



THE PEOPLES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

THE JOURNEY LOOKING TOWARDS THE CITY

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

31ST JANUARY - 20TH FEBRUARY 2022

The People's Christian Fellowship exists to **SPREAD** the gospel through **SERVING** our community and **STRENGTHENING** the body of Christ

THE JOURNEY—LOOKING TOWARDS THE CITY

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am so happy that you are joining us in this season of corporate prayer and fasting. I always feel that praying and fasting together at the beginning of the year, helps to unite and focus the church so that we can better address the spiritual challenges ahead. We are in particularly perilous days right now, and our faith will become increasingly challenged by this society. But we must not fear or be anxious, we just have to keep our faith in Christ Jesus who is our saviour and Lord.

This period of prayer and fasting is broken down into three parts over the next three weeks. During the first week of our fast, we focus on **knowing our God**, this is important because knowing who our God truly is, gives us fundamental reasons to trusting Him wholeheartedly. We then move onto thinking about **Our Promises**. He is the all-powerful God whom we know and trust, and He invites us into an intimate relationship with Him, to be His chosen people. The combination of knowing God and His rich promises, should stimulates lifestyle actions which assures us that we are on track to achieving **Our Hope**, the hope of one day dwelling in the presence of the Lord in His glorious City.

Abraham knew His God and followed His leading into the Promised land. He received the covenant promise of God and the inheritance of Canaan, but His hope was to dwell in the City of God. This effected His actions, he lived by faith, disciplined himself and everyday lived with the knowledge that He was a citizen of another World (**Hebrews 11:8-10**).

We are on a spiritual journey together, let's take this opportunity, to be an encouragement to each other in Jesus Name.

Pastor Dave

TYPES OF FAST

Complete Fast:

Abstaining from food and liquids for a period of time (see Esther 4:15-16).

Normal fast:

Abstaining from food but drinking liquids. This fast can be exercised over the course of a full day or for a specific period of the day. The majority of people do this type of fast. Fasting from for example, from sunrise to sunset, or from 6am to 6pm. Or from 8pm in the evening and breaking the fast at 3pm the next day.

Partial Fast or Daniel Fast:

Some people see the daily periodic breaking of the normal fast as a type of partial fast. But a partial fast could allow the eating of certain foods. The Daniel type fast is based on Daniel 1:8 and 10:2-3 which includes a restriction on the consumption of all meats, sweets, alcohol, and pleasurable foods.

Electronic Entertainment Fast:

Abstaining from social media and all forms of electronic entertainment (movies, TV, video games, etc.) This is a wonderful fast for everyone! Still, it is important that when you embark on any spiritual food fast, that you include this form of abstinence also. When you break the fast, try not to rush back into social entertainment. Continue to think about whatever it is the Lord had shown you during this period of fasting.

WHY FAST?

- ⇒ to know God's will and direction for your life
- ⇒ or a miracle or breakthrough
- ⇒ for a word inside you that only God can make possible
- ⇒ a fresh touch from God in your life
- ⇒ a deeper, more intimate, and powerful relationship with the Lord
- ⇒ to have greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's voice
- ⇒ to break free from bondages that have been holding you captive
- ⇒ for the salvation of friends and/or loved ones
- ⇒ to bring your flesh into subjection, to be more influenced by the Holy Spirit

MEDICAL ADVICE

For medical reasons, some people may not be able to fast from food altogether. They may choose to abstain only from certain foods, like sugar or chocolate, or from something other than food. Doing without something temporarily, such as television, as a way of redirecting our focus toward God. Consult your doctor before going on the fast.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How many meals do I eat per day on the Daniel Fast? Can I have snacks?

A: The number of times you eat throughout the day is a personal decision. Some people choose to eat three meals. Some might add a snack or two in between. Others may skip a meal to pray. There isn't a particular formula for the frequency of meals. Let God guide you as to what your fast should look like.

Q: Pastor, what is one thing a first time 'faster' like me should remember?

A: This is a spiritual fast. What you do during this period of consecration is more important than the food restrictions you have chosen. Fasting is about denying the physical body and soul of things it may both need and desire, to focus on providing for one's spiritual necessities. So, we may like to be entertained by many things, but in this period of fasting, we choose to develop our spirits and relationships with Christ.

Note:

Always keep paper and pen nearby so that you can write down the things the Lord lays on your heart.

During the evening it might be good to fill out a journal which recaps your thoughts and feelings throughout the day .

Put on Christian radio and TV channels, ask the Lord to direct you to a book that you should read or a Christian magazine. Do not let non-spiritual things cloud your mind or cause you to lose focus.

Call a Christian friend and entertain them with godly words of comfort and encouragement.

Q: Are salt and pepper allowed? What about herbs and spices?

A: Yes, you can use salt and pepper to flavour your food. Also, herbs and spices are allowed. However, you need to make sure any store-bought seasonings are Daniel Fast friendly. Read the ingredients list on the label to be sure. Watch out especially for added sugar.

EAT BUT...

In a normal fast, we fast for a certain number of hours each day, then we are permitted to break our fast to eat. In the Daniel Fast, you are permitted to eat at any time, but you are restricted to only eating specific things (see Daniel 1: 11-16; 10: 3 for reference). It is not uncommon for believers to do a 'normal fast' but restrict their eating to the foods approved on the Daniel fast list.

10 OR 21 DAYS

Officially we are doing a 21 day fast and I hope everyone is aiming for this. But there may be some of our congregation who may have never fasted before. 21 days might seem too great a challenge. Well maybe you could aim at doing 10 days and see how you feel on the 10th day. You could then either continue, or if not, still restrict yourself from other things like TV etc. until day 21.

FOOD IS ONE THING

Restrict yourself from all forms of fleshly entertainment for the duration and increase your spiritual intake. Seek the Lord regarding which external things to abstain from. Read and study the Word, increase your prayer times connect with other believers. Be confident that through this spiritual sacrifice, God will take His rightful place within your heart.

Make extra time to pray, this is imperative. Prayer is talking with God; you will find that during a period of fasting, your spiritual senses become finely tuned. Do prayer walks with other believers, bike prayer rides, prayer journals, prayer conference call sessions, email encouraging words to each other (be creative). Remember to pray for others.

OPPORTUNITY

There are habits, attitudes, beliefs, practices, weakness, and other carnal powers that can only be broken through fasting. During this period of fasting, let us stop doing those things that we know are wrong (the Lord speaks to our conscience) and do the things we know that are right and pleasing to Him.

Whole Grains

Amaranth, barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, freekeh, millet, oats, purple rice, quinoa, rye, sorghum, spelt, teff, whole grain pasta, whole wheat, and wild rice.

Beans and Legumes

Black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, peanuts, pinto beans, and split peas.

Nuts and Seeds

Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, nut butters, peanuts (actually legumes but people think of them as nuts), pecans, pepitas (pumpkin seeds), pine nuts, pistachios, poppy seeds, walnuts, sesame seeds, soy nuts, sunflower seeds.

Vegetables

All vegetables are allowed (fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, and canned).

Fruit

All fruit is allowed (fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, and canned). However, any dried fruit should not contain added sugar (check ingredients to be sure).

Oils

Oils (such as coconut, olive, and sesame, for example) are allowed but should be used minimally. For example, you can sauté foods in olive oil but avoid deep-frying them.

Other

Unleavened bread (whole grain bread made without yeast, sugars, or preservatives).

All herbs, spices, and seasonings are allowed, including salt and pepper.

Soy products (such as edamame and soy nuts) and tofu are acceptable.

Beverages

Water should be the main beverage on your Daniel Fast. Distilled, filtered, sparkling, spring, and mineral water are allowed as well. However, you may have 100% fruit juice on occasion. You can also use 100% fruit juice in recipe

Animal Products

- * Meat (bacon, beef, bison, chicken, lamb, pork, and turkey).
- * Dairy (butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt)
- * Fish
- * Eggs

Added Sugar

Agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, brown sugar, cane juice, corn syrup, honey, malt syrup, molasses, and raw sugar.

Yeast

Yeast and, therefore, leavened bread is not part of the Daniel Fast.

Refined Grains

White flour and white rice. Only whole grains are allowed on the Daniel Fast. A whole grain product contains the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm.

Processed Food

Foods that contain artificial flavourings, chemicals, food additives, and preservatives.

Deep-Fried Food

Examples are corn chips, French fries, and potato chips. (Baked chips are acceptable if they do not contain restricted ingredients. Check the label for “baked” to be sure.)

Solid Fats

Butter, lard, margarine, and shortening.

Chocolate

Milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, dark chocolate, chocolate syrup, and cacao.

Caffeinated and alcoholic beverages

Alcohol, coffee, caffeinated tea, and energy drinks.



- KNOWING OUR GOD
- OUR PROMISE
- OUR HOPE

'SO WE FASTED AND IMploRED OUR GOD FOR
THIS, AND HE LISTENED TO OUR ENTREATY. '

EZRA 8:23

KNOWING OUR GOD

DAY 1—GOD THE CREATOR

St. Augustine was the bishop of Hippo (the location is now Annaba, in Algeria) from 396 to 430 AD. He is recognised as one of the church fathers and his prolific theological writings are still being used to conceptualize God and interpret scripture. St Augustine taught that God made everything in the world out of nothing, which is the Latin phrase, *Ex Nihilo*. The principle as it applies to God and creation expresses that God, who is all-powerful has created all that exists out of formless matter, i.e., creating something out of nothing or out of chaos (Gen 1:1-2). It was the later R C Sproul that stressed that 'out of nothing, the only thing that can be expected is nothing' unless... the all-powerful God creates. St Augustine also highlighted that the order and motion we see before our eye has been created by an eternal God who is without motion.

As we contemplate the characteristics of God the creator, we are taught in (Rom 1:20) that... since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made. What is before our very eyes extends beyond our ability to identify objects, what we touch and hear are beyond electrical pulses that stimulate us, what we smell and taste are beyond what enables us to form opinions regarding what is pleasant and unpleasant. God has created a way for our imperfect senses to connect to a perfect revelation of Him.

Action

On three occasions today, stop what you are doing, reflect on Romans 1:20, and then be still for 10mins and engage with your surroundings. Whatever you can hear, see, smell, touch or taste, extend homage and gratitude to God for. This is not a moment for worshipping items, but our task is to acknowledge God the creator of all that is observable. Whatever is around you has been created out of chaos, by the all-powerful eternal creator and his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature are being revealed right in front of you. Acknowledge him with reverence and adoration.

DAY 2—GOD IS ETERNAL

Karl Barth held a view regarding the existence of God. He emphasized that the question is not whether God exists, but to what extent we can know Him, and consequently to what extent can we talk about him? We are always limited by our ability and the tools at our disposal to communicate a true reflection of a thing, let alone the eternal creator. When it comes to God, there are a number of challenges inclusive of, how can that which is temporal seek to engage with that which is eternal, and what words can we use to describe that which is indescribable? If we used 'like as' examples to describe the eternal God, what would we liken Him to?

The bible speaks of his eternal characteristic in the following ways:

Ps 90:2: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Job 36:26: Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable.

In scripture, there is one disciple that received a revelation of the Christ, like no other. His recognition of the Christ was one of a kind and there is no other disciple recorded throughout the Gospels that acknowledged Jesus in the same way. The interaction between him and the Christ was not the result of some form of amazing faith he had, nor an amazing act that he performed. Actually, at the time of this great revelation, he had already rejected the testimony of the church (the ecclesia). The person in question was Thomas with his recognition of the resurrected Jesus as, "My Lord and My God." (John 20:28).

As we have the promise that guarantees that we will live in the presence of God for eternity if we remain in Christ, pray that this declaration that Thomas made shall remain the declaration of our heart.

(John 17:3)

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

A.W. Pink in his book on eternal security highlighted that each of us that approach the eternal God, must enter the room having put down the weapons of our warfare. He expressed that in warfare no defeated enemy can plead mercy before the victory with a gun or knife still in his hand. Nor can a cheating husband seek to reconcile his marriage in the counselling room, with his lover still holding on to his arm.

As we make this declaration, we must seek to repent. We must recognise the error of our ways before a God who is eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing and every present, and as we repent pray for grace and mercy.

DAY 3—ALL POWERFUL GOD

The adjective for the word 'mighty' has three facets of definition: a gauge of strength or power (and its potential), an indicator of size, proportion, or magnitude and thirdly a measurement of capability and capacity. The unrestricted, unlimited, boundless, and infinite adaptation of this is the word 'Almighty'.

God describes Himself as 'El-Shaddai'- 'God Almighty' and in some versions 'The All Sufficient One'. He tells us that whatever we believe to be mighty in strength, size, or capability, He is the unlimited and infinite version thereof!

He transcends our limited consciousness and abilities.

An awesome concept to grasp is that in all His almightiness, He requires that we take on a level of responsibility to see His work in our lives. In our key text today, we see God tell Abram that he needed to be blameless in his actions, and that He would subsequently make a covenant to bless him greatly when it didn't seem rational or conceivable! The situation God presented to Abram was designed to demonstrate that a full reliance on God transcends what we perceive is possible. The command for him to be blameless wasn't even achievable for Abram to complete himself. It would take a relinquishing of authority in his own ability and full dependence in the 'El-Shaddai'.

In Matthew 19 Jesus warns of the impossibility of entering heaven with worldly gains as your focus. It was a teaching that stunned His disciples. Jesus' words were designed to concentrate their focus on Him and not the trappings and concerns of life.

Action points:

Prayer and meditative spotlight for today is to recognise the Almighty and Sufficient God in our lives. Correcting and humbling our thought, language, and behaviour to reflect His authority and dominion over us.

Further encouragement:

Genesis 17:1-2; Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 1:19-20

DAY 4—GOD IS TRUTH

“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

John Adams (2nd US President)

This statement is over 200 years old but is poignant for our post-modern culture. We have become a society that feels it needs to “speak its truth”. Reworded; ‘we speak and live from our perspective, and this should be accepted, whether it is objectively true or not!’

But whether we like it or not, the truth is an immutable object and if we were left to our own devices, would shape it for our own purpose... God, the source of objective truth continues to hold the keys to the purpose of life: for mankind to be **His image-bearers**.

Our key text today has at times been used as a ‘positive affirmation’ to proclaim over situations. It is taken from (a highly entertaining) story of Balaam; a non-Israelite diviner/prophet who was hired to curse the now freed (from Egyptian rule) nation of Israel. Their sheer size, miraculous exodus and overthrowing of nations threatened the Midianites. Unable to do so, Balaam pronounced four poetically formed blessings over God’s people instead.

Society outside of acknowledging and relying on God wants to keep its existing parameters, mindset & truths. But God’s truth continues to be uncomfortable and inconsistent with the world. But like the Midianites, it can try all it wants. God’s plan will be accomplished!

His eternal and unchanging love has a purpose and plan for us, in which we can depend. Today we want to focus on being reliant on His wisdom and direction for us.

Action point:

Meditate on history and an ever evolving and shifting world where God, in His transcendent perfection never changes.

Key text: Numbers 23:19 (feel free to read ch:21-24)

Further encouragement:

James 1:17; John 14:6-7 & Hebrews 13:8

DAY 5—GOD IS HOLY

Today we consider the Holiness of God who is truly set apart from all man-made gods. Today we agree with the Israelites when God opened a path for them to cross the Red Sea, as they sang

*“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders (Exodus 15:11)*

We ask that question, Who is like You O Lord? We all know that there is none like our God who is mighty and awesome in power. This is the truth. The Holiness of God sets Him so far beyond anyone or anything else. Therefore how can we, who are called and now Christ-like ones, approach God who is Holy?

We who are born into sin, should never be able to approach God who is clothed in holiness and righteousness, but He loved us to the extent that He made a way for us to have access to His throne. Now, whenever we call Him, He hears us because of His Son, Jesus, who paid the price for our sins. Holiness and sin can not mix. It is like the force of a magnet when the two ends are introduced and causes the force to repel. You will be hard pressed to get those two ends to touch. So holiness and sin can not mix but through the immense love that God (who is love) has for us all, He made a way for us to have access to Himself.

Prayer points:

The response to our theme today must move us to a prayer of declaration.

- Let's pray together Psalm 86: 1-17
- Pray your own declaration to our Holy and Majestic God. Your Heavenly Father

Further encouragement:

Isaiah 6:3; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalms 86:8-10; Psalm 99:1-3; Isaiah 40:25; 57:15.

DAY 6 - GOD LOVES US

In Romans chapter 8 verse 31 to 39 we are truly encouraged by God's attribute of self-giving love. We all know that the highest court of justice in the universe, is God's holy court in heaven. It displays the highest standard of righteousness that exists in all of creation.

In verse 33, The question is posed, who shall bring any charge against Gods elect? The answer to that question is no one since God has already justified his elect. The next verse probes even further asking who can condemn his elect? The answer again is nobody, because Jesus God's Son lovingly took upon Himself the condemnation that we deserved.

Furthermore, not only did Jesus die, but He was raised from the dead, which proves that He was innocent of any offence against God. Then the scriptures state that Jesus is now interceding for us at the right hand of God in heaven. Keeping in mind the court room analogy, His intercession on our behalf in this instance – means that whenever a charge is made against us, Jesus rebuffs that charge before God on our behalf.

He loves the elect, and **nothing** can derail this fact. Be assured that nothing - whether spiritual, physical or distressing - can separate us from God's Love for us.

Action points:

- How does knowing that God loves you with an everlasting love make you feel?
- Declare throughout this day the fact that: (1) you are saved, (2) that God loves you, (3) that no charge can be brought against you to cause you to lose your holy standing before God, (4) That Jesus has done this for you because He loves you.
- But if you do not feel special because of this attribute of God's towards you, then find someone today who will support you in prayer for your mindset to change.

Further encouragement:

Hebrews 12:5-7; John 3:16-18.

DAY 7 - FATHER GOD

2 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Samuel 7:14-15 Isaiah 64:8, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:1

Over the past five years, whenever I see the title 'Father GOD', my unconscious mind brings to the forefront of my mind the song written by Tony Brown & Pat Barrett, 'Good Good Father' sang by Chris Tomlin. This song is an anthem of mine; please be encouraged to listen to the song as part of your devotion today.

Many people can share stories about their earthly father, mostly good ones, but unfortunately, others are not so good. Those who have had pleasant experiences with their earthly fathers have a reflective relationship with their heavenly Father that surpasses their earthly ones. This is because they have received key nurturing ingredients such as encouragement, affirmation, protection, instilled value and worth. In addition, they have experienced being cherished and disciplined, and have been provided with a safety net to fall and learn.

On the other side of the coin, others have grown up with absent fathers and have not experienced the key nurturing ingredients mentioned above. Unfortunately, this at times causes difficulty when relating to GOD the Father. Scripture tells us that GOD is Father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5) and further states the following, 'As a father shows compassion to His children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him' (Psalms 103:13).

Irrespective of the type of relationship we have had with our earthly fathers, we now have access to The Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

Action point:

Please read and meditate on 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and ask the LORD to reveal to you how you can practically apply these words of truth to another person and embrace them for yourself.

Prayer:

- Dear LORD, please help me to identify the barriers which prevent me from showing mercy and comfort to others.
- Dear LORD, forgive me for the times when I have failed to value your mercies and comfort

OUR PROMISE

DAY 8—THAT HE IS OUR GOD (COVENANT)

Jehovah, our God, is a covenant making and covenant keeping God. In the time of the Old Testament, He made a covenant with Israel through his prophet Moses for the express purpose of making Israel His special people. This covenant came in the form of laws written on tablets of stone and legitimised or signed with blood. Unfortunately, Israel turned against Jehovah and did not become the people He desired. Exodus 20. Even in the face of such betrayal Jehovah God promised to re-establish a new covenant with His people.

This new covenant has not been written on tablets of stone but on the table of our hearts Jer. 31: 31-34. This new covenant has not been sealed imperfectly by the blood of bulls, sheep, and doves. The blood of Jesus has sealed this covenant eternally allowing us to become God's people forever. Eph 9:11-12.

God has made his covenant alive in us through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, His word, and the work of the Holy Spirit all for the express purpose of making us His people, His Church.

God has shown us who we are and can be, in the person of Jesus Christ, we are reminded who He was, is and will be, in His word, and we have a reliable witness and helper in becoming more Christ like both as individuals and as the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit.

We have come through a year where the theme was 'Let the Church be the Church'. God has written his covenant in our inward parts and on our hearts. God is still at pains to be our God, He has sacrificed for us, he has redeemed us, he has sanctified us, he has made us holy, he has showered us with all kinds of blessing, he has saved us and justified us, and he continues to love us. He is worthy of being our God its time we gave ourselves back to him and become his people.

Action points:

- Today take some time to consider all that God has done for you.
- Take a moment to rededicate yourself to him (you choose how).
- Pray that you will please God today, and show those around you what it means to be a child of God.

DAY 9—THAT WE ARE SAVED

John 10: 28-29

We are the property and responsibility of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Redeemer, Lord and King. Our sin separated us from a loving God full of grace and light, leading us on a path to certain death and destruction. But the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has saved us from that destination and placed us on a path leading to the light of God, life eternal.

John 5: 24

God has given us Jesus Christ, who has re-established the relationship that God wants to have with us, close and personal. Our part in this relationship is to learn more about and from God and put what we have learned into being and action, it is not enough to change what we do we must allow the word of God and the Holy spirit to change who we are. At the end of such an endeavour and process is life eternal.

Romans 4 :8

Sin makes us dirty and life eternal cannot be obtained by the dirty. The blood of Jesus has cleansed us and allowed us to come back into relationship with the one in whom there is light and life. It is the blood of Jesus, the word of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit that will allow us to stand before the throne of God at the judgement blameless, enabling us to live with God forever.

Romans 10: 9-10 & Psalm 103: 12

If we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ from the deepest recesses of our being and openly proclaim him as Lord and saviour then salvation will be ours. Our belief will lead us into right standing with God influencing our state of mind and our deeds, marking us out as a people belonging to God.

Revelation 20: 15

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is the son of God who died to save us from sin and was raised again to life eternal.

DAY 10—THAT GOD IS OUR PROVIDER

We are often told from scripture that God will meet our needs, (Phil 4.19), but when we look at the problems in the world, are we allowed to ask whether God will meet all our needs, or just some of them?

I say this because when we look around the world, so many nations are in poverty, and many others are in need of food and shelter, and so, is it possible that the Bible could be wrong about God? Well, thank God, scripture is not wrong at all.

Sadly, many of the problems we face in this world are not because of God but because of the sin of mankind and the selfish choices we make each day.

Believing that God will meet all our needs puts a lot of responsibility on Him, and often when we go through difficult times, it is easy to forget what God has said He will do for us.

One of God's many names is Jehovah Jireh (or Yahweh Jireh), which means the Lord will provide. In the Bible, we read that God provided Manna from Heaven for the Israelites to eat, (Ex16:1-36.) He also provided a way of escape for the Israelites as they fled from the Egyptians through the Red Sea, (Ex14:1-30.) God even provides a way of escape when we are facing temptation, (1 Cor10.13.)

The truth is we serve a God who is committed to His children. God provided the ultimate sacrifice by allowing His son, Jesus, to go to the cross, and face the punishment we deserved. So be encouraged that God's plans to provide for you are good.

Prayer Points:

- To trust God, believing that He is for you and not against you.
- That God will remind His children of His daily provisions.
- For God's children to apply His Word to their lives daily.

Action point:

To believe God is more than able to meet our needs and to walk in His provision daily.

DAY 11—THAT HE SANCTIFIES US

Let's just give God some praise today for Salvation, nobody else could have given us this except God. We thank him continually for his saving grace. We thank him for rescuing us from death and destruction and for bringing us into a great and loving relationship with him.

The title for today's devotion is: That He Sanctifies Us

Sanctification is to be made Clean and as believers we have gone and are still going through a process of sanctification. As we serve God, we must continue to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience *Col 3v12*. We must continue to strive to become more like Christ daily, in our thinking and in our actions.

In *1 Cor 6 v 9:10* Paul was reminding the believers of their state before they were saved, and it was the same with us before we were saved, we were in a bad state, *v11* goes on to say, 'but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God'. We have been purified by the blood of Jesus Christ and now our actions should reflect who we are.

Yes we still fall and yes we sin as we are not perfect, but we must continue to remember that we have been Called and Predestined and that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do *Eph 2:10*.

God continues to cleanse us through his Holy Word, through prayer and repentance also by us asking him to renew our mind.

It's our belief in him that is the key to sanctification. The blood of Jesus sanctifies us once and for all.

Prayer Point:

Let's ask God to help our thinking and actions to be in line with his Will.

Further reading:

Gal 5 v 22:24, Gal 2 v 20

DAY 12—HE WILL LEAD US

We are reminded in John 16:13 that when he, the Spirit of Truth comes (which is God's Holy Spirit), he will guide us into all the truth, and give understanding and revelation to who God is.

The Spirit of Truth will also begin to reveal any errors and misunderstandings we may have about God and the Word of God. He reveals God's standards of righteousness to believers and gives direction to ensure we walk towards fulfilling God's desire for us to become part of His eternal family. Essentially, the Spirit of Truth empowers us to discern both good and evil and to endure in the face of trials.

Today, let's cry out to God, asking the Spirit of Truth to teach us to do the will of God, to awaken our minds and stir our will. Let us ask God to lead us to the place where we can walk on level ground and live a life that pleases Him, even if this means restructuring our priorities to safeguard us in reaching our destination - the city of God.

In the Scriptures, "level ground" is a safe and proper place for God's children to walk (see Psalm 26:12). It is not necessarily a path free from all dangers and threats – but it is a path of trust and obedience to God.

When confronted with circumstances that seem overwhelming, we cry out to our Father in heaven and trust that his Spirit of Truth will lead us in the way we should go. He will also bring God's power and His blessings and deliverance.

Thoughts:

- What has the Spirit of Truth revealed to you recently?
- What will you do with this revelation?

Prayer:

Dear Father, thank you that you are mindful of me, and thank you that you have put every provision in place for me to live a life that will bring honour and glory to your name.

Lord, please teach me to do your will, for you are my God; and may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Amen

DAY 13—HE WON'T FORSAKE US

He won't abandon us; He will not leave us helpless....

A faithful promise from God that no matter what we are going through He will be with us always, even in death.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man that He should lie.....Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (NKJV)

Every promise He has given us is true. God wants us to TRUST HIM which at times we fail to do because we fear disappointments or failure. We tend to forget that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above ALL that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20). God has given power to face the things that surround us. He made us and knows everything about us and He promises to take care of us. He loves us with an everlasting love.

Prayer:

God, please help me not to fear the things I can't work out by myself but be confident that you are with me, and you will never leave me or forsake me.

Help me to stand on your promises found in your Word: -

- Deuteronomy 4:31 (for the Lord your God is a merciful God) HE WILL NOT FORSAKE YOU....
- Deuteronomy 31:6-8 encouraging us to BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE..... HE WILL NOT LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.
- Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU." So, we boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR: WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"

DAY 14—THAT WE SHALL SPEND ETERNITY WITH HIM

[John 3:16](#); [Matthew 22:32](#); [John 14:1-3](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#);

Many of us can quote the scripture John 3:16 but does the promise of eternal life fill us with joy or are there things that cloud our focus on eternity?

With the challenges of everyday life, we can soon fall into routine or be overcome with what feels like that weight of the world, losing sight of where we are going. Material possessions, career focus, relationships and many other things can form a basis for what motivates us and can become the things that we strive for. Our purpose is not to just live a 'good' life, otherwise what separates us from those in the world? We must remember that we are children of the Most High

As sojourners, temporarily residing in a place that is not our own, our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20). His word tells us in John 14 that there are many mansions (dwelling places) for us in the Father's house and that Jesus is preparing a place for us. Scripture goes on to say that if Jesus goes to prepare a place for us then He will come again, that where He is, there we may be also. If we truly believe that we shall spend eternity with Him, our lives and daily focus must reflect this

Thoughts:

- What are you more invested in, your future on Earth or eternity with God?

The race has already begun and it is up to us, to finish the race, to keep the faith because we know that there is a crown of righteousness which the Lord will give us, if we have lived faithfully, in the hope of His return (2 Tim 4:8). Tomorrow is not promised but one guarantee, is that we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give account (Rom 14:10-12). Let us not forget the promises of God!

- Nothing that we have experienced or will experience can compare with the gift of eternal life.

Prayer points

- Let's take time out to focus on where we invest our time and energy. Ask God to reveal how you can continue any good practices you have started during this period
- Pray that God will fill your mind with the thoughts of Heaven on a daily basis
- Read and pray in line Galatians 6:8-9

OUR HOPE

DAY 15—RELATIONSHIP AND RECONCILIATION

John 1:10-13 outlines that “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.” Knowing God refers to having a relationship with him – it is to have a sense of intimacy, fellowship, and connectedness with Him.

God so loved us that he “*made him who had no sin,*” meaning Christ “*to be sin for us.*” on the cross, where the full fury of his wrath against all the sins of all the people who would ever believe was poured out. His perfect expression of love has given us the legitimate claim or authority to become **children of God**. Saints, it is a privilege to be reconciled with God - the Creator!

A reconciled relationship with God is not one-sided, but it involves responsibility and sharing. Jesus gives full disclosure to His children. He withholds nothing from us. We are the objects of divine revelation, and this is a privilege that comes from having a genuine relationship with Him. In return, we are to be beacons (light and salt) to our world and extend love, even when rejected.

Romans 8:26-39 states that God is always present, and he is always willing to help us in times of need, and that “all things work together for good for those who love God.”

Just as God has *reconciled us to himself through Christ*, we must be ministers of reconciliation for God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Christ's love to us should direct us to love each other. As God's love and knowledge flow down to us, we, in turn, are to share the Word of God and his perfect love with others.

We must endeavour to allow John 15:7 to become a prerequisite for our everyday living – i.e., we **MUST** abide in God and allow the Word of God to abide in us.

Prayer Points:

- Thank God for the privilege of being called a Child of God
- Thank God for making us ministers of reconciliation
- Ask God to teach us how to express genuine love to others

Action Point:

During this period of fasting, and as a minister of reconciliation for God, each week, challenge yourself to share the Word of God and His perfect love with others?

DAY 16—BE HIS WITNESS

In the New Testament (1 Cor 15.6), we are told that over 500 people saw Jesus Christ, after the resurrection. Without those witnesses how would we know Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Those witnesses and their testimony have played a vital part as evidence in support of the resurrection, but what if those witnesses stayed silent and decided not to say anything.

Many believers today have sadly done a similar thing. They have experienced the amazing goodness of God's love and grace through Jesus Christ but because of the world's view, they have chosen not to share His love and grace with others.

The truth about being a witness for our Father God, is not everyone will be excited about what you have to share, yet the most important thing is we still share with others what Jesus has done and what He means to us.

The amazing thing is God has not left us to be witnesses in our own strength, but He has given us the Holy Spirit (Act 5.32), who guides us, and gives us boldness to share His truth where possible.

So, as you go through this day, ask the Lord to let you be a witness to someone today. Ask Him to give you the opportunity to share His message of hope and love.

In Mt 28:18-20, we read what is known as The Great Commission, where Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples of others, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in verse 20, we are reminded that Jesus is with us, always. So let us go and be a witness for Jesus today.

Prayer Points:

- Not to fear man but to trust God to use you in any situation.
- To spend regular time reading/studying the Bible.
- To live in the freedom and liberty God has for you.

Action Point:

To **trust** God to use you for His glory, and to be a witness in this world.

DAY 17—BE HOLY—In pursuit of Christlikeness

During the first week of our fast we considered the holiness of God and now we will reflect on the clear instruction set out for us in the Bible called to be imitators of God. We recognise that we make a conscious effort to do the 'right thing' when responding in difficult situations. Often the 'right thing' is difficult. To be clear, this recognition of our human frailty does not give lenience, not is it a 'get out clause' to not obey God's instruction.

Our call to holiness would be no problem had it not been for the flesh! The flesh and spirit man within us counteract constantly (like the two ends of a magnet), yet we must **be holy as Christ is holy**. We were reminded on day 5 that it is impossible for a Holy God to have contact with sin. So also the spirit man (connecting with God) and the flesh (prone to sin) fights for eminence. Yet we are called to **be holy as Christ is holy**.

There is some great news, saints. God, knowing human frailty, made a way that makes it possible to live our lives in pursuit of Christlikeness. God has given us His Holy Spirit who will guide us, His people, to live according to His instructions. The more we immerse ourselves in matters relating to God - in prayer, reading God's Word, gathering with the saints in fellowship - the clearer we hear the Holy Spirit. Distractions are everywhere - including people we study with, work with, our families, advertisements, the media - even still we are called to **be holy as Christ is holy**.

Meditation:

Considering yesterday, or earlier today, what distracted you? How did you react to those distractions in your pursuit of living a life of holiness? Was your response Christ-like?

Prayer points:

- For renewed awareness of our Christlikeness everyday
- Thank God for His Holy Spirit who is with us at all times, directing us the way we should respond
- That God will help us to live our lives in holiness as we follow Christ

Further reading:

1 Peter 1:13-21 (key passage); Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5: 1-2

DAY 18—BE JUST

Isaiah 1:17; Isaiah 58:6-7

At the very top of the Old Bailey Court in London – on the outside – is a dome, and on top of the dome is a statue called ‘Lady Justice.’ The statue depicts the lady holding a sword in one hand and a balancing scale in the other. The scales of justice in her left hand, indicate the fact that each case will be heard fairly, and the evidence for and against will be balanced justly. The sword represents the authority to enact justice.

It is in the nature of God to always act justly, the courts of our world cannot attain the standard of His justice.

Psalm 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

*Job 9:19 If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty!
If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him?*

As a result of God’s justice, God expects us to act fairly and without impartiality towards others. We do this because God loves humans and cares about them, and we should love people in the same way also. And then because we love Him and aspire to be like Him in all that we do, God wants people to recognise Himself through us.

Action points:

- Today, let us make a special effort to treat people as Christ would.
- Let us try to notice people who are in need of support and let us be a blessing.
- Are you aware of anyone in the church who could do with feeling especially loved today?
- Could someone you know in your church, argue the case that they have been treated harshly? Do you care? What could you do to help?

Pray about these matters now.

Further reading:

Isaiah 42:1-4; Proverbs 31:8-9; Micah 6:8.

DAY 19—TRUTH

The world wants to eradicate the reality of their being a truth, for ‘the truth’ indicates that there exists right and wrong. Be who you want to be and do what you want to do. The world would have us believe that most things are permissible and that you can live the life you want without much consequence. There will be something that you see or hear this week that highlights this

We have to understand that there can only be one truth and that truth is Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). In Jesus, there is nothing false, nothing misleading and nothing uncertain. We can be capable of knowing truth but none of us can claim to be the truth. When we seek to figure out what is truth and what is a lie, we can measure it against the words of Jesus who is the Truth

Thoughts:

- What things have you recently taken as ‘truth’ (things you have seen/heard or thoughts that you believe about yourself) but haven’t taken the time to measure it up against The Word?

Whilst we know that the Word of God provides us with the truth, we must take time to understand this for ourselves, otherwise right and wrong, good and bad is measured against the world’s standards. Our Hope is built on Jesus’s blood and His righteousness. This must not just be something that we are taught but knowledge that we have sought for ourselves by seeking Him and understanding His promises in the Word.

- What views have you allowed to enter your home through media, written word or conversation that are in direct opposition to God’s Word?

A famous film has a line ‘You can’t handle the truth’. Well, the world can’t handle the Truth and Bible tells us that the message of Jesus Christ is an offence or folly to those who are perishing. The truth highlights lifestyles and beliefs that are contrary to God’s standards. When we truly try to comprehend what God has done for us and the hope we have through Jesus Christ, our lives should be forever changed.

Prayer Points:

- Read 1 John 1:4-10, focusing on verse 6. Ask God to show you areas where your actions may be contrary to your beliefs/words
- Pray for boldness to live your life in the knowledge of God’s Truth
- Ask God for a revelation during this fasting period, through a deeper understanding of the Word

DAY 20—SUBMIT TO HIM

Hebrew 12:9, James 4:7, Romans 8:7

What an honour and a privilege it is to submit to Him our Heavenly Father our true and living GOD. Yet, let us not kid ourselves, it takes a lot of discipline and courage to do so. Submission is no easy task for at its root is OBEDIENCE.

The bible gives an excellent example of what obedience and submitting to GOD looks like. We are all familiar with the story of Abraham in the Old Testament. When I reflect on Abraham's two exemplary acts of obedience, one, leaving Ur of the Chaldeans and two, travelling up mount Moriah to sacrifice his promised son there are several questions that come to mind but I'll narrow it down to two. First, why did Abraham make the decision to leave the comfort of his lifestyle in Ur to journey with GOD into the unknown? Second, is there something special about Abraham's DNA that is different to ours in the twenty first century. Selah

In the holy scriptures we read the following 'Abraham believed God. As a result, God accepted Abraham as right with him' (Genesis 15:6). Obedience requires submission and trust; without these key factors you may not see the outcome of what GOD desires for you.

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to GOD. In short, this act proved Abraham's complete submission to GOD. The story as you know didn't end with Isaac being sacrificed because GOD had an alternative plan. (Genesis 22:1-19)

Reflection:

Can we really submit to GOD without trusting him with our whole lives?

Prayers:

- Dear LORD, I have not always followed Your instructions and have failed to be obedient, please forgive me.
- Dear LORD, please help me to completely submit to You.
- Dear LORD, show me how to be vulnerable to You as vulnerability places my life into Your hands.

DAY 21—LOVE

Quote from APPLY THE WORD...LOVE IS AS STRONG AS DEATH... ..

“God is the source of love. Sinful human beings twist and abuse it and even confuse it with passion and lust. But God wants to help us rediscover love so that we restore and heal ourselves and everyone around us. This is one of the most basic tenets of the message of Christ.”

1 John 4:7-8 ***“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for GOD IS LOVE.”***

John encourages us to Love one another in his Epistles. In this same chapter verse 20 -21 reminds us If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Verse 21 - And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God MUST love his brother also.

In Mark 12:28-31 we read when Jesus was asked by one of the scribes, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind**, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘**You shall love your neighbour as yourself.**’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Action Point:

Memorise this scripture if you can as a daily reminder taken from 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 ***“watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love”.***

Prayer:

Dear Father God, please help me to love you more, even as you love me and have forgiven me of all my sins, help me to love myself so that I can love my neighbour as myself and love my enemies too in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Amen.

NOTES

DURING THE FAST, I AM PRAYING AND BELIEVING GOD FOR:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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ANSWERED PRAYERS

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to all our contributors: Pastor Dave; Elder Martin; Deacon Harold; Deacon Daniel; Sister Lindy; Minister Keith; Brother Courtney; Sister Shirland; Deacon Helena; Sister Colleen, and Deacon Tessa.

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