



HOPE STARTS HERE

May 4-9, 2020

As we face this challenging time of social distancing, we want to join in daily devotionals, structured around our church's Core Values, to encourage us in our walk with God. Open by reading the Bible passage(s) for each day, then read the devotional text. Take a few moments to reflect, then close in prayer, including the prompt for each day but adding the praises and prayers that are on your own heart. May God bless us as we seek his face together!

May 4—Found People Find People

Gina Glazer

THEIR GREATEST NEED

[Matthew 4:19; Titus 2:11; Matthew 28:16-20](#)

God doesn't need our help. But part of his blessing to us is allowing us to come alongside him in his work on this earth. When Jesus said to Simon and Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," it wasn't because he needed help reaching people; it was because leading others into truth is a privilege.

Years ago I was talking to a counselor about someone in my life who was causing much heartache and pain. He asked me, "What is this person's greatest need?" I had many answers: discipline, structure, an attitude adjustment, stricter parents.

He asked again, "What is their greatest need?" I thought for a moment and realized what he was saying. Jesus—their greatest need was Jesus. And in my self-absorbed, worldly thought process, I had failed to see that. I had failed to love them appropriately through their difficult time.

I also realized in that moment that my role had just changed; I needed to ignore my feelings, ignore the hurt and do what God was calling me to do, to be his hands and feet, pray for this person, forgive this person, love this person. It was a difficult task; by this point it was personal, and I had feelings that were involved. However, I am not called to love people I feel like loving, to serve people I feel like serving, or to forgive people I feel like forgiving. Love and service are not feelings. They are actions. Becoming fishers of men requires action.

God's grace pursued me long before I ever saw it, and he placed people in my life who were gracious enough to pray for me, to love me, to lead me into his presence. Who in your life is he calling you to pray for, to love, to invite? I encourage you today to get started.

Prayer prompt: Father, help us to remember that this life is not about us but about you. Soften my heart. Show me who it is you would like me to love better, to serve, to point in your direction. Give me the courage to do the work you have called us all to do.

I SERVE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN SAVED

[Matthew 8:14-15](#)

I love the image presented in this passage of scripture. It's so short but also so poignant in what it portrays. Jesus walks into the house of Peter, whose mother-in-law is sick with a fever. Jesus touches her, and she's healed—and the very first thing she does is begin to wait on Jesus.

I think we lose sight of this sometimes. It's easy to forget what our salvation means. We are not simply healed from sickness but rescued from an eternal punishment that we rightly deserve. How wonderful a gift, and how simple it should be for us to serve Jesus and his church! Yet how big of a mountain we sometimes make it.

With this new season of service opportunities made available, remember that because of Jesus' touch, you have been healed. As Peter's mother-in-law did, appreciate what has been done for you, get up, and begin to serve him.

Prayer prompt: Father, help me to put your free gift of salvation into perspective. Let me not simply walk through life saved, but reflect Christ in service to others.

TREADMILLS

[James 4:1-10; Psalm 46:10-11](#)

Many of us have picked up hobbies during our ample time at home: some of them old hobbies that we lost touch with, others completely new to the wheelhouse. It appears to me that painting, writing, baking and exploring the woods have been among the most popular. I'm not creative, and I am a menace in the kitchen, so I've taken up the yo-yo. It took longer than I'm willing to admit to get the basics down.

We're all, at this point, getting used to the new pace that life has taken the last two months. Francis Chan compares the change of pace to a treadmill. He says that at times, we run through life not really knowing what we're running for, but we know that if we don't run, we'll miss opportunities or scholarships or job offers. We fixate on getting ahead or going to the next event and performance. The world says our lives are measured by how much we get done or how successful we are.

But we've come to a point where that race is halted; for many, the treadmill has slowed down. We say we're too busy to spend time with God, we say we can't find the time in our busy schedule to dwell in his presence. God is jealous for your hearts' attention and passion. Spend this time when the treadmill has slowed dwelling in the statement, "Be still, and know that I am God." And maybe learn how to yo-yo as your mind and heart meditate on his Word.

Prayer prompt: Jesus, still the anxiety and fear that take my mind from you. Give me peace and rest to grow deeper in your Word.

THE EARTH WILL BE FILLED

[Habakkuk 2:12-14, 18-20](#)

Today is known as the National Day of Prayer throughout the United States. Did you know that the first National Call to Prayer occurred in 1775 by the Continental Congress? Did you know that since 1775 there have been more than 1,500 state and federal calls to prayer? In the midst of COVID-19, prayer—prayer from the depths of our being, prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit—is needed more than ever.

In this time of a great pause, let us be encouraged by the words from the prophet Habakkuk when he declared, “For the earth *will be filled* with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (v 14). This is a promise from the Lord that gives us great hope.

The same glory that was revealed to Moses, the glory that dwelled in the tabernacle and then in the temple, the glory that announced the birth of our Savior to shepherds watching their flock, the glory that came down on Pentecost, that same glory that resides in us and transforms us, will fill this earth. Pause for a moment and meditate on the magnitude of this promise.

Have you seen the pictures of the Los Angeles skyline that were taken over several months? The first picture was of a very foggy and hazy skyline where you could barely see the outline of the city. The second one was taken a few weeks into the stay-at-home orders. The haze was beginning to lift. The third was taken sometime after Easter, and the Los Angeles skyline was as clear as can be. It is a beautiful picture of what I believe God desires to do in our lives, in our communities, in our nation.

Prayer prompt: God, help me to repent of all the idolatrous clutter I have placed in my life that has created this great haze. In these days, may I see your glory more clearly.

GETTING TO THE PROMISED LAND

[Numbers 14:1-4](#)

The Israelites had been freed miraculously from their bondage in Egypt. They had traveled through the dessert under the guidance and protection from God. But when they came to the edge of the Promised Land, they could not muster the courage to take the next step. The result was they began to grumble and rebel. They said, “We want a new leader!” and they were not referring to Moses. They did not want God leading them anymore. Isn’t it amazing? They were convinced the misery of slavery they knew would be preferable to the promise of God ahead of them.

We will never be able to take the next step God has for us if we do not have eyes to see clearly what he has already done. What is God calling you to do that seems too big for you? Is it to serve as a growth group leader? Share your faith with a neighbor? Be generous in a time of economic uncertainty? Instead of grumbling and cowering in fear, take some time to think about how God has taken care of you in the past – and just dream about what he has for you in the future.

Because of their lack of faith, the people ended up spending 40 years in the desert, and a whole generation never saw the Promised Land. When we fail to trust God we always miss out on his blessings. Whatever situation you are facing that looks too big, remember it might just be your promised land.

Prayer prompt: Father, grant us grace to submit to your leadership over our lives. Help us to trust you, and to give ourselves for others in love.

HIS INEXPRESSIBLE GIFT

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.” We have been given an amazing, incredible, beyond-our-wildest-dreams kind of life in Jesus Christ. It is a gift that is eternal and full of heavenly riches. How have you experienced this inexpressible gift in your life? Take a moment and give God thanks for such an undeserving gift.

These words conclude Paul’s writing to the Corinthians about bountiful sowing. This kind of sowing is a direct by-product of a life that understands God’s love for us. It overflows from a life lived under the abundance of that love. Let your spirit take in these words. Read them slowly and let them seep in the depths of your heart.

- “God is able”
- “all grace abounds to you”
- “all sufficiency in all things, at all times”
- “may abound in every good work”
- “He who supplies...will multiply”
- “increase the harvest of your righteousness”
- “enriched in every way”
- “generous in every way”
- “produce thanksgiving to God”
- “overflowing many thanksgivings to God”
- “glorify God”
- “the surpassing grace of God upon you”

This is the picture of the bountiful Christian life. This is a picture of a Christian who is alive in Jesus Christ. I pray that this is the picture of your life in Christ.

Prayer prompt: Holy Spirit, bring to mind the many ways you have shown your love for us. Fill us with thanksgiving and worship for your inexpressible gift.

Join us for our live-streamed service at 10 a.m. Sunday!

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