, and this week we are exploring the theme of God's hope for the future.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glorious presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Isaiah 60...

"No longer will you need the sun to shine by day,
nor the moon to give its light by night,
for the LORD your God will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

Your sun will never set;
your moon will not go down.

For the LORD will be your everlasting light.

Your days of mourning will come to an end.

Isaiah 60:19-20 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on a few more verses from John's revelation. What Isaiah prophesied, John experienced in his vision 800 years later...

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

Revelation 21:22-26 (NIV UK)

John could not see a temple in the city because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the temple, and the light of their presence wasn't just somewhere, but everywhere.

Ask

What if people where I live couldn't see the church structures because the presence of God in God's people wasn't just somewhere, but everywhere... illuminating every school, every shopping mall, every office and every factory, every local neighborhood? This sounds a little bit like heaven to me.

Lord Jesus, help me to play my part, to shine the light that You have put inside me wherever I am today.

Pause and pray

In today's passage, John wrote, 'On no day will its gates ever be shut'. I think of those in my local community who feel as if they're 'on the outside' and unable to find their way in.

Loving God, may they find that the gates into Your presence are wide open. May they receive Your warm welcome, through me and other Christians today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

Revelation 21:22-26 (NIV UK)

The Apostle Peter also writes about this grand finale, and he reminds the believers not to wait passively for it to arrive, but to play their part. 'We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells,' he writes. 'Live holy and godly lives, as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.' (2 Peter 3:13b,11-12, NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Heavenly Father, I feel the weight and the responsibility of Peter's words; You invite me to 'speed the coming' of the day of the Lord. But I also feel the anticipation, the sense of excitement. I yield to the invitation, and I say, let Your will be done, let Your kingdom come, in and through my life.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew's gospel:

*'You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:14,16 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 06 2022 (click for audio)

Tree of Life

Today is Saturday the 6th of August, and this week we have been exploring the theme of God's hope for the future.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

God of hope, I put my trust in You. As I spend this time with You, may Your joy and peace fill me, and Your hope overflow through me. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's ultimate plans today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 46...

*God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.
Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!
A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.
Psalm 46:1-5a (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on the first few verses of the final chapter of John's revelation. I notice that many of his images and themes were there in the book of Genesis too.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they

will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22:1-5 (NIV UK)

‘John’s vision,’ writes theologian NT Wright, ‘is of a new Eden. In Genesis, there were four rivers flowing from the garden,’ but in today’s passage from the book of Revelation there is only one. ‘The tree of life which grows in profusion on either bank of the river is “the tree of life”, the tree which was forbidden to Adam and Eve as they were expelled from the garden... And the “tree of life” is not merely there to provide healing for this person, or that, for this Adam or this Eve. Now the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.’*

* NT Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, (London: SPCK Publishing, 2011), p.200.

Ask

I think about my own nation, and in particular the areas where we are broken, divided, and hurting right now.

Lord Jesus, as I name my nation before You, I pray that the leaves of the tree of life would fall upon us and heal us.

Pause and pray

Which other nations have been on my heart and in my mind this week? Which nations beyond my own has the Lord been speaking with me about?

Lord Jesus, as I name these nations before You now, I pray that the leaves of the tree of life would fall upon them and heal them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 22:1-5 (NIV UK)

When I’m reading a book or watching a film or a TV series, I usually avoid talking with people who know how the story ends, just in case they spoil it for me by giving away how everything comes

together. Reading the final chapters of the Bible is amazing though. Instead of spoiling the story, John's revelation helps me to understand the full story, and it gives me great hope for the future.

'Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,' he writes. 'And blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.' (Revelation 1:3, NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

At the very end of the book of Revelation, Jesus says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' I use John's response as my prayer of yielding today (Revelation 22:20):

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation:

'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.'

Revelation 22:17 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

[August 07 2022 \(click for audio\)](#)

Hope Sabbath

It's Sunday the 7th of August, and today we pause our regular **P.R.A.Y.** rhythms to pray a special Sabbath prayer.

Theologian William Willimon writes, 'Sabbath keeping is a publicly enacted sign of our trust that God keeps the world, therefore we do not have to. God welcomes our labors, but our contributions to the world have their limits. If even God trusted creation enough to be confident that the world would continue while God rested, so should we.'*

*William Willimon, *The Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. (p.329), cited in Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), p.129.

Throughout this week, I've been reflecting on the theme of hope. As I settle into this time of prayer, I open my mind to grasp the hope to which God has called me (Ephesians 1:18). I open my heart to receive the hope God wants to pour into and through me. (Romans 15:13)

Pause and pray

A Sabbath prayer from Psalm 31:

*Praise be to the LORD,
for he showed me the wonders of his love
when I was in a city under siege.
In my alarm I said,
'I am cut off from your sight!'
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
when I called to you for help.
Love the LORD, all his faithful people!
The LORD preserves those who are true to him,
but the proud he pays back in full.
Be strong and take heart,
all you who hope in the LORD.
Psalm 31:21-24 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Father God, I thank You that millions of people around the world will hear Your word being preached today. I pray that those who speak will be bold and courageous as they preach the good news. And I pray that those who listen will discover that You have great 'plans to give them hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11).

Jesus, I pray especially for those who are finding life painful or difficult right now. Draw near to them and give them strength to hold onto hope. Remind them today that You are faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

And Holy Spirit, fill the Church today. Help her to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers in my own local community, naming those I know who are bringing hope in simple ways to their homes, their schools or their workplaces.

Pause and pray

As I bring this short Sabbath prayer to a close, I receive the promise and the commissioning in the words of the Apostle Paul's prayer from the book of Romans:

May the God of hope fill [me] with all joy and peace as [I] trust in him, so that [I] may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

*May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.***

****Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info**

August 08 2022 (click for audio)

They Did Not Understand

Today is Monday the 8th of August, and this week we are exploring the teachings of Jesus as He walked with His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem where he knew he was going to die. I must warn you that it's going to be a particularly challenging journey.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path in the light of Your life.

(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's guidance today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*The LORD is good and does what is right;
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.
He leads the humble in doing right,
teaching them his way.
Psalm 25:8-9 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Jesus' extraordinary priorities :

*They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.' But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.
Mark 9:30-32 (NIV UK)*

Jesus has 'resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9:51) and the whole focus of His ministry seems to have shifted; shutting out the clamoring crowds in order to privately prepare His disciples for all that is to come. One commentator says that His focus here is 'intensive, not extensive'. It's about depth rather than breadth. '[Jesus] had a quiet purposeful selectiveness, so often lacking in the fevered rush of much of our Christian work today, which produces nervous breakdowns as part of its bitter fruit.'*

*R.A. Cole, The Gospel According to St Mark: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961, 1980) p.149.

Ask

Loren Cunningham, the founder of Youth With a Mission, says that 'if we will take care of the depth, God will take care of the breadth.'

Have I got my priorities right? Where am I currently over-committed? How might the Lord be calling me to slow down? Is there someone to whom, or something to which I should say 'no' today?

Pause and pray

*Lord, I pray now for someone I know who seems distracted and too busy. Would You show them how to focus, to prioritize, to 'ruthlessly eliminate hurry'** from their lives? May their life be shaped by Your calling and not by the unrelenting demands of the crowds.*

**When John Ortberg asked Dallas Willard, 'What do I need to do to become the me I want to be?' he answered: 'You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life', quoted in John Mark Comer, The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2019) p.19.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I imagine the expressions on the faces of the disciples as Jesus makes His shocking statement...

They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.' But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Mark 9:30-32 (NIV UK)

The disciples did 'not understand what [Jesus] meant' when he spoke to them about His death and resurrection (although it was the third time He'd done so) but we're told here that they were also 'afraid to ask him about it.' I wonder why? [pause]

Is Jesus inviting me into a difficult conversation or a painful situation which I would much rather avoid?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I can be so shallow: more interested in breadth than depth, activity than presence, an easy life instead of an honest one. I push into the shadows today, crucify my ego, and yield to what is real, even if it is painful, trusting in Your love and Your life to come.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 12:

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

John 12:24 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 09 2022 (click for audio)

The Greatest

Today is Tuesday the 9th of August, and this week we are exploring the teachings of Jesus as He walked with His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem where he knew he was going to die.

Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** very simply each day – ‘**P**’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘**R**’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. ‘**A**’: **ASKING** God to help us and others and ‘**Y**’: **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path in the light of Your life.

(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the awesome majesty of God today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the exuberance of Psalm 47...

Come, everyone! Clap your hands!

Shout to God with joyful praise!

For the LORD Most High is awesome.

He is the great King of all the earth.

Psalm 47:1-2 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the disciples’ heart attitudes as they walked and talked with Jesus on their way to Jerusalem.

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.’

He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever

welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'
Mark 9:33-37 (NIV UK)

The disciples have left everything to follow Jesus. They have spent three years with the Son of God, and yet they are still struggling for status, riven with unhealthy competition and toxic selfish ambition. Perhaps I should find this shocking but in fact I find it strangely reassuring. These motives are familiar. These attitudes, if I'm honest, can often be my own.

Ask

Aware of my own unhealthy drives, I ask the Lord to give me an opportunity today to serve Him anonymously by doing something for His glory that no one else will ever discover, or by honoring someone with whom I might otherwise be tempted to compete.

Pause and pray

Remembering how Jesus held that child in His arms, I pray now for children I know to experience the love of the Lord, and for strength and wisdom for the people God has called to care for them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.'

He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'

Mark 9:33-37 (NIV UK)

The needs of the world are overwhelming. But just because I can't do everything, that isn't a reason to do nothing. I notice that Jesus doesn't ask His disciples to be magnanimous towards all humanity, but to welcome one child in His name. Who might that 'one' person be for me today?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I lay aside my aspirations towards greatness, and I simply yield today to Your invitation to be the servant of all – one person at a time.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this challenging time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me assures me in John's Gospel:

Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 12:26 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 10 2022 (click for audio)

Not One Of Us

Today is Wednesday the 10th of August, and this week we are exploring the teachings of Jesus as He walked with His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem where he knew he was going to die.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path in the light of Your life.

(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithful love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 136...

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!

His faithful love endures forever.

Give thanks to him who alone does mighty miracles.

His faithful love endures forever.

Psalm 136:1,4 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on another trap the disciples have fallen into – thinking that they are the only ones to enjoy God's favor and that everyone else is wrong.

'Teacher,' said John, 'we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.'

'Do not stop him,' Jesus said. 'For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.'

Mark 9:38-41 (NIV UK)

Nicky Gumbel, the pioneer of Alpha, confesses: 'I used to look at other kinds of Christians and think "What's wrong with them?" But now,' he says, 'I look at them and think "What's right with them? What can I learn from them? What insights do they have for me?"'

Ask

Are there other types of Christians I am excluding as 'not one of us'?

Lord, help me to be generous and gracious towards my Christian brothers and sisters, especially those whose traditions and convictions disturb or disrupt my own. Would You open my ears to receive revelation from someone with whom I would prefer to disagree.

Pause and pray

Lord Jesus, You prayed for Your Church, 'that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17:21). As I name a church or a Christian leader in my area from a tradition not my own, I ask you to bless them Today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

'Teacher,' said John, 'we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.'

'Do not stop him,' Jesus said. 'For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.'

Mark 9:38-41 (NIV UK)

Jesus rejects the notion of 'us and them' amongst his followers. He refuses to endorse John's indignation with its underlying sense of elitism and exclusivity. Instead he promises a reward for anyone and everyone who welcomes others in his name, regardless of whether we consider them 'one of us' (v.38). And so, having prayed for God to bless other Christians, I ask the Lord to give me an opportunity to welcome someone from another tradition as a friend.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, as I yield myself again to the kindness of Your generous hospitality towards me, would You increase my capacity to believe the best in other people, celebrating diversity and welcoming them with grace.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me speaks a word of unity over His family the Church, declaring that:

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 11 2022 (click for audio)

Causing To Stumble

Today is Thursday the 11th of August, and this week we are exploring the teachings of Jesus as He walked with His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem where he knew he was going to die. Please be aware that in today's Lectio we will be addressing some painful areas relating to the safeguarding of children.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path in the light of Your life.

(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's attention to detail today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 37...

*The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.
Though they stumble, they will never fall,
for the LORD holds them by the hand.
Psalm 37:23-24 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on some particularly tough teaching Jesus gives to His disciples while they are on the road.

*'If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung round their neck and they were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where
“the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.”’
Mark 9:42-48 (NIV UK)*

As a Middle Eastern man, Jesus was passionate, colorful, and often metaphorical in His communication. He isn't speaking literally here. He's not advocating self-mutilation (or there would be a lot of one-eyed, one-footed, and one-handed people in the Church) but rather He is highlighting the seriousness of sin and advocating for the protection of children both literal and spiritual in the strongest possible terms.

Ask

Holy God, would You show me the sins I am tolerating and accommodating that damage the lives of others, sins to which I have become numb. Would You re-sensitize my conscience and renew in me a burning passion for holiness. Give me the courage to cut out anything that needs to go.

Pause and pray

The widespread abuse of children, not just in society at large but in churches, is utterly shocking, heartbreaking and devastating. And today's passage leaves us with absolutely no doubt about Jesus' own fury. I hold before Him now someone known to me whose life has been damaged in this way, asking for continued mercy, justice and healing.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to this challenging passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*'If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung round their neck and they were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where
“the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.”’*
Mark 9:42-48 (NIV UK)

Feeling the force of Jesus' words here, and having prayed with sobriety about my own holiness, I pray now for greater holiness in the institutions of the Church, and particularly for those charged with the vital responsibility of safeguarding our children.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Using the words of Psalm 51, I pray:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin...
Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
(Psalm 51:1-2,10 NIV UK)*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 103:

*As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
Psalm 103:12 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 12 2022 (click for audio)

Salted With Fire

Today is Friday the 12th of August, and this week we are exploring the teachings of Jesus as He walked with His disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem where he knew he was going to die.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path in the light of Your life.

(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the sheer magnificence of God in creation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 104...

Let all that I am praise the LORD.

O LORD my God, how great you are!

You are robed with honor and majesty...

You make the clouds your chariot;

you ride upon the wings of the wind.

The winds are your messengers;

flames of fire are your servants.

Psalm 104:1,3b-4 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on one of the more ominous and obscure sayings of Jesus:

Everyone will be salted with fire.

'Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.'

Mark 9:49-50 (NIV UK)

Jesus' words sound strange to our modern ears but, throughout the Bible, salt and fire were symbols of purity and purification. To be 'salted with fire', therefore, is to be purged, cleansed and made holy. And to eat salt with someone in the ancient world was a way of pledging binding friendship (Numbers 18:19). This is why Jesus follows on from saying 'have salt among yourselves' by adding 'be at peace with each other'. It's about friendship as well as purity.

Ask

Whenever I pray, 'Come Holy Spirit' I am inviting the holiness of God to enter my life. Thinking now of a particular friend, I pray 'Come Holy Spirit' upon our friendship, asking the Lord to take it deeper and make it more beautiful for His glory.

Pause and pray

Father God, would You come with the fire of Your Spirit to preserve, purge, and purify Your Church. May Your people be salt in the world and may we all be at peace with one another.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Everyone will be salted with fire.

'Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.'

Mark 9:49-50 (NIV UK)

John Newton, the former slave trader and author of the hymn 'Amazing Grace', once made a refreshingly honest and hopeful observation about the slow process of becoming 'salty':

I am not what I ought to be... I am not what I wish to be... I am not what I hope to be.... Yet,... I can truly say, I am not what I once was... and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'*

<https://quotepark.com/quotes/1008976-john-newton-i-am-not-what-i-ought-to-be-ah-how-imperfect-an/b>

Lectio365 this week has been enormously challenging, but I thank God now that, having saved me, He is still saving me and that one day I shall be as beautiful and free as Jesus Christ himself.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, salt me with fire. Thank You for the many ways in which You have already changed me. I yield myself again to Your amazing grace in my life.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me assures me that He is refining me for His glory:

Now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even

though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 13 2022 (click for audio)

The Moravian Pentecost

Today is Saturday the 13th of August and it was on this day in 1727 that an outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon a community of Moravian Christians at Herrnhut, in modern-day Germany. This was a moment that launched a movement that changed the world.

On feast days we pause from our usual rhythms, often to celebrate the stories of heroes of faith whose collective witness embodies the six practices at the heart of Lectio 365, but sometimes also to remember landmark moments in the history of the Church. Today we mark one of the greatest moments in modern-day prayer and mission movements.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Holy Spirit, fill me today as You filled the Moravian Christians nearly three hundred years ago in Herrnhut. Ignite in me a passion for prayer and a fearless ambition for Your gospel. Let me learn from their example that I might follow in their footsteps. Amen.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's unfailing love from generation to generation, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 100...

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the LORD is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.
Psalm 100:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

The great Moravian Pentecost of 13th August 1727 ignited a prayer meeting which continued non-stop for more than a hundred years, propelling missionaries, aflame with the gospel, to the ends of the earth, and launching the modern missions movement. It is a moment worth celebrating!

It had begun five years earlier when a bedraggled band of refugees arrived on the country estate of Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf at Berthelsdorf in Saxony, fleeing for their lives from fierce religious persecution in their homelands of Bohemia and Moravia across the Austrian Alps to the south. Zinzendorf offered them extraordinary hospitality, provoked no doubt by his Mustard Seed vow* to

‘be kind to all people’. He permitted the Moravians to settle on his land where they built a village called Herrnhut, ‘the Watch of the Lord’.

* For more on the modern Order of the Mustard Seed, please visit

<https://www.orderofthemustardseed.com/>

But the new community was far from idyllic. For five years they had bickered and argued until this day in 1727 when they gathered in the church and repented before the Lord. Count Zinzendorf himself recorded what happened next: ‘The Saviour permitted to come upon us a Spirit of whom we had hitherto not had any experience or knowledge. Hitherto we had been the leaders and helpers. Now the Holy Spirit Himself took full control of everything and everybody.’**

**John Greenfield (Original Version, 1928). Edited by Mark Mirza, Power from on High: The Two Hundredth anniversary of the Great Moravian Revival 1727-1927 (Atlanta: CTM Publishing, 2017) p.25.

Some fell to the floor under the power of the Holy Spirit. It was even reported that some of the community working 20 miles away had the same experience at the same time!

Ask

The example of the Moravian Christians challenges me in many ways. Am I harboring broken relationships or bad attitudes towards other believers? Do I carry resentment, a critical spirit, or unforgiveness? Am I still holding tightly to old opinions and hurts from the past?

Holy Spirit, search my heart as I repent and turn again to You.

Pause and pray

Since the fifteenth century, the Moravian Church had been known as the ‘Unitas Fratrum’ – the ‘Unity of the Brethren’. Through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, they began once again to live up to their name. Thinking now of other churches, as well as my own, I ask for God’s extravagant blessing, praying as Jesus also prayed:

‘that [we] may be brought to complete unity.’(John 17:23, (NIV UK)

Pause and pray

Yield

Opening my hands before the Lord now, I pause and wait as I invite the Holy Spirit to fill me afresh.

Come Holy Spirit

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield to the Lord now using an ancient invocation to the Holy Spirit, drawn from a Novena prayer***:

***<https://hozana.org/en/prayer/holy-spirit/veni-sancte-spiritus>

Veni Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit, send forth the heavenly radiance of your light...

Cleanse that which is unclean, water that which is dry, heal that which is wounded.

Bend that which is inflexible, fire that which is chilled, correct what goes astray...

Grant the reward of virtue, grant the deliverance of salvation, grant eternal joy.

Amen

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me promises to give me the Holy Spirit, saying:

'...wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about... in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 1:4-5 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 14 2022 (click for audio)

Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 14th of August, a day of rest for billions of Christians on which we pause our normal rhythms to pray a special Sabbath prayer.

Do not let Sunday be taken from you,' said Albert Schweitzer, the great missionary and Nobel Laureate. 'If your soul has no Sunday, it becomes an orphan.'

Father, help me today to relax and rest as You rested, honoring Your creation with my recreation, expressing my trust through rest and, in all I do, saying with You: 'It is good, it is good, it is good.'

Pause and pray

It's an astonishing thought that some two billion people will gather today to worship Jesus from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets (Psalm 113:3), celebrating together the story of God from creation to redemption, anticipating together its final thrilling chapter, and partaking together in its unfolding narrative. We are broken and imperfect yet we are the largest, most diverse community on earth, an ancient, global, revolutionary movement conspiring 'to proclaim good news to the poor... to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives' and 'to comfort all who mourn' (Isaiah 61:1-2) fulfilling the mission and the mandate of our Master Jesus Christ.

Pause and pray

Father, thank you that Your family is gathering around the world today. Please speak powerfully, that 'many will see and fear... and put their trust in [You].'(Psalm 40:3 NIV UK).

Jesus, I pray today for pastors and priests leading Your people and preaching Your gospel. May they follow in Your footsteps, loving sacrificially, preaching boldly and laying down their lives for the flock.

Holy Spirit, revive us today we pray. Surprise us with Your power and Your presence as we meet. Heal the sick, speak prophetically, bind up broken hearts, convict us of our sins, pour out Your gifts, and renew in us an all-consuming passion for Jesus.

Pause and pray

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers quite specifically in my own local community, naming people I know who particularly need to encounter Jesus today.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.*

[*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

August 15 2022 (click for audio)

Lord You Have My Heart

Today is Monday the 15th of August, and this week we are reflecting on the Gospel of Mark and responding to Jesus' invitation to follow Him.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's leadership today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 32...

The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.

I will advise you and watch over you.

Do not be like a senseless horse or mule

that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

Many sorrows come to the wicked,

but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.

So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him!

Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

Psalm 32:8-11 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I reflect on a passage where the Pharisees are trying to trap Jesus with tricky questions.

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?'

'What did Moses command you?' he replied.

They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.'

'It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,' Jesus replied. 'But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female".'

Mark 10:1-6 (NIV UK)

The location of this conversation may give some indication as to what the Pharisees might have been up to. Jesus was preaching in Judea, across the Jordan, where John the Baptist had formerly taught.

The same John the Baptist who spoke against Herod's marriage to his brother's wife and subsequently lost his life. Divorce is a controversial topic, then and now!

Jesus refuses to debate by the Pharisee's rules. Theologian Donald English notes:

[He] points to the heart of the matter, God's will and purpose. The real question is the positive one, namely, 'What did God intend by giving marriage in the first place?'

* Donald English, *The Message of Mark* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 164.

Ask

God, I ask that You show me how I'm doing in my marriage and in my primary relationships. In the routine of day-to-day life together have we gone on automatic pilot? Do we take one another for granted? Have little hurts accumulated or big hurts fractured our relationship? In the quiet I listen to anything You might want to say to me.

Pause and pray

God, I pray for marriages that are struggling. Maybe that includes mine! Would You soften hearts? Would You repair brokenness in relationships, restore hope, and renew vision of Your good purpose for life together.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' 'What did Moses command you?' he replied.

They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.'

'It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,' Jesus replied. 'But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female".'

Mark 10:1-6 (NIV UK)

Sometimes my heart is hard because of past hurts. I fortify myself to protect myself from further harm. Other times my heart is hard because I'm willful. I close my ears, my eyes and my heart to God and to others so that I can do what I want to do. A hard heart makes loving communication and connection difficult.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, today I yield my heart to You, in whatever shape it's in, and I echo the songwriter Martin Smith and pray:

Lord You have my heart,
And I'll run after Yours.
Jesus, take my life and lead me on.
Lord You have my heart,
And I'll run after Yours.
Let me be to You a sacrifice.**

** Martin Smith, 'Lord You Have My Heart' ©1992, Thank you Music.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Ezekiel 36:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 16 2022 (click for audio)

Torn Apart

Today is Tuesday the 16th of August, and this week we are reflecting on the book of Mark and his invitation to us to follow Jesus.

Together we will pray **(P.R.A.Y.)** very simply each day – ‘**P**’: **PAUSING** to be still. ‘**R**’: **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. ‘**A**’: **ASKING** God to help us and others and ‘**Y**’: **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s glory today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 45...

*Beautiful words stir my heart.
I will recite a lovely poem about the king,
for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.
You are the most handsome of all.
Gracious words stream from your lips.
God himself has blessed you forever.
Put on your sword, O mighty warrior!
You are so glorious, so majestic!
Psalm 45:1-3 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

In today’s passage Jesus is responding to questions about divorce.

*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’
When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.’
Mark 10:7-12 (NIV UK)*

This was a tough passage for me to write about. I was divorced by my first husband thirty years ago, so I've experienced the devastation that can happen when what God has joined together is torn apart. It's like we were a laminated piece of paper. When the plastic was pulled apart, the paper was torn to bits. Afterwards, as a single mum, I needed and received compassionate and essential support from my Christian community as I sought to heal and rebuild my life.

Ask

God, is there a way I could support a family that has been impacted by divorce? Can I provide a listening ear? A lift to the supermarket? Offer childcare or tutoring?

Pause and pray

God, I pray for those who are divorced. Lord, would you heal broken hearts. Would you comfort and restore the children who are affected. Today I pray for someone I know specifically whose life has been affected by divorce.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’

When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.’

Mark 10:7-12 (NIV UK)

It's helpful to contextualize verses like these within the broader instructions on divorce in the Scriptures. In the parallel passage in Matthew, Jesus says 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery' (Matthew 19:9). The Apostle Paul goes on to allow divorce in the instance of an unbelieving spouse ending the relationship (1 Corinthians 7:13).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, I yield my heart and my relationships to You. In the pain and brokenness facing marriages and families today, I join in the prayer attributed to St. Francis:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;*

*where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah 54:

*The LORD will call you back
as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit –
a wife who married young,
only to be rejected,’ says your God
... with everlasting kindness
I will have compassion on you,’
says the LORD your Redeemer.
Isaiah 54:6, 8b (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 17 2022 (click for audio)

A Touch From A Holy Man

Today is Wednesday the 17th of August, and this week we are considering Jesus' invitation to follow Him, found in the Gospel of Mark.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's majesty today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 8...

*O LORD, our LORD, your majestic name fills the earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.
You have taught children and infants
to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies
and all who oppose you. Psalm 8:1-2 (NLT)*

Jesus is with the crowds, and He is approached by parents carrying children, hoping that a touch from a holy man will bring blessing.

Pause and pray

*People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.
Mark 10:13-16 (NIV UK)*

I wonder if the children grabbed Jesus by the nose, and tugged on His beard? Kids can be sticky and wiggly. Sometimes loud and often gawky and uncoordinated. They are little bundles of chaos and contradiction. Jesus is unperturbed and, scolding His followers, He reaches to hold the children and bless them.

Ask

Lord, You know my immaturity and my insecurities. You see me when I'm messy, You see all my chaos and contradiction, even when I carefully hide it under a veneer of grown-up good behavior. What a relief that the kingdom of heaven belongs even to me!

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for my children or grandchildren, or my nieces and nephews, or the children of my friends. In my mind's eye I bring them to You to bless them, and I imagine You holding them. May they receive Your kingdom today.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I enter into it with my imagination. What if I was the child in the story? What would it feel like to be pressed through the crowds and placed in Jesus' arms? What might His calloused carpenter hands feel like as He places them on me to bless me?

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.
Mark 10:13-16 (NIV UK)

I take a moment and savor the sensation of being held and blessed - in all my smallness, my weakness, and in my belovedness.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I yield myself to Your welcome, to Your embrace, to Your blessing. I belong to You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew 18:

Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:4 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 18 2022 (click for audio)

One Thing You Lack

Today is Thursday the 18th of August, and this week we are in the book of Mark, learning with him how to follow Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 145...

*Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts;
let them proclaim your power.
I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor
and your wonderful miracles.
Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue;
I will proclaim your greatness.
Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness;
they will sing with joy about your righteousness.
Psalm 145:4-7 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus was brilliant at both warmly inviting people to enter into His kingdom, and deeply challenging them as well. In today's passage, He does both.

*As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'
'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good – except God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother."
'Teacher,' he declared, 'all these I have kept since I was a boy.'
Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'
Mark 10:17-21 (NIV UK)*

Is there something I have an unhealthy attachment to? Perhaps, like the man in this story, it's money? Or maybe an unhelpful habit? Where am I finding identity, value and purpose? In God? Or not?

Ask

Jesus, I take a moment and picture myself as the man kneeling before You. I hear You saying to me, 'One thing you lack...' and I listen to hear what You might say next.

Pause and pray

God, today I pray for the successful - those who have great achievements, those who are well spoken of or wealthy. Lord, help them to have Your perspective on themselves, their lives and their gifts, and protect them from being victims of their own success.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good – except God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother."

'Teacher,' he declared, 'all these I have kept since I was a boy.'

Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'

Mark 10:17-21 (NIV UK)

I love the part in this passage where Mark says, 'Jesus looked at him and loved him.' He wants to help the man recognize what prevents him from giving himself fully and freely to Jesus.

Theology professor Robert Mulholland writes:

Usually we have sunk the roots of our identity into things that, in and of themselves, are part of God's good creation, yet they are things that are never sufficient ground for our identity ... In order to detach our identity from those things we must yield ourselves to God in love precisely at those points of attachment.*

* M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your True Self*. (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016) p.145

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God, please forgive me for when I've rooted my identity in created things rather than the Creator. Whatever I am attached to in an unhealthy way, give me the grace to let it go. Today I yield to Your love and I offer You mine in return.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Jeremiah 31:

*'I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.'*
Jeremiah 31:3b (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 19 2022 (click for audio)

Through The Needle's Eye

Today is Friday the 19th of August, and we are reflecting on Mark's gospel.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's trustworthiness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 28...

Praise the LORD!

For he has heard my cry for mercy.

The LORD is my strength and shield.

I trust him with all my heart.

He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.

I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.

The Lord gives his people strength.

Psalm 28:6-8a (NLT)

Pause and pray

After his disappointing encounter with a rich man, Jesus debriefs with his disciples.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!'

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?'

Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.'

Mark 10:23-27 (NIV UK)

In a world where more than a third of the population live on less than \$2 a day,* perhaps this passage is addressing me?

[*https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17312819](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17312819)

Jesus speaks elsewhere in the Gospels about the allure of money. 'No one can serve two masters' He said, 'Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money' (Matthew 6:24).

Ask

How's my relationship with money? What does my current use of my resources tell me about what is important to me?

Lord, I invite You to search my heart. Show me if I have allowed consumerism and the love of my own comfort and convenience to become more important to me than following and obeying You.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for those who live on less than \$2 a day. Please give them resilience and resourcefulness. I pray that governments will make just decisions and remember the poor (Galatians 2:10).

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!'

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?'

Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.'

Mark 10:23-27 (NIV UK)

This is the only time in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus calls his disciples 'children'. I wonder if He is deliberately referring to and reminding them of their recent conversation in the midst of a throng of kids? 'For the kingdom belongs to such as these' (Mark 10:14b), He'd told them.

I can't buy my way into God's kingdom or force my way in with my own strength and power. Entrance into His kingdom is His gift: given from a loving Father to me, a needy child.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Jesus, I want to squeeze through the needle's eye. You say it's possible. Would You help me let go of anything I need to let go of, so that I can follow You wherever You go? Today I come to You as a child, and I receive Your kingdom.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Luke 12:

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 20 2022 (click for audio)

Bernard of Clairvaux – Hero of Prayer

Today is Saturday the 20th of August and the feast day of Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the great pioneers of monasticism, who died on this day in 1153. On feast days, we pause to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365, which are prayer, creativity, justice, hospitality, learning and mission. Today we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Bernard of Clairvaux, a hero of prayer.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

As I draw near to You, God, would You draw near to me? Teach me to pray. Speak Lord, Your servant is listening.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's protection, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 91...

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

This I declare about the LORD:

*He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;
he is my God, and I trust him.*

Psalm 91:1–2 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Born in France in 1090, Bernard's mother died when he was just 19. Following his call to a life of prayer at 22, he turned up at his local monastery with no fewer than 30 friends who all wanted to become monks with him. He was a natural leader and they set about reviving the community which grew quickly. In 1115, Bernard planted his first monastery at a place he named Clairvaux in North-Eastern France.

Over his lifetime, Bernard was used by God – despite many mistakes – to completely revitalize the Cistercian Order. He also helped to establish 163 other monasteries in different parts of Europe.

Bernard was also 'instrumental in re-emphasizing the importance of Lectio Divina (Latin for 'divine reading') and contemplation on Scripture within the Cistercian Order... He considered Lectio Divina and contemplation guided by the Holy Spirit the keys to nourishing Christian spirituality.'*

* Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan, 'Meditation and Contemplation' in Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), pp.90–91.

Bernard wrote about the Bible: 'For our meditations on the Word who is the Bridegroom, on his glory, his elegance, power and majesty, become in a sense his way of speaking to us. And not only that, but when with eager minds we examine his rulings, the decrees from his own mouth; when we meditate on his law day and night, let us be assured that the Bridegroom is present, and that he speaks his message of happiness to us lest our trials should prove more than we can bear.'**

** Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Commentary on the Song of Songs (Jazzybee Verlag: Kindle Edition) p.182.

Sometimes, I approach the Bible in a utilitarian manner. I want to skim quickly, find something helpful and then use it to achieve whatever desired result I am looking for.

Lectio Divina is a prayerful way of reading the scriptures in order to encounter the living Word, Jesus Christ. In Lectio Divina, I read slowly, repeatedly. I reflect on the word, I respond to it and rest in it, just as I do every day using Lectio 365.

Ask

How do I approach the Scriptures? Do I read them, or am I read by them? Do I attempt to master them, or do I allow them to master me? Do I believe that God is present as I read, and that He has a message for me?

Pause and pray

Bernard said that meditating on the word strengthens us so that we can face the trials and burdens that are an inevitable part of human experience. Often, when I'm struggling, I take a simple phrase from the Bible, like 'The LORD is the stronghold of my life' (Psalm 27:1) and I pray it over and over throughout my day. I find that it redirects my thinking and changes my emotional chemistry for the better.

Who do I know that needs help today?

Lord, I ask You for a verse from Your word to pray over and over them throughout the day.

Pause and pray

Yield

Bernard of Clairvaux also said, 'Consider how great is the grace of intimacy which results from this encounter of the soul and the Word, and how great the confidence which follows this intimacy! I think such a soul need not fear to say, "my beloved is mine"'.***

*** Bernard of Clairvaux, Intimacy in Prayer: Wisdom from Bernard of Clairvaux (Pauline Books and Media: Kindle Edition).

Some say the hardest and longest journey a person can make is the 18 inches from head to heart. Bernard of Clairvaux taught that meditating on the word creates that vital link. Modern-day contemplative Misty Edwards echoes this conviction, singing:

*I'll take my cold, cold heart
I'll take my unrenewed mind
I'll take Your Word in my hand and then I'll give You time
To come and melt me*****

**** Misty Edwards, 'What Only You Can Do', Always on His Mind album (Forerunner Music, 2014).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Thank You, Lord, that I am nourished by Your word; it is as sweet as honey. I know that if I take the time to savor its taste, it is a doorway of revelation, a doorway of encounter, but, so often, I bolt it down like fast food.

Today, I choose to slow down, I steep myself in Your word, expectant and hungry for Your voice.

Yielding Promise

I thank You, God, for the encouragement of Psalm 1, that if I delight in, and meditate on Your word, then my life will bear fruit for You (Psalm 1:2-3).

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 21 2022 (click for audio)

A Sabbath Prayer for Hospitality

Today is Sunday the 21st of August and today we interrupt our usual daily pattern with a shorter, simpler time of prayer. Today I celebrate the greatest dinner invitation of all time: 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me' (Rev. 3:20).

Pause and pray

Psalm 23 celebrates the Good Shepherd's hospitality in every season of life:

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.
Psalm 23 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Lord, thank You for leading me by quiet waters, for feeding me at Your table, and for inviting me to dwell in Your house forever. Would You please give me opportunities this week to show true hospitality to others, and to do it generously, joyfully and without grumbling. Would You give me grace to embrace interruptions as gifts from You, and help me to make space in my schedule, at my table, in my home and my heart for others. Amen.

I pray today for the Church as it opens its doors to the world:

Father God, as millions of people gather in Your House to eat at Your table today,
may we be a family defined by its kindness towards everyone.

Jesus, we pray for those who are lonely or on the margins today,
and especially for those who are attending church for the first time or the last time.
May they find themselves noticed and loved. And for those who are nowhere near a church
meeting today, send us out to bring the prodigals home.

Holy Spirit, revive Your church today.
Form us into the most welcoming and diverse community on earth that the world may see
Your love, believe in Your mercy, and receive Your invitation home.

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers in my own local community, naming those I know who
might otherwise find themselves forgotten or on the margins today.

Pause and pray

And now I dedicate the coming week to the Lord, accepting His invitation and offering Him my heart
and my home in return:

Thank You, Father, for welcoming me home into Your heart.

Love me this week as I welcome You home into my heart.

Thank You, Jesus, for standing and knocking at the door of my life.

Befriend me again this week as I open the shameful and vulnerable parts of myself to You.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for brooding over the chaos of my world and within my inner being,

Fill me this week as I seek to host You with generous attention and joy.

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and his Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.*

*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

August 22 2022 (click for audio)

Leaving Everything

Today is Monday the 22nd of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's truth today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*Show me the right path, O LORD;
point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.
Psalm 25:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus has just finished speaking to a rich man to whom He has issued the challenge, 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' Today I am reflecting on what happens next...

*Then Peter spoke up, 'We have left everything to follow you!'
'Truly I tell you,' Jesus replied, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'
Mark 10:28-31 (NIV UK)*

It is tempting to think that to be a Christian it is enough to receive Christ – to add Jesus to my already crowded life. But in truth everyone who follows Christ must, in the end, make the same sacrifice – to leave everything behind and follow Him.

Ask

I find myself challenged again. Have I left everything to follow Jesus? Or is there something I am holding back? Something I am afraid to let go of?

I talk to God about this now.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for Christians who, having left all to follow You, are facing persecution today. I think of a country where believers must gather in secret to worship. Lord, would You strengthen them, give them wisdom, and fill them with Your Spirit of joy and boldness.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Then Peter spoke up, 'We have left everything to follow you!'

'Truly I tell you,' Jesus replied, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'

Mark 10:28-31 (NIV UK)

As I let go of all the sources of certainty and security which this world offers, and which I've come to rely on, I open myself to receive the treasures which God has ready for me to receive.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I use words from an old song attributed to Sadhu Sundar Singh as my yielding prayer today...

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

*No turning back, no turning back.**

[*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Have_Decided_to_Follow_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Have_Decided_to_Follow_Jesus)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation 17:

'The Lamb will triumph... because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.'
Revelation 17:14 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 23 2022 (click for audio)

Astonished and Afraid

Today is Tuesday the 23rd of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem . Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life.(Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's help today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 40...

*I waited patiently for the LORD to help me,
and he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the pit of despair,
out of the mud and the mire.
He set my feet on solid ground
and steadied me as I walked along.
He has given me a new song to sing,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see what he has done and be amazed.
They will put their trust in the LORD.
Psalm 40:1-3 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a message Jesus kept repeating...

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 'We are going up to Jerusalem,' he said, 'and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on

him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.'

Mark 10:32-34 (NIV UK)

Have I ever started listening to a sermon or a talk in church and thought, 'Oh, not this again', and then, part way through, I realize that maybe God has something He wants to say to me? There are some lessons I'm reluctant to hear. This message about His death and resurrection was one Jesus was repeating for at least the third time. And even then, I'm not sure if the disciples were listening.

Ask

Is there something God has been trying to say to me – a lesson, perhaps, that I don't want to hear?

Lord, please give me ears to hear, and a teachable heart to receive what You want to say to me.

Pause and pray

Father, I pray for someone I know who has heard about You – perhaps they grew up in a Christian home – but they don't yet know You; they have not felt the embrace of Your love or trusted the message of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 'We are going up to Jerusalem,' he said, 'and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.'

Mark 10:32-34

I notice two phrases: 'the disciples were astonished' and 'those who followed were afraid'. In Greek the words are *ethambounto*, meaning 'amazed to the point of complete emotional shut-down', and *ephobounto*, 'to be utterly terrified'. These are extreme emotions, but they are part of the journey for every disciple.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your path and to Your way, knowing that it may mean not only changes in geography but also in the landscape of my emotions, and that I can expect at times to be both astonished and afraid.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Luke 12:

Do not be afraid ... for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 24 2022 (click for audio)

The Cup I Drink

Today is Wednesday the 24th of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's creation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 8...

*When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
Yet you made them only a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.
Psalm 8:3-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on an outrageous request from two of Jesus' disciples who really should have known better...

*Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'
'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.
They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'
'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?'
'We can,' they answered.
Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those*

for whom they have been prepared.'

Mark 10:35-40 (NIV UK)

James and John are seeking glory and honor for themselves because they still don't understand the way of the kingdom. They clearly haven't been listening to Jesus' words about the cross.

Ask

Lord, when I bring my requests to You, I do want to understand what I am asking. And so, today I choose to use the words You taught Your disciples as my prayer,

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."
(Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV UK))*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'

'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'

'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?'

'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.'

Mark 10:35-40 (NIV UK)

Jesus tells James and John, 'You will drink the cup I drink'. They don't yet understand what He means. We, however, have heard Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, 'Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.' This is the cup and the baptism of suffering.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I abandon my ambition for personal glory. May I not cling to the advantages of status; rather, laying aside whatever privilege I have, I yield myself to Your way of thinking, for You humbled yourself to serve others, and to suffer death on the cross.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Philippians:

*God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 25 2022 (click for audio)

Not So With You

Today is Thursday the 25th of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's favor today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 31...

*I am trusting you, O LORD,
saying, "You are my God!" ...
Let your favor shine on your servant.
In your unfailing love, rescue me.
Psalm 31:14,16 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

James and John have been seeking privileged status amongst the disciples. Today I am reflecting on how Jesus and the other disciples responded...

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'
Mark 10:41-45 (NIV UK)

Jesus lived in an age of tyrants, governors and bureaucrats. The temptation right from the start was for the Church to adopt the attitudes, hierarchies, and power structures of every other organization, full of ambitious people seeking to climb the ladder of success. But Jesus turned it all on its head. If you want to be great, you must be servant of all.

Ask

I wonder what ambition motivates me. Do I want to be great? Or am I truly content to serve well?

I talk to God about this now.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for Your church around the world – a community of diverse and deeply flawed people, just like the earliest disciples, and just like me. Forgive us our failings. May Your family be known for their love and service and not for scandals and schisms.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

Mark 10:41-45 (NIV UK)

There is something different about Jesus’ new community. The world runs on power games, says Jesus, but ‘not so with you.’ In the book of Isaiah, there is an ancient prophecy, which Jesus understood to be about him:

*‘Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.’*

(Isaiah 42:1 NIV UK)

Jesus is now building a servant community, empowered by the Spirit, bringing justice to the nations, coming not to be served, but to serve.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I yield myself to Your call to serve. May I not seek position or privilege, but rather to follow You wherever You invite me to go.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 4:

*The LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.*

Psalm 4:3 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 26 2022 (click for audio)

Mercy, Mercy, Mercy

Today is Friday the 26th of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's mercy today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 51...

*Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.
Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.
Psalm 51:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on an encounter that Jesus and the disciples had as they were leaving the city of Jericho, about to begin the final leg of their journey to Jerusalem...

*A blind man, Bartimaeus (which means 'son of Timaeus'), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'
Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'
Mark 10:46b-48 (NIV UK)*

In Jesus' day there were many priests living in Jericho. So I imagine it would have been a religious sort of place where everyone knew the rules about how you were meant to behave. This beggar, Bartimaeus, was embarrassing. In the middle of a polite crowd, curious to meet Rabbi Jesus, a blind man is shouting. And he won't keep quiet – 'Jesus... have mercy on me!'

Ask

Conscious of my constant need for God's mercy, I pray now in the words of Psalm 51:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin. (Psalm 51:1-2)*

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone I know who is desperately crying out to you for a miracle of mercy. May they never be silenced.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

*A blind man, Bartimaeus (which means 'son of Timaeus'), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'
Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'
Mark 10:46b-48 (NIV UK)*

I notice the response of Bartimaeus to those who wished to silence him – 'he shouted all the more'. Sometimes one quiet prayer is enough. But often, God is waiting for my bold persistence. Bartimaeus has grasped hold of Christ's mercy and he's not about to give up asking for it now.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Today, I don't so much yield, as grasp hold. Lord, You know my need. I hold on to Your mercy today.
'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God. Have mercy on me, a sinner.'*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 6:

*[He] has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer.
Psalm 6:9 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 27 2022 (click for audio)

On Your Feet!

Today is Saturday the 27th of August, and this week we are exploring Jesus' conversations and adventures with His disciples on the road to Jerusalem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, light of the world, as I follow You today would You illuminate the darkness within me and around me. Show me Your presence and Your path as I welcome the light of Your life. (Adapted from John 8:12)

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's healing today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 103...

*Let all that I am praise the LORD;
may I never forget the good things he does for me.
He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from death
and crowns me with love and tender mercies.
Psalm 103:2-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Jesus' response to the blind beggar who has been disrupting life on the streets of Jericho.

*Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'
So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.
'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.
The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'
'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.
Mark 10:49-52 (NIV UK)*

Unlike the crowd, Jesus is not embarrassed by the shouting of a beggar. 'Call him', he says. Others had been offended by a noisy disruption, but Jesus sees the man's faith.

Ask

I wonder, am I easily offended by things of little importance? Do I balk at interruptions to my routine or, like Jesus, am I willing to welcome them?

Lord, may I notice the needs in those around me, and respond to them with kindness, just like You.

Pause and pray

Lord, I pray for someone I know who has been discouraged and put off by the opinions of others when they have sought to meet Jesus. May they know that You are also calling them.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'

So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'

'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Mark 10:49-52 (NIV UK)

The first thing Bartimaeus does is to throw aside his cloak. He puts his faith into action, for the cloak is the mark of his disability, a signal that he is permitted to beg on the street. Now he abandons everything he has ever known to follow Jesus along the road.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I throw aside all my excuses for not following You wholeheartedly, and I yield my identity to You. May I not cling to the past but instead embrace the new person You are creating me to be in Christ.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Corinthians:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 28 2022 (click for audio)

Sabbath Prayer

Today is Sunday the 28th of August, and today we are taking a break from our usual rhythms to pray a special Sabbath prayer. 'Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath,' writes Rabbi Abraham Heschel, 'we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul.'* * Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*(FSG Classics) p1

Prayer of Approach

As I settle into prayer now, Lord, show me what it means to 'care for the seeds of eternity in my soul'. Help me to stop counting the minutes, to relinquish control. Inspire me to live and breathe with greater ease, as an eternal being loved by you

Pause and pray

I've been learning from the life of Jesus again this week, and reflecting on the invitation to follow Him, to join in with His mission to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Today, however, I stop all my striving and I make space for the Lord to preach the gospel to me, to come and save me. Sunday is a day to be born again - again! And so I take time now to get right with God, to repent of my sins, to give thanks for the cross, and to receive the Spirit once more.

*Search me, 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 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Turning my attention outwards, I pray for the gospel community as it gathers today:

Lord Jesus, You told us to ask the Father to send out workers to bring in the harvest. This we must do. Please ignite a renewed passion for the gospel in our lives and a sense of urgency in our churches. May we preach the way of salvation clearly today, so that many might see and believe and put their trust in You. Mobilize us as a missionary movement, wherever we live and to every tribe and tongue.

Holy Spirit, revive us again. Come to us once more as You came to that first prayer room in Jerusalem that we might be propelled out of our meetings and onto the streets with new courage to preach the gospel, that thousands might encounter the resurrected Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I take a moment now to earth these big prayers in my own life, naming friends, family members or colleagues who don't yet know Jesus. I ask for opportunities to share 'the hope that (I) have' (1 Pet. 3:15) with at least one of these people this week.

Pause and pray

Finally, I dedicate myself afresh to the mission of God:

Thank You, Father, that You loved the world so much that You sent Your only Son,
Please help me to love the world with extraordinary generosity.

Thank You, Jesus, that You gave up everything and died for me.
Please help me to lay down my life for those who don't yet know You.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for giving those first disciples such courage and power.
Please fill me now with that same boldness this week.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness
in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.**

**Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, petegreig.info

August 29 2022 (click for audio)

Jesus' Plan

Today is Monday the 29th of August, and this week we are continuing to explore the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and listening for His call to 'follow me'.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, I fix my eyes on You, the author and perfecter of my story. Help me know You more clearly, love You more dearly and follow You more nearly, each and every day.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's unshakable plans today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 33...

*Let the whole world fear the LORD,
and let everyone stand in awe of him.
For when he spoke, the world began!
It appeared at his command.
The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations
and thwarts all their schemes.
But the LORD's plans stand firm forever;
his intentions can never be shaken.
Psalm 33:8-11 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus and His disciples had been traveling from Jericho. Today, I am reflecting on what happened when they arrived at Bethany, just outside Jerusalem.

*Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly."' They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway.
Mark 11:1b-4a (NIV UK)*

Did Jesus supernaturally foreknow where and when the colt would be - was this an example of what the apostle Paul calls a 'word of knowledge' (1 Corinthians 12:8) - or was there perhaps a more down-to-earth explanation for Jesus' instructions?

The Bible commentator, William Barclay, points out that Jesus was frequently in that area. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were His close friends, which alone suggests regular visits to Bethany. 'This explains the incident with the colt,' writes Barclay. 'Jesus did not leave things until the last moment. He knew what he was going to do and long ago he had made arrangements with a friend. When he sent forward his disciples, he sent them with a password that had been pre-arranged - 'The Lord needs it now.' This was not a sudden, reckless decision of Jesus. It was something to which all his life had been building.'* Jesus had a plan.

* William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark, (Edinburgh, Saint Andrews Press: 1975), p. 263.

Ask

Scripture assures me that there are also divine plans for my life (Jeremiah 29:11).

As I name a particular area of my life where I am seeking God's guidance, I listen carefully for anything He wants to say to me today.

Pause and pray

Who else do I know that is seeking guidance from the Lord about something right now? Perhaps it's about a relationship, or maybe it's about where they live, or what they do with their time.

Lord Jesus, as I name this friend before You now, I ask You to speak to them. Guide them, instruct them, tell them what You want them to do.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly."' They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway.
Mark 11:1b-4a (NIV UK)

550 years earlier, Zechariah had prophesied, 'Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey' (Zechariah 9:9, NIV UK).

Jesus clearly knew what He was doing when He sent the disciples to fetch the colt. Perhaps typically, the disciples didn't realize the significance of this moment until much later (John 12:16, NIVUK).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord Jesus, I would love a bit of foreknowledge sometimes, supernatural or otherwise. There are so many things that I don't understand - things about my life now, and about what my life is going to look like in the future. But I surrender all of this to You. Help me to simply trust You and obey You.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Psalm 32:

I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.

I will advise you and watch over you.

Psalm 32:8 (NLT)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

August 30 2022 (click for audio)

Save Us, Please!

Today is Tuesday the 30th of August, and this week we are continuing to explore the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and listening for His call to 'follow me'. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – '**P**': **PAUSING** to be still. '**R**': **REJOICING** with a Psalm and **REFLECTING** on a Scripture. '**A**': **ASKING** God to help us and others and '**Y**': **YIELDING** to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, I fix my eyes on You, the author and perfecter of my story. Help me know You more clearly, love You more dearly and follow You more nearly, each and every day.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the fact that God saves me, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 118...

*The stone that the builders rejected
has now become the cornerstone.*

*This is the LORD's doing,
and it is wonderful to see.*

This is the day the LORD has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Please, Lord, please save us.

Psalm 118:22-25a, (NLT)

Pause and pray

Jesus had sent His disciples to a nearby village to find an unriden colt. Today I am reflecting on what happened when they returned...

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

'Hosanna!'

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!'

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but

since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Mark 11:7-11 (NIV UK)

The crowds were singing and shouting for a new king. And Jesus was a king, but not the kind that they were expecting. For them, kingship involved conquering and overthrowing the existing rulers, whereas for Jesus, there was a different route to the throne.

The Hebrew word that the crowds cried, 'Hosanna', literally means, 'Save us, please!' Jesus had come to do exactly that, just not in the way that they expected.

Ask

Where am I serving, perhaps even worshiping, a version of who I want Jesus to be?

Lord Jesus, I ask You to help me see and understand who You really are a little bit more this week.

Pause and pray

I think of friends who haven't encountered Jesus at all. Maybe they've encountered religion, or read some of the Bible, or been along to a church service, but that's as far as they've got.

Lord Jesus, as I name these friends, one by one, I ask You to show them who You really are. Save them, please.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

'Hosanna!'

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!'

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Mark 11:7-11 (NIV UK)

I noticed that, at the end of what must have been a noisy, emotionally charged day, instead of remaining in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples left and returned to Bethany. Jesus probably knew what He would face in the temple the following day, and it's likely that He also knew what was coming after that, so He went to a familiar place and surrounded Himself with His closest friends. Sometimes I, too, need a safe place with safe friends to give me strength for what is ahead.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I use words from a hymn by Isaac Watts as my prayer of yielding today:

*Sinners, rejoice; and saints, be glad;
Hosanna, let his name be blest;
A thousand honors on his head,
With peace, and light, and glory rest!
In God's own name he comes to bring
Salvation to our dying race;
Let the whole church address their King
With hearts of joy and songs of praise.**

* https://hymnary.org/text/lo_what_a_glorious_cornerstone

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel that:

*God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.
John 3:17 (NLT)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.

August 31 2022 (click for audio)

Be Fruitful

Today is Wednesday the 31st of August, and this week we are continuing to explore the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and listening for His call to 'follow me'.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Jesus, I fix my eyes on You, the author and perfecter of my story. Help me know You more clearly, love You more dearly and follow You more nearly, each and every day.

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's gardening skills, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 92...

*But the godly will flourish like palm trees
and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.
For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house.
They flourish in the courts of our God.
Even in old age they will still produce fruit;
they will remain vital and green.
They will declare, "The LORD is just!
He is my rock!
There is no evil in him!"
Psalm 92:12-15 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

After riding into Jerusalem on the back of a colt, surrounded by noisy crowds, Jesus had spent the night back in Bethany with His disciples. Today, I am reflecting on what happened the following morning...

*As they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig-tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard him say it.
Mark 11:12-14 (NIV UK)*

This strange story raises lots of questions. If it wasn't fig-season, why did Jesus go looking for figs on the tree in the first place? And did Jesus really curse the tree simply because He was hungry and it had

no fruit? This doesn't sound like the same Jesus who flatly refused to turn stones into bread to satisfy His hunger (Matthew 4:3-4).

Most Bible commentators suggest that this isn't an example of Jesus petulantly using His power, but of Him enacting a parable. Jesus was making a point in a dramatic way - a point that He made on other occasions in other ways about the importance of bearing fruit, and the risks of not doing so.

Ask

What areas of my life are bearing fruit in this season? I take a few moments to thank God, and to ask Him how I can use this fruit to bless others.

Pause and pray

What areas of my life are lacking fruit? Do I know why that is? Is it my own fault in some way, or is it something to do with the circumstances or the season I am in? I take a few moments to talk with God about this and listen for anything that God might want to say to me.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

As they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig-tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard him say it.

Mark 11:12-14 (NIV UK)

Mark deliberately connects this story with Jesus' visit to the temple in Jerusalem (which I will be focusing on tomorrow). He does it because the fruitlessness of the fig-tree reflects the fruitlessness of the temple, which had become corrupt. Jesus 'came looking for fruit,' writes theologian Tom Wright, 'but when he found none he solemnly declared that the tree would be barren forever. That's exactly what he did with the Temple.'*

* Tom Wright, *Matthew For Everyone Part 2* (London: SPCK, 2002), p. 72.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

God of all seasons, I want to be fruitful for You, and so I submit myself to the ways You want to cultivate my life, whether I understand what You're doing or not. Prune the things that You need to. It feels a bit risky to pray this, but cut off the things that I am hanging onto that really need to go too. And teach me how to remain in You. (John 15:1-4)

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit - fruit that will last.

John 15:16a (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.