LOOK AT JESUS

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

And He said to them, "It is written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer"

the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. ***1 Peter 5:7***

SERIES GUIDE

WEEK 1

JESUS FORGIVES

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

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PLAYLIST FOR THE WEEK:

1. You Won't Let Go - **Cory Asbury**
2. Our Help, Our Rescue - **Far-FlungTin Can**
3. Turn Your Eyes - **The Belonging Co, Natalie Grant**
4. Center - **Bethel Music, Abbie Gamboa**
5. No One Like You - **UPPERROOM**
6. Make Room - **The Church Will Sing**
7. You Saved Me - **UPPERROOM**
8. Open The Eyes of My Heart - **7 Hills Worship**

MONDAY

The Dirt, the Crowd... The Stoop.

Scripture: John 8:1-11

Devotional

It started like any other morning. Jesus had gone to the Mount of Olives for the night, and at dawn, He returned to the temple courts. People gathered around Him. They always did. And He sat down to teach, just like a rabbi would.

But then it happens, the interruption.

A woman is dragged into the circle, disheveled, shaking, eyes darting for escape. The law says she deserves death. Stones are already clenched in fists. And they're not just looking for justice, they're looking for a spectacle... and a trap. "Teacher," they say, "This woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What do you say?" (John 8:4-5) It's bait, of course. If Jesus says "stone her," they'll accuse Him of cruelty. If He says "let her go," they'll accuse Him of violating the law. So he does something strange. He stoops. Doesn't speak. Doesn't answer. Just bends down and writes... in the dust.

What kind of God draws in dirt when a woman's life hangs in the balance? Apparently, one who knows that silence can sometimes say what shouting never could. And then he speaks."Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." (v.7) No one moves. No one breathes. One by one, starting with the oldest (which says something, doesn't it?), they walk away. Until it's just the two of them, this woman, still caught in her shame... and the only one who had the right to condemn her.

But He doesn't. He asks her: "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir." "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." It's a moment heavy with grace, but also purpose. He doesn't excuse her sin. He frees her from it. She's not just forgiven, she's now commissioned for something greater. That's what mercy does. It picks you up, wipes the dust off, and points toward a new direction. And that's the thing we don't always expect: the most powerful moments with Jesus often begin in the dirt. And that dirt... it's familiar territory. It's what we we're made from. Genesis tells us that God formed man from the dust of the earth. He didn't snap His fingers or speak us into being like the stars. He got His hands in the dirt. So maybe it's no accident that Jesus kneels down into it here. Because when sin pulls us low, Jesus gets low too. Not to expose us, but to be with us. To draw near. To draw something new.

The only one with the right to throw a stone chooses instead to draw in the soil. And suddenly, this isn't a courtroom anymore. It's Holy ground. Not because of what she did, but because of Who showed up. And when Jesus finally speaks... it's not to condemn her. It's to restore her. To call her out of the shame and into something new. Not "go back and try harder," but "go, and sin no more." It's release. It's redemption. That's what Jesus does. He rewrites the end of stories we thought were over.

So if you're in the dirt today, if you're the one who's failed, the one who's been exposed, the one who's standing there holding the weight of what everyone else thinks you are...look again. He's there, too. Kneeling beside you. Waiting for the crowd to leave. And when it's just the two of you? Grace will speak.

Reflection

What if the place you feel most disqualified is the very place Jesus is writing grace into your story?

Prayer

Jesus, You didn't walk away from brokenness. You walked right into it. Into hers. Into mine. Thank You for mercy that doesn't flinch, and for silence that says more than shame ever could. I receive Your grace again today. I go... forgiven and free. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..."
Psalm 130:3-4, "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins... who could stand?"

Breakfast on the Beach

Scripture: John 21:1–17

Devotional

It wasn't supposed to end like that. Peter had been all-in from the beginning. First one out of the boat, first one to speak up, first one to swing a sword. But in the hours that mattered most, when Jesus was arrested and everything started unraveling, Peter unraveled too.

Three times he said it.

"I don't know Him."
"I don't know Him."
"I SWEAR, I don't know the man."

And then the rooster crowed.

That sound chased him into the shadows. Not just because it marked his failure, but because Jesus had told him it would happen. And Peter had said, "Never." Like so many of us do, right before we fall. That's where this story picks up, not in the moment of failure, but in the awkwardness of what comes after.

Peter goes back to fishing. Not because it's a fun day off, but because it's what he did before. Before the calling. Before the fire and miracles and betrayal and tomb. Sometimes when you don't know what else to do... you go back to what you knew.

They fish all night. Catch nothing. And then... a voice from the shore: "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they say. "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." And just like that, the net is full. One hundred and fifty-three fish. (It's such a random number, it has to be an eyewitness detail. Someone counted.)

John's the first to put it together. "It is the Lord." And Peter? He doesn't wait. He throws on his cloak, jumps into the water, and swims hard toward shore. (Leave it to Peter to dress up after he jumps in.) And there, on the beach, Jesus is waiting. He's made a fire. Bread. The fish is already cooking. He doesn't mention the denial. Not right away. He doesn't lead with correction. He leads with a meal. He feeds them first. Then He talks to Peter. Not in front of everyone, but beside the fire. Quietly. Personally. "Do you love me?" Three times He asks. One for each denial. And after each question, He doesn't say "try harder." He says, "Feed my sheep."

He doesn't just forgive Peter. He gives him something to do. This isn't punishment. It's reinstatement. It's Jesus saying, "You're still my guy." Sometimes I wonder what that walk back up the beach felt like for Peter. Still dripping wet. Full belly. Maybe eyes a little misty. But heart is a little lighter. Not because he figured everything out. But because the same Jesus he denied... came to find him. Cooked him breakfast. Sat by the fire. And gave him back his purpose.

Forgiveness isn't just about cleaning up what's behind you. It's about giving you the strength to walk forward again. Because grace doesn't just fix things. It restores people.

Reflection

Where in your life have you "gone back to fishing"? What would it look like to see Jesus waiting on the shore again? What would Jesus call you back to do?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for coming to find me, not just when I fall, but when I run. Thank You for not just forgiving me, but for calling me forward again. I want to follow You today... even from the place where I failed. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Luke 22:61-62, Peter's denial and the Lord's gaze
Psalm 103:10-12, "He does not treat us as our sins deserve..."

Forgiven From the Inside Out

Scripture: Luke 7:36-50

Devotional

It wasn't the kind of house where women like her were welcome. The man who owned it was a Pharisee, religious, respected, meticulous. His table was set for prestige. Jesus was there too, invited more out of curiosity than friendship. And then... she came in. She wasn't on the guest list. She wasn't supposed to be in that part of town. She definitely wasn't supposed to be in that room. But there she was. Hair undone, perfume in hand, and a past that everyone seemed to know. The text simply calls her a "sinful woman," which is the Bible's polite way of saying what the whole town already whispered. She carried a reputation like a second skin. And yet, somehow, she made it all the way to Jesus' feet.

And then she broke.

No words. Just tears. The kind that fall fast and unfiltered. She wept on His feet. Wiped them with her hair. Poured perfume on them. It was awkward. It was unplanned. It was beautiful. And it bothered Simon. The host watched the whole thing and thought to himself, "If this man were really a prophet, He'd know who is touching Him... and what kind of woman she is." Jesus knew what kind of woman she was. But He also knew what kind of heart she had.

So He told a story.

Two people owed money, one owed a little, the other owed a lot. Neither could pay. The lender forgave both debts. "Now, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then, He turned to the woman, but kept talking to Simon. He pointed out all the things Simon didn't do: no water for His feet, no kiss of greeting, no oil for His head. But she had done all of it. Not out of duty. Out of love. Deep love. Because she knew the weight of what had been lifted.

"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven, as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." And then, for the first time, He looks at her. Speaks directly to her. "Your sins are forgiven." We don't know her name. We don't really know what she did before that day, or what she did after.
We don't know the moments that broke her. The promises that were never kept. The names she was called behind her back, or maybe to her face. We don't know how long she carried the weight of regret, or how many times she replayed her choices in her head. We just know she walked into that house with all of it still clinging to her.

And she wasn't invited. She wasn't expected. She wasn't supposed to be there. But something in her said, "I need to be close to Him." And that was enough.

She didn't come with a script. She didn't offer a defense. She came undone. She didn't speak a word, and yet, somehow, her tears said everything. She loved deeply. Not because she was emotional. But because she knew the size of her debt and the depth of His mercy. And Jesus saw it. He didn't recoil. He didn't correct her. He didn't brush off the moment or sanitize the scandal. He received it. And then, He gave her something back that no one else in the room could have offered: "Your sins are forgiven." It's one thing to hope for that, but it's another to hear it.

And then, He added a phrase that changed everything: "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." Go. Not "stay here and prove yourself." Not "go and do better next time." Just... go. Because grace doesn't just cover what you did, it releases you from who you were.

Go, in peace.
Go, without shame.
Go, with your head up and your heart light.
Go, knowing that when Jesus speaks forgiveness, the story doesn't have to end with guilt.

Reflection

Have you ever avoided Jesus because you assumed He saw you the way others do? What if His response is completely different than you imagined?

Prayer

Jesus, I don't want to keep my distance anymore. Not because I have it together, but because I know You already see it all, and You still invite me closer. Thank You for grace that overrules shame. I come to You today, just as I am. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Romans 5:8 — “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
Micah 7:18-19 — “You delight to show mercy…”

THURSDAY

The Older Brother

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

Devotional

I’m the oldest son. So maybe I’m a little biased with this one. But everyone remembers the younger son. He’s the one who asked for his inheritance early, basically telling his dad, “I’d rather have your stuff than your presence.” He’s the one who left town, wasted everything, hit rock bottom, and eventually came crawling home. And when he did? The father ran to meet him. Wrapped him in a robe. Called for a feast. Threw a full-blown celebration. No long speech. No lecture. Just joy.

It’s beautiful. Almost too beautiful. Because then there’s the older brother. He’s the one who stayed. Worked the land. Showed up every morning. Kept the rules. Did everything he was “supposed” to do. And when he hears the music and finds out the reason for the party? Something in him breaks. He refuses to go in. He stands outside the house that holds his own celebration, and he won’t walk through the door.

The father, again, goes out. This time, not for the runaway. But for the one who’s always been right there… yet feels just as distant. The older son vents: “All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.”

It’s not about the goat. It never is. It’s about the ache of being faithful and feeling forgotten. It’s about the resentment that creeps in when grace feels… unfair. But the father doesn’t argue. He reminds. “My son,” he says, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.” Everything. Not withheld. Not rationed. Already his.

But here’s the haunting part: We don’t know if the older brother ever goes in. The curtain falls with him still outside, arms crossed, jaw clenched, heart locked. Sometimes the hardest place to receive grace is when you've been trying so hard to be good.

It’s not rebellion that keeps you distant, it’s resentment. It’s the quiet belief that God owes you something for your consistency. That your obedience should earn you a blessing. That you’ve done your part, so why hasn’t He done His?

But here’s what Jesus shows us: God doesn’t run only after the reckless. He comes for the bitter, too. He doesn’t just restore the broken. He pleads with the prideful. Because both sons were lost. One ran away and found his way back. The other stayed close, but still missed the heart of the Father. And grace was trying to get to them both. But only one of them let it in.

That’s the question this story leaves hanging, will you? Will you stop measuring your worth by your work? Will you stop holding your joy hostage to someone else’s redemption story? Will you stop standing outside, waiting for it to feel fair? Because the Father has already come out to you. Already spoken your name. Already said, “Everything I have is yours.”

The only thing left… is to come in.

Reflection

Is there any part of your heart that’s been standing outside the party, trying to earn something God already said was yours?

Prayer

Father, I confess, I’ve felt frustrated. I’ve been faithful, and sometimes it feels like You haven’t noticed. But I see it now. You’ve been with me all along. I don’t want to stand outside of joy. I want to come in. Not because I deserve it, but because you've invited me. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Psalm 73:2-3, 23-26, “My feet had almost slipped… yet I am always with you.”
Romans 8:15-17, “You did not receive the spirit of slavery… but sonship.”

FRIDAY

A Thief's Last Breath

Scripture: Luke 23:32-43

Devotional

There were three crosses on that hill. One in the middle. Two on either side. The man in the center? Innocent. The other two? Guilty, and they knew it. These weren't misunderstood men. They weren't framed. They were criminals. Thieves. Men who had spent their lives taking what wasn't theirs, running from justice, and finally running out of time. No one was expecting a redemption story here. And yet... one happened anyway.

At first, both criminals mocked Jesus. But somewhere in the slow hours of pain, something shifted in one of them. Maybe it was how Jesus absorbed the hatred without throwing it back. Maybe it was the words, "Father, forgive them..." spoken over the very people killing Him. Somewhere in that chaos, the thief saw something different. He turned to his partner in crime and said, "Don't you fear God? We're getting what we deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." And then he looked at Jesus. Not a long prayer. Not some eloquent apology. Just this: "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." He didn't even ask for paradise. He didn't assume he belonged. He just hoped not to be forgotten. And Jesus... with thorns on His head, nails in His hands, breath shallow and bloodied... said: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

I wonder what that man thought when he opened his eyes again, somewhere on the other side of death. Heaven. Glory. The presence of God. I wonder if he was still trying to process it. Imagine him walking through the gates and someone asking, "So... how did you get here?" "Well... I was dying next to this man. Jesus. I don't really know how it happened. I just asked Him to remember me. And He did." "What church were you part of?" "Wasn't. Never made it to one." "Did you get baptized?" "No... not unless you count blood and sweat." "Did you go through discipleship?" "No class. No process. Just that one moment."

And maybe there was this pause... and a quiet laugh from some old saint, shaking his head with a smile: "Only Jesus."

Because only Jesus would take a guilty man's final breath... and turn it into an invitation. Only Jesus would offer paradise to someone who never tithed, never served, never memorized a single verse.

Only Jesus would make forgiveness this accessible. This scandalous. This immediate. We get so wrapped up in earning what can only be received. We keep trying to be "good enough," when the truth is, we were never asked to be. We were asked to believe. To turn. To trust. And the thief shows us: even with breath running out and no time to fix your life... Jesus is enough. He doesn't need your track record. He doesn't need your résumé. He just needs your heart to be open.

That's it. One sentence from a cross, and heaven opens. Because that's what grace does. It doesn't wait until you're ready. It meets you where you are, pulls you in close, and says: "You're coming with Me." And the next thing that the thief saw was a kingdom. Not because he was good. But because Jesus is.

Reflection

What if Jesus isn't waiting for you to get it all together, but is simply waiting for you to turn toward Him, like the thief did?

Prayer

Jesus, I've spent too much time trying to earn what You already gave. Forgive me. I don't want to waste another moment thinking I'm too far or too late. Like that thief on the cross... I just want to be near You. You are enough. I trust You. I give You my heart, right now. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Isaiah 55:6-7, "Seek the Lord while He may be found... for He will freely pardon."
Titus 3:4-5, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy."

SATURDAY

While They Were Doing It

Scripture: Luke 23:33-34

Devotional

They didn't wait for Him to die before they gambled for His clothes. Before His blood had even dried on the crossbeam, they were tossing dice in the dirt, arguing over His robe like it was a prize. He hung there, arms stretched, lungs collapsing, nails piercing nerves. And still... still... He spoke. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Read that again, slowly. While they were doing it, the mocking, the piercing, the crushing, He was already asking the Father to release them. He wasn't waiting for repentance. He wasn't holding out for a change of heart. He prayed for forgiveness before they even knew they needed it. That's the kind of forgiveness that makes no sense. The kind that confronts you. Undoes you. Reaches for you in your worst moment, not your cleaned-up one. Because Jesus didn't go to the cross to secure our potential. He went to rescue us at our worst.

Sometimes we think of forgiveness as a response. Someone apologizes. We consider. Maybe if we feel generous, we let it go. But that's not how Jesus does it. His forgiveness isn't reactive. It's proactive. And it wasn't just for the soldiers with the hammers. It was for us. For the ways we reject Him without even realizing it. For the quiet betrayals.The casual apathy. The moments we call Him Lord on Sunday and live like strangers by Tuesday. He saw all of it. And still He said, "Father, forgive them..."

There's a moment in Isaiah where the prophet says: "He was pierced for our transgressions... crushed for our iniquities... and by His wounds, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) That wasn't poetic language. It was a prophecy of this exact scene. And what heals us isn't just the pain Jesus endured, it's the forgiveness He offered in the middle of it. While the nails were still in. While the jeers still rang out. While they were still doing it.

I once heard someone describe grace like this:
"Jesus didn't die for the person you're trying to be. He died for the person you actually are." And when you start to believe that? You stop performing. You stop pretending. You stop trying to earn what He already settled in blood. Because when Jesus says, "Father, forgive them...", it's not a plea. It's a proclamation.

It's Jesus, in agony, lifting His voice so you could know, once and for all, you are not too far gone. You are not too broken. You are not beyond His reach. The cross doesn't just erase the debt. It declares the value. And the hands that were pierced are the same ones stretched toward you now, still saying the same words: "Forgive them."

Reflection

Where do you still struggle to believe that you've been fully forgiven? What would change if you believed Jesus already said, "Forgive them", about that part of your story?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for forgiving me, not just after I got it together, but while I was still in the middle of my mess. Thank You for seeing it all... and loving me anyway. Help me stop trying to earn what You already gave. Let Your words be the soundtrack over my life: "Father, forgive them." And let me live like it's true. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Isaiah 53:5-6, "The punishment that brought us peace was on Him..."
Hebrews 10:10-14, "By one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever..."

Sermon Notes

WEEK 2

JESUS PRAYS

My house will be called a house of prayer

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PLAYLIST FOR THE WEEK:

1. House of Prayer - **Eddie James, Jayna Cullens**
2. Set a Fire - **Will Reagan, United Pursuit**
3. Worthy (Paradoxology) - **Elevation Worship**
4. I Will Follow - **Pat Barrett**
5. Show Me Your Face/Yahweh - **Red Worship, Lizzie Morgan**
6. Jesus We Love You - **Bethel Music**
7. Only Jesus - **Housefires, DOE**
8. QUIET - **Elevation Worship**
9. Pour My Love On You - **UPPERROOM**

MONDAY

A House of Prayer

Scripture: Mark 11:15-17

Devotional

In reading these verses, it is evident that Jesus has identified some bad habits that were happening in the temple. Habits that were thinking of earthly desires and not heavenly desires. Habits that were distractions that did not bring the results of a prayer life. Jesus expected something different than what He saw in the temple. Have you ever seen something different than what you expected? What I like about Jesus is that he began to teach them about the needful habit of prayer. One of the things that amazes me most about His teaching is that out of all the metaphors He could have chosen to describe prayer, He used the one place that every person is familiar with, a house. Let's pause and think about this. A house isn't just a place you visit; it's a place where you live. It's where you eat, bathe, sleep, and rest. It's where you dwell. It's where a lot of the items you cherish are kept, and valuable items are kept in a safe. Most importantly, you just don't allow anyone in your house or apartment, as it's your personal space and you will just about do everything to protect it. Just like we dwell in our house, Jesus was saying that prayer is meant to dwell in us. It's a lifestyle, a daily habit, a structure we live inside of.

Prayer is the one thing that may be most telling in what His disciples saw when they watched Him. They didn't ask, "Lord, teach us to preach" or "Lord, teach us to heal." They asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Because they saw something in Him that they didn't see in anyone else. A habit that was alive, connected, steady, and intimate. Even during His time of death, His habit of prayer couldn't be silenced. Hearing the disciples' question on prayer reminds me of my own story.

When we visited Word of Life in 1990, I was a teenager. A year later, when we joined, I didn't fully understand the transformation of what my family was walking into in learning the truth about our heavenly Father. On hearing the prayer announcement during one church service, my parents made sure our family was at Saturday morning prayer. I remember thinking, "Why do we have to pray so much? What's the big deal about prayer?" Honestly, I didn't want to go. I didn't see the value of prayer until I started hearing a shift in my parents' conversation about God.

Week after week, I watched my parents and how our church gathered in prayer. This wasn't out of tradition or religion but a sincere desire. I heard church members cry out to God with passion, humility, and faith. They walked in an intimacy with God that could only come from time spent in prayer. I started to wonder if I could know God like that. Can I come up higher in prayer like that? Well, I didn't realize that sitting in prayer and not even praying would one day change my mind concerning prayer. As the statement goes, some things are taught and some things are caught. The day finally came when I could tell I was becoming hungry for prayer, and I wanted to know more. I remember whispering, "Lord, teach me how to pray." That whisper changed everything.

I picked up books on prayer that were in our bookstore and went back over the prayer notes at home each week. I learned how to follow in prayer during those meetings. I saw firsthand how prayer was deeply embedded in our church and we were a house of prayer.

Scripture says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. That means you are a house, and Jesus is saying, "Let your life be the place where prayer lives." This week, we're going to journey through the prayer life of Jesus. Not just looking at how often He prayed, but how He was a house of prayer. And just like a house has many rooms, each serving a purpose, we're going to enter into the "rooms" of prayer we see in Jesus' life.

As you look at Jesus's life this week, it will be evident that He had a prayer life, or you can say, a prayer habit. He prayed in lonely places. He prayed through the night. He prayed before choosing His disciples. He prayed when He was hurting. He prayed when others were sleeping. He prayed before miracles were in physical sight. He prayed with people. Prayerfully, by the end of this week, as you learn about Jesus' prayer habit, you will become a house of prayer in every season of your life.

Reflection

Ask yourself: Where does prayer live in my daily life? Is it unknown, hidden, visible at times, or at the center of your life? Journal your answer and write where you desire to be in your prayer life.

Prayer

God, there are some distractions in my life that are becoming habits, and they are not allowing me to give time to prayer or even learn about prayer. Help me release them so I can become a house of prayer. My prayer life shouldn't

be a reaction to trouble but a daily conversation with You. I don't want prayer to be something I check off, but I want prayer to become where I live. Teach me about prayer and teach me how to pray so I can become a house of prayer, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 - you are God's temple. That means your life is the place where God wants prayer to dwell.
Mediate on Isaiah 56:7 - God's heart is for all nations, and we must pray from His heart.

TUESDAY

A House that Withdrew

Scripture: Luke 5:16

Devotional

Think about your house or apartment when it's noisy, buzzing with conversation, phones ringing, or kids playing with toys running through the house, or hearing the voices from a movie or your favorite TV show. This is what many of our lives look like, right? It feels like we never stop moving, and most of the time we withdraw to a room to sleep, take a nap, or maybe you're in a rhythm of prayer where you do withdraw to pray. Jesus shows us how to do something different in the midst of all that noise, something quieter and essential.

In Luke 5:16, it says, "Jesus often withdrew." This means it was regular, normal, it was His rhythm. Not something He did occasionally when things were really bad. Pulling away from the crowd, from the ministry, from the momentum to pray was how Jesus lived. Jesus didn't withdraw because He was tired of people. I mean the bible shows in scripture how His life was packed with people, full of miracles, always on the move, and yet He never let His days be more full of activity than they were full of prayer. Read the last statement slowly...Jesus never let His days be more full of activity than they were full of prayer. How would you rate your activity life vs your prayer life?

I remember when I made the decision to grow in my relationship with God through prayer. It seemed like when I would set aside time to pray, my cellphone would ring, and invitations via text would come to hang out with my friends. I soon realized that my phone couldn't follow me into the room of prayer. I had to learn how to withdraw from my phone. Not because I didn't want to talk to my friends or family. I wanted to learn how to love God more deeply. I needed to make space to withdraw so I could hear and not be distracted. Let's be honest, it's not always easy, but it's always worth it.

One thing that helped me learn how to withdraw was a resource mentioned at our church. A devotional book by Lynne Hammond called Devotions for the Praying Heart. I would set aside time to not just read but journal as well, as each day had a devotion that helped me understand more about prayer. I had to pull back from the noise so I could tune into God's voice. This was a season where I knew I had to build something in my spiritual life, a habit of withdrawing, like Jesus did.

Jesus withdrew because He understood that the health of His house depended on the strength of His prayer life. Jesus is the one who said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." And while He was talking about the Temple, He was also pointing to something deeper, you. In accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour, we are the house now. We are the dwelling place of God. And if Jesus made it a priority to fill His house with prayer, how much more do we need to? And that's really the heart of today's devotion. Your heart is God's home, and your body is His temple. Jesus didn't just pray to survive life; He prayed to build a house of prayer.

Reflection

Not out of shame or guilt, but is there an invitation or activity in your week that you could decline to make intentional space for time with God?

Prayer

God, I want to learn how to withdraw from people so I can continually come to you. Teach me to yield to you and not the busyness of life. Help me carve out space in my daily life to pray. I desire for my heart to be Your home, quiet, steady, and full of prayer. Thank you for helping me grow into becoming a house of prayer, in Jesus name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Psalm 46:10 - be still so you can empty your soul from the voice of the world and hear from God.
Meditate on Matthew 6:6 - when you withdraw in private, it will be noticeable in public. Do you believe that the quiet place in prayer can be the most powerful part of your life?

WEDNESDAY

A House that Rises Early

Scripture: Mark 1:35

Devotional

Jesus got up early while it was still dark. The day before had been filled with ministry, healing crowds, driving out demons, and teaching into the evening. Yet His response the next day wasn't a time to sleep in. Why? Because He wasn't building a house that reacted to the voices of others. He was building one that responded to the Father first. It was an early morning fellowship that couldn't be interrupted by people's needs or demands. Think about that for a moment. So many of us struggle or have struggled to give God the first part of our day. The bed is so comfortable and warm. The snooze button helps us to stay in bed longer, causing us to ignore our heart, which is why we set the alarm to wake up at a specific time. But Jesus modeled something different, a house of prayer that rises early. Something happens for the better when we give God the quiet of our morning. Let me explain...

I remember learning this lesson personally. I had no problem waking up early for the gym because I learned a few benefits, which were:

1. Morning exercise helps you avoid distractions.
2. You'll reap the mental benefits of exercise all day.
3. Morning exercise can help you make healthier choices.
4. You'll boost your metabolism with morning exercise.
5. You'll sleep better if you exercise in the morning.

My accountability partner and I had a routine of waking up at 4:30 am and arriving at the gym at 5 a.m. to work out before our day began. This action that became a habit taught me something powerful: I can wake up early, and it will become easier the more I do it. Well, why did I do it? The hunger was there for growth, I wanted to live a healthier lifestyle, and I was expecting those benefits. I mean, the 5 I listed are some great benefits, right? Then I started asking myself, "What if I gave that same energy to prayer?" I didn't have a workout partner for prayer, but I did have the Holy Spirit, my Helper. The One who knows how to wake the soul and steady the heart. So I started inviting Him into my mornings on the days I wouldn't go to the gym. I would whisper before bed, "Holy Spirit, help me wake up, help me grow. I want to know more about prayer." And slowly, something changed. Not every morning was perfect, as sometimes I hit the snooze button, but I made a decision to get out of bed and pray. Where is your relationship with the Holy Spirit in your prayer life? He knows about being a house of prayer. Jesus' life and ministry would not have been possible without the Holy Spirit. I began to share my time of early morning prayer with some friends at church. As friendships deepened, we encouraged one another not just to show up Sunday evenings but to rise early and give God our first.

Jesus knew that before He stepped into the demands of the day, He had to be filled by the One who sent Him because there's something about morning prayer, when the mind is uncluttered, when the house is silent. When the only voice you hear calling your name is the One who made you. When you are a house of prayer that rises early, you are creating a prayer habit that says, "Before I hear from the world, I will hear from my Father." It's His presence that I long for, and it's His presence I will seek. Jesus knew the benefits of rising early to pray. I believe you will, too.

Reflection

What would it take for you to be intentional in giving God your mornings? Maybe wake up 10 to 15 minutes earlier for uninterrupted time in prayer.

Prayer

God, I desire to rise early in the morning when the world still sleeps. Help me value your presence more than I value my bed. I don't want anything to interfere with coming up higher in prayer. Just as sleep couldn't interfere with Samuel hearing your voice, I desire the same. I want to be a house of prayer that responds to you, even in the mornings, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Psalm 5:3 - In the morning, David's voice is heard by God.
Read Isaiah 50:4 - Isaiah is awakened in the mornings by God to receive instructions.

THURSDAY

A House With Open Doors

Scripture: Luke 9:28

Devotional

We often picture prayer as something reserved for solitude, for silent moments between us and God. And while that's true, if we look at Jesus' life, we discover something beautifully intentional: He prayed with others. In Luke 9, we see Jesus go up a mountain—not alone, but with Peter, James, and John. And what was the purpose of the climb? This moment would later be known as the Transfiguration, a supernatural encounter where Jesus' face changed, His clothes became dazzling white, and the Father spoke from a cloud. He invited them in to witness the very heart of His intimacy with the Father. Jesus was constructing a house of prayer with open doors, and this mountain was one of the first blueprints.

So here's the question:

Who are you taking up the mountain with you?

Who are you inviting into the sacred space of your walk with God?

It's easy to reserve prayer for private devotion. But sometimes, the breakthrough others need is found not in your advice, but in your invitation to prayer. The invitation to come close to witness your posture and to hear your voice as you pray to your Heavenly Father. That's what Jesus gave Peter, James, and John. He brought them into His prayer life and something eternal was revealed.

I remember when I was invited to join a prayer meeting in 2013 with a group of friends preparing for a mission trip to India. Honestly, I was hesitant as so many doubts were in my mind. What do I even pray for? What if I don't pray about anything? Am I even supposed to go on this trip? I showed up anyway, but I was a mess internally as all I could think of were the negatives, and fear was winning. Before prayer started, a conversation was had about India and what we would be praying for. Wooh!! What a relief, because if I were asked to pray, I was just going to repeat what was said. As prayer started in the presence of others, my fears and doubts began to not be real anymore. The prayer room became the open door for us to experience the presence of God together. We weren't just praying, we were becoming a house of prayer together. I didn't just hear prayers, I heard God. As we prayed, someone spoke words of knowledge and gave a prophecy over me that confirmed not only the importance of that trip to India, but that God would use me in prayer in the future. This moment marked me as I began to receive some clarity on why God wanted me to go. When I arrived in India months later in the same year, more was revealed.

This is what Jesus modeled. Jesus didn't just teach prayer; He demonstrated it in relationship with Peter, James, and John. He's calling us to do the same. To stop locking our prayer lives behind closed doors and start inviting others into the holy space. To become a house with open doors. This doesn't mean we let everyone in. But it does mean we stop living with a "me and God only" mentality. Because the Kingdom of God was never meant to be built in isolation, but be built through invitation. Prayer isn't just where we meet God; it's where we bring others to meet Him, too. Who are you inviting to come and learn how to be a house of prayer with you?

Reflection

Who in your life could you ask about their journey with prayer? What might you learn by opening the door to that kind of conversation, and how could it help you grow in your prayer life?

Prayer

God, forgive me for keeping my prayer life hidden. Teach me what it means to become a house with open doors to model intimacy with You. Show me who needs to be brought up the mountain with me. Give me the courage to pray with people and not just for them. I also pray that my life will be surrounded by people who are helping me come up higher in my prayer life, in Jesus name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Meditate on Matthew 18:19-20 - Jesus talks about agreement in prayer in gathering with two or three in His name. How can your current relationships be deepened through shared moments of prayer?

Read James 5:16 - confess and pray for each other so you may be healed.

FRIDAY

A House of Unity

Scripture: John 17:20-21

Devotional

Notice what Jesus prayed before going to the cross. He prayed for unity, the one thing that is the foundation for a house of prayer. Think about the weight of that prayer. Jesus witnessed division through theological debates and political tensions. He was about to experience betrayal, denial, and abandonment by disciples. And yet He still believed unity was possible. Why? Because Jesus prayed with the vision of heaven, which is unity. He prayed for a church that would mirror the oneness of the Godhead, the Trinity. A house of prayer that wouldn't just sing together, but would stand together with one heart, one voice, and one mind. Think about how Jesus taught the disciples on how to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What does that sound like? You have answered correctly, unity.

Jesus knew the temptation that we would face concerning division because He faced it Himself. To split over politics, race, doctrine, culture, or pain. He also knew the only force strong enough to unite our broken humanity is prayer that's rooted and grounded in unity. And so, He prayed for the church, for us, and for you. He dreamed of a house of prayer that looked like heaven, in which is diverse, whole, and deeply united. In our world today, the need for this kind of unity couldn't be louder. We see nations divided, cities divided, leaders divided, and families divided.We see the gospel being silenced in regions like the 10/40 window. Where people are imprisoned for believing in Jesus, where Bibles are contraband, and where missionaries risk everything just to whisper His name.

That's why I love what we've been doing as a church. Our Wednesday prayer times. Our decision to pray for Jackson Leadership, missionaries, send Bibles, plant schools, and build churches in spiritually dark regions. What are we saying? We're saying we will be one. We're saying we will align our hearts with heaven's plan. We're saying we will be a house of unity.

I'll never forget when this became personal for me. There was a time when God challenged me not just to be united with people who thought like me, looked like me, or worshiped like me, but to stand in unity with heaven's plan. To pray for those I'll never meet on this side of heaven, and pray for souls I may never see until I get to heaven. To give my time and go to nations to be physically present with missionaries that my family and I are called to see face to face. We are called to partner financially with missionaries whom we are called to support. When my family and I pray for missionaries, visit missionaries, and give to missionaries, we are walking in unity with heaven. Some of my closest friends are missionaries, and we talk monthly via email and Zoom. This is just another reminder for me on the WHY for unity. Jesus said, "The world will know that we are His by our love." There is no unity without love. A house of prayer models unity, as there is no prayer without unity, just as there is no house without a foundation.

What are some ways you can continue to get in alignment with unity? Remember, Jesus prayed this for us over 2,000 years ago as He knew we needed to be reminded. The enemy is after building walls that will bring division. Jesus is after building altars that will bring unity. A house of prayer is about loving beyond comfort, praying beyond boundaries, and reaching beyond walls. When we become one, the world sees the ONE and His name is Jesus.

Reflection

Read John 17 out loud. What stands out to you about Jesus' heart for unity? How might His prayer shape the way you pray for others and pursue unity in your own life?

Prayer

God, forgive us when we've made Your house a place of division instead of oneness. Forgive us for building denominations instead of bridges. Help us to lay down our agendas, our opinions, and our pride. Help us to become humble so we can be one, just as You, Jesus and The Holy Spirit are One. Make us a house of unity and let our unity reveal Your glory to the world, in Jesus name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Psalm 133 - unity is the foundation for God to command a blessing.
Meditate on 1 Corinthians 1:10 - let there be no division, be of one mind. Have you allowed division, pride, or offense to build walls in my heart?

SATURDAY

A House that Groans

Scripture: Luke 22:44

Devotional

We often talk about prayer as peace. And yes, there are times when it absolutely is. But peace is not the only evidence of prayer. Sometimes, real prayer sounds more like a groan than a hymn. In Luke 22:44, Jesus is in the garden and He is fully aware of what's about to come. His betrayal, His trial, His mocking, His crucifixion, and the weight of the world's sin upon His shoulders. He prays three times, not passively but with such intensity that His sweat becomes like drops of blood. I can't imagine what He felt like at that moment. This wasn't the gentle, quiet kind of prayer we see when He gives thanks before feeding the five thousand. This wasn't the glorious mountaintop moment where His face shone like the sun. This was totally different, even from when He wept before praying to raise Lazarus from the dead. This was the groan of surrender.

Jesus models something that many of us try to hide, anguish. He didn't hide His distress before the Father. He didn't pretend it was easy. He prayed through His breaking point. His groans didn't disqualify Him from being heard but they qualified Him as our High Priest who knows our pain and He is forever making intercession for us.

Have you had moments where you wrestled with the will of God? Moments when you were not at peace with saying yes. Moments when the cost of obedience looked like too much. I remember several moments in my life when I knew God was calling me to move to physically relocate, to shift spiritually, to lay down comfort, and my first response wasn't praise to any of these. The hardest part was knowing that to say "yes" to Him, I had to say "no" to things I thought I needed. Notice the wording, things I thought I needed.

I knew that in order to follow God's plan for my life, I would have to abandon some things, such as TV shows, relationships, and other times it was just the routine of what I was used to. One of the most vivid moments I felt was when the Lord asked me to say yes to a move that I didn't feel ready for. In prayer, I was like Jesus in Gethsemane, saying, "If there's any other way? God said, "This is the way." Fast forward years later, I found myself walking into the very things He had shown me in those agonizing moments of prayer, but they only came after my yes. And that didn't come easy. It came through tears, through groans, through the internal wrestling of surrender.

Jesus understands this. He knows what it's like to question the cost. But He also shows us the way forward from His own words, "Not my will, but Yours be done."

Prayer is not always peaceful. It can be a place of battleground, a place of decision, a place of laying down and letting go. And yet, even in the groaning, God meets us, hears us and strengthens us. If Jesus had to groan His way to surrender, why would we expect anything different? A house of prayer is not just filled with praise; it's filled with surrender that sometimes sounds like a groan.

Reflection

Is there an area in your life where you've been asking God, "Is there another way?" What would it look like to fully surrender that to Him in prayer this week?

Prayer

God, thank You for seeing me in the moments where I'm not strong. Thank You for not turning away from my tears or my groans. I bring to You my questions, and even my hesitations. Help me to surrender and help me let go of the things that are holding me back. Help me to say yes even when it's painful. I want to be a house of prayer that doesn't hide, but brings everything to You so you can help me surrender to your will, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Romans 8:26 - the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness to pray through groaning.
Read Hebrews 5:7 - Jesus offered up prayers and petitions with cries and tears.

Sermon Notes

WEEK 3

JESUS HEALS

the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

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PLAYLIST FOR THE WEEK:

1. Jesus Is My Healer - **Gateway Worship, Jessie Harris**
2. Through and Through - **Will Reagan, United Pursuit**
3. Too Good To Not Believe - **Tribl, Maverick City Music,Lizzie Morgan**
4. Open Our Eyes - **Steffany Gretzinger**
5. Lift Up Holy Hands/He's Alive - **Bethel Music**
6. Jesus Have It All - **Bethel Music**
7. Surrounded (Fight My Battles) - **UPPERROOM**
8. Your Great Name - **Todd Dulaney**
9. When You Walk Into The Room - **Bethel Music**
10. I Thank God - **Maverick City Music**
11. The Name of Jesus - **Highlands Worship**
12. Eyes On You - **The Belonging Co**

Healing Belongs to You

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5

Devotional

Healing is not just a good idea or possibility—it is a divine inheritance, a promise. Just as salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ, so is healing. Jesus did not suffer and die only to forgive your sins; He also bore your sicknesses and diseases. This includes symptoms in your body. Isaiah 53:5 (AMP) declares, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our wickedness... and by His stripes we are healed." That word "healed" isn't symbolic—it means wholeness in every way. God doesn't intend for His children to live in cycles of pain, but to walk in the freedom of divine health. This healing isn't based on your works or anything you could strive to do, but on what Jesus provided through his death and resurrection. And you know what my favorite part of this is? He would have done it all over again even if it was JUST for YOU. If you can believe that your sins are forgiven, you can believe that your body can be restored. God is not selective with His benefits package—He is faithful to perform His Word. Healing is not just for some; it's for all who believe. Will you believe?

There is power in persistence. Healing is not always instantaneous—it is often a process of faith in motion. Just as you wouldn't plant a seed and dig it up every day to see if it's growing, you must trust that God is at work even when you don't feel it. Faith means choosing to believe before you see. Hebrews 11:1 (NASB) reminds us, "Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen." The enemy would love to convince you that, because symptoms still exist, healing hasn't begun. But symptoms are not the final word—God's Word is. His Word is alive, active, and healing to your whole body (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT). Keep speaking life. Keep speaking life over your body. Keep declaring truth. Don't stop watering your faith with the Word of God.

Healing belongs to you because you belong to Jesus. There's no application process, no waiting line—just a promise already sealed by the blood of Jesus because He loves you that much. 1 Peter 2:24 (NLT) says, "He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross... By his wounds you are healed." Every promise in God's Word is yes and amen to those in Him. You are not too far gone. You are not too sick. God is not intimidated by the bad doctors' report. You are not the exception. God has not overlooked you. He is near, and He is willing—just as He was with the leper in Mark 1:41, who said, "I am willing; be cleansed." If He was willing then, how much more willing is He today? If He was healing then, He is healing today. He is the same God yesterday, today, and forever.

Reflection

What is one area in your life—physically, emotionally, or spiritually—where you've hesitated to believe healing is already yours, and what truth from God's Word can you begin declaring over that area today?

Prayer

Jesus, I thank You that healing is not just a hope or an idea that sounds good. It's a promise secured by Your stripes. You bore my sickness, carried my pain, and made a way for me to walk in complete wholeness. I believe that just as You forgave my sins, You also made healing available to me—not because I've earned it, but because You love me. Help me to trust Your Word over every symptom and every report. Strengthen my faith as I stand on Your promises. I choose to speak life over my body and to believe that I am healed. Thank You that You are willing, able, and faithful to heal. I receive it now by faith. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

Romans 8:11 (NLT)
"The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you... He will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you."

Mark 11:24 (NASB)
"Therefore, I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be yours."

Faith that Sees

Scripture: Mark 5:28 NKJV For she said, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."*

Devotional

Faith doesn't wait to see results—it sees the promise before it's manifested in the natural. What do I mean by that? In the same way, I have to put glasses or contacts in my eyes in the morning to see in the natural, I have to look through the lens of faith to see my body fully healed, EVEN IF I am still feeling symptoms in my body. Because my faith is in the promise of God and what the Word of God says, more than what my body is telling me through symptoms or a negative report. The woman with the issue of blood saw herself healed long before she touched the hem of Jesus' garment. Mark 5:28 (AMP) says, "For she was saying [to herself], 'If I only touch His clothing, I will get well.'" That statement wasn't a wish—it was a confession of faith. Her healing began the moment she believed, not the moment symptoms disappeared from her body. I often wonder how many times, even in my own life, I have allowed sickness like the flu to take root in my body because I allowed the symptoms I was feeling to be bigger than what the Word of God said regarding my health. Faith is the lens through which you view your reality. Even when symptoms are loud, faith speaks louder. When your body screams pain, faith whispers truth: "By His stripes, I am healed" (Isaiah 53:5 AMP). Speak what you believe, not what you feel. Feelings change. The Word of God does not. Now you may say, okay great, so when I feel symptoms in my body, I can just ignore them and not go to the doctor. No, that's not what we're saying here. Faith isn't the denial of symptoms or something going on in the body. It's an indicator of what to target your words to and attach your faith to. If it's high blood pressure, you declare over your body, thank you Jesus that my high blood pressure is normalizing in Jesus' name. I see my body healed. I see the doctor's report that says I no longer have high blood pressure.

Faith-filled words release healing power in your body. Proverbs 18:21 (NASB) tells us, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Your words matter. They are seeds that produce after their kind. Speak life over your body. Speak healing over your mind. Speak peace into your atmosphere. Say it until you believe it, then say it because you believe it. Let your mouth agree with what Heaven says. Keep your confession aligned with the Word, and you will see the fruit it promises. Healing is not a fantasy or a dream. It's the covenant right of every child of God. And it belongs to you.

Jesus consistently responded to faith. Again and again, He said, "Your faith has made you well." In Luke 8:48 (NLT), Jesus tells the woman, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." The same faith that saved you is the same faith that heals you. It's a response to confident belief. Even faith the size of a mustard seed moves mountains (Matthew 17:20). What you believe about Jesus determines what you will receive from Him. He hasn't changed. You'll see this scripture repeated a lot this week– He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8 NASB). If He responded to faith then, He responds to faith now.

Reflection

Is there an area where you've stopped believing because symptoms remained? How can you reignite faith in that area?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You that healing is mine through faith in You. Help me to see myself the way You see me: whole, restored, and made new. Even when symptoms try to speak louder, I choose to listen to Your Word. I align my words with Your truth and declare that by Your stripes, I am healed. Strengthen my faith to believe before I see, to confess what You've promised, even when my body feels otherwise. Let my mouth agree with Heaven. Amidst what I feel in my body, I see myself healed in Jesus' name. I trust that You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And just as You responded to faith then, You'll respond to mine now. In Your name I pray, amen.

Dive Deeper

Hebrews 11:1

Wholeness Is the Promise

Scripture: John 5:6 KJV When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Devotional

Jesus is not just interested in treating your symptoms—He wants you whole. Wholeness means nothing missing, nothing broken, total restoration—body, soul, and spirit. In John 5:6 (KJV), Jesus asked the man at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He didn't ask if the man wanted to feel better; He asked if he wanted to be restored. Jesus didn't come to offer partial healing; He came to restore what was lost. This surpasses just your physical healing– it includes your peace, your hope, and your purpose. Isaiah 53:4-5 (AMP) says He carried your sorrows and pains. His mission was not only forgiveness, but complete healing. When Jesus touches you, He doesn't just make things better—He makes them new. Your healing is not just about what you no longer feel; it's about who you fully become. He is far more interested in healing the whole of you, including the root of what caused the symptom in the first place, rather than just taking care of the symptom. If you are pruning a weed in your yard and you don't get the root, it's just going to keep growing back. Sometimes quicker and larger than before. Jesus desires to heal the whole of you.

Sometimes healing is a journey, not a moment. There are times when we must walk out our healing in faith, trusting that God is working behind the scenes. The blind man in Mark 8:25 (NLT) wasn't fully healed until Jesus touched him a second time. "Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly." See, the enemy wants you to give up after you don't see it instantly. Sometimes the first touch brings clarity and stirs your faith to believe for the second. Don't let delay deceive you into doubt. Just because it's taking time doesn't mean it's not happening. Your faith must be bigger than your symptoms.

Declare today that healing is taking place in your body. The healing power of God is flowing through your body from the top of your head to the soles of your feet– whole and complete, lacking nothing. You were designed to be whole. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NASB) says, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept complete." That's His will for you. Not partial peace, not partial healing—but completeness. There was a time in my life when I was believing God for healing in my own body, and I saw it partway, but there were still symptoms that were still present. I sensed in the stillness of God's presence, Him asking me the question, "When in the bible did I ever heal partway?" Reject anything less than wholeness. Speak wholeness over every area of your life. Let your mind be at rest, your body restored, and your heart encouraged. Jesus paid for it all. And if He paid for it, you have every right to receive it.

Reflection

Are there areas in your life where you've been asking God to treat a symptom, but He's waiting for you to believe for full restoration—mind, body, and spirit? What would it look like to agree with Him for complete wholeness today?

Prayer

God, I thank You that You didn't come just to treat my symptoms. You came to make me whole. Nothing missing, nothing broken. You see every part of me (body, soul, and spirit), and You care about it all. I believe that You are restoring what has been lost, healing what has been hurting, and making new what has been broken. Help me to trust You in the process, even when healing takes time. Strengthen my faith to believe for the full picture, not just relief, but complete restoration. I receive the wholeness You paid for, and I declare it over my life today. In Your name, amen.

Dive Deeper

John 10:10 (AMP)
"The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]."
-Jesus didn't come to give partial relief. He came to bring total, abundant life in every area.

Jeremiah 30:17 (NASB)
"For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds,' declares the Lord."
-His healing restores what has been wounded—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Psalm 147:3 (NLT)
"He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."
-Healing isn't limited to the physical; God mends the soul and binds up unseen pain.

Mark 5:34 (NASB)
"And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be cured of your disease.'"
-This word "well" also implies "made whole" in Greek—total restoration, not just symptom relief.

Isaiah 61:1-3 (AMP)
"He has sent Me to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted... to give them beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning..."
-Jesus came to restore the deepest parts of your identity, not just physical health.

Luke 17:19 (NASB)
"And He said to him, 'Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.'"
-The one leper who returned to thank Jesus was not just cleansed—he was made whole.

THURSDAY

Healing Through the Word

Scripture: Proverbs 4:20-22

Devotional

The Word of God is not just truth—it moves healing through your body. It is healing in spoken form. It is strength to your bones, peace to your mind, and life to your spirit. Proverbs 4:20-22 (NLT) makes it clear: the Word brings healing to your whole body, not just some of it. That means every organ, every system, every symptom, every diagnosis. God's Word is alive and powerful—when spoken, believed, and acted upon, it cannot fail. Isaiah 55:11 (AMP) says His Word does not return void, but accomplishes what He pleases and succeeds where He sends it. The same voice that formed the universe now speaks healing into you. When you align your mouth with His Word, you administer supernatural life into every part of you. You don't need a medical degree to activate what Heaven already released—you need faith to speak it out. Let the Word be your foundation, and let every doctor's report, symptom, or fear bow to the truth you declare.

Healing is a promise, but it must be possessed. Just like the Israelites were given the Promised Land but still had to go in and take it, your healing is available, but it requires active faith to receive. 1 Peter 2:24 (NASB) states, "By His wounds you were healed." That's past tense, showing us that it's already done. Jesus didn't leave your healing hanging in the balance. The work was completed at the cross. Now the ball is in your court—to believe, to speak, to stand, and to take what has been rightfully given to you. The Word is your weapon. Feed on it daily. Let it strengthen your inner man. As your spirit is built up, your body comes into alignment with the authority of God's Word. Keep pressing. Don't let delay become discouragement. Keep declaring the Word over your life, and let truth speak louder than every whisper of fear or doubt.

You cannot afford to neglect the Word when you're believing for healing. It's not a suggestion. It's your lifeline. Romans 10:17 (KJV) reminds us, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If faith is the vehicle that moves your healing forward, then the Word is the fuel. What are you fueling your spirit with? Guard what enters your ears, heart, and mind. This is critical. Turn off voices that contradict God's truth. Fill your home with Scripture. Let your own voice speak out the promises of healing and wholeness. Speak it aloud until your mind catches up with your spirit. Speak it until pain begins to bow. Speak it because the Word works. Your miracle is voice-activated. Release the Word, and watch healing flow—spirit, soul, and body—just as God intended.

Reflection

Have I allowed symptoms or past disappointments to speak louder than God's Word and what step can I take today to realign my faith with what He has already promised?

Prayer

God, thank You that Your Word is not only truth—it is healing, strength, and life to every part of me. Help me to speak Your promises more than the pain, more than the diagnosis, more than the doubt. Let my voice align with Yours as I speak Your Word over my body. Strengthen my faith as I hear it, believe it, and act on it. I take hold of the healing You've already provided, and I declare: Your Word is final. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

Isaiah 55:11 (AMP)
"So will My word be which goes out of My mouth; it will not return to Me void... without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the purpose for which I sent it."

Psalm 107:20 (NASB)
"He sent His word and healed them, and saved them from their destruction."

FRIDAY

The Power of Thanksgiving

Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7

Devotional

Thanksgiving isn't just a response to healing after you see it take place—it's a pathway to it. If I were to ask you to bring a cake to the birthday party, I am going to thank you in advance. Why? Because I have faith that you will do what you said you would do and bring the cake to the party. When you thank God in advance, you show that you trust His Word more than your symptoms. Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT) says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." Gratitude stirs your spirit and strengthens your faith. It aligns your focus with what God has already promised. When you thank Him for healing, even before you see it manifested in the natural, you are declaring that His Word is true, regardless of what you feel. Thanksgiving is a weapon. It silences doubt, disarms fear, and invites peace. The enemy loses power when you praise God in the middle of your pain. Thanksgiving is the pathway for your miracle to follow.

Jesus modeled this in His ministry. Before multiplying the loaves and fish, He gave thanks (John 6:11). Before raising Lazarus, He thanked the Father (John 11:41). There is something supernatural that happens when you thank God before the miracle appears. Thanksgiving is not denial that you haven't seen it in the natural yet—it's faith in action. It's saying, "God, I trust You. I believe You. I know You are working, even if I don't see it yet." Hebrews 13:15 (NASB) says, "Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name." Sometimes that praise feels like a sacrifice. But it is a fragrance that reaches Heaven and moves the heart of God. Praise is the sound of victory even before the battle is over. Praise gets the attention of your Heavenly Father.

So don't wait to see the manifestation to lift your hands. Thank Him now—for what you don't yet see, for the healing that's already been paid for, and for the faith to receive it. Thank Him that He is not finished with your story, and that He is faithful to complete what He started (Philippians 1:6). Speak it boldly—let your ears hear your own voice declare the goodness and reliability of your God. Thanksgiving breaks off the heaviness of waiting. It repositions your heart from striving and wondering to trusting. It reminds your soul that the victory was already won at the cross. Healing is yours, and gratitude opens the door to walk in it. So today, let thanksgiving be more than just something you say, but let it be your declaration of authority, your banner of faith, and your invitation for Heaven to invade your circumstance and your body.

Reflection

Can you think of an area in your life where you've been waiting to see a breakthrough? What would it look like to shift from waiting in worry to thanking God in faith even before you see the results?

Prayer

God, I thank You—not just for what I've seen You do, but for what You've promised and are still bringing to pass. Even when I don't feel it yet, I trust You. I choose praise over panic and gratitude over doubt. Let thanksgiving rise from my heart as a declaration of faith. I believe You are healing me, working in me, and finishing what You started. You are faithful, and I give You thanks in advance. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dive Deeper

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

SATURDAY

Compassion that Heals

Scripture: Mark 1:41, Matthew 9:27

Devotional

Jesus doesn't heal out of obligation; He heals out of compassion. His miracles were never sterile procedures performed in a clinical setting; they were deeply personal encounters, covered in mercy and driven by love. Mark 1:41 (NLT) shows us His heart so clearly: "Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be healed!'" Jesus is not hesitant or indifferent. He doesn't need to be convinced. His compassion moved Him then, and it moves Him now. He sees you, not just your condition. He sees your late nights, your hidden tears, your brave face in the middle of the pain—and He is not distant from any of it. You're not just a case number, a prayer request, or a diagnosis. You are His creation, His workmanship, and His heart beats with mercy toward you. Healing flows not because you've earned it, but because you are loved beyond measure.

One of the cruelest lies the enemy whispers is that healing is for others, but not for you. He drags up your past, your shortcomings, and your failures, telling you that you don't qualify. But compassion doesn't require perfection, just proximity. Jesus isn't waiting for you to clean yourself up or get your act together before He responds. Like the blind men in Matthew 9:27 (NASB) who cried out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David," you can come boldly—just as you are. Jesus didn't rebuke their desperation; He rewarded their faith. Hebrews 4:15-16 tells us that we have a High Priest who understands our weakness, and we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace. That means the real you—not the filtered version, not the one who pretends everything's fine. Come messy. Come hurting. Come with tears in your eyes and hope in your heart. His mercy is still fresh. His power has not diminished.

I once met a girl at my apartment complex who had rescued a dog from the side of the highway. He was skinny, jumpy, and barked at everyone—understandably terrified from all he'd endured. She trained him daily, walking with him with patience, helping him learn to trust again. I nicknamed him Barkey because, well, he barked constantly. And yet, I couldn't help but think—if she could be that patient, how much more is our Father with us? Barkey had been left alone, abandoned, and unsure of his future. And still, someone stopped for him. That's how God loves us. No matter what you've been through, how long you've been hurting, or where you come from—His compassion finds you. God doesn't just heal the injury; He heals the history behind it. He restores the places in us that have been traumatized, overlooked, or dismissed. He rescues, He restores, and He remains. He is a compassionate, healing Father—and He's not done with you yet.

Reflection

Are there parts of your story that have made you feel disqualified from healing or restoration? How might your faith shift if you truly believed that Jesus sees you with compassion, not condemnation?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You that You are not distant or indifferent to my pain. You are moved with compassion, and You see me fully. You see my story, my wounds, my questions. I don't have to earn Your healing or prove myself worthy. You are willing. Help me rest in that truth today. Let Your love quiet every doubt and remind me that I am not forgotten. You are the same yesterday, today, and forever—and I receive Your mercy with open hands. Amen.

Dive Deeper

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NLT)

"The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning."

Sermon Notes

WEEK 4

JESUS CARES

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

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Wednesday	Jesus Cares About Your Pressure	28
Thursday	Jesus Cares About Your Practical Needs	29
Friday	Jesus Cares About Your People	30
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PLAYLIST FOR THE WEEK:

1. Jesus Forever - **Red Worship, Lizzie Morgan**
2. You Don't Miss A Thing - **Bethel Music, Amanda Cook**
3. When I Lock Eyes with You/Your Love Is Extravagant - **Harvest**
4. Beautiful Jesus - **Passion Chidima**
5. How I Love You - **Passion, Christy Nockels**
6. Names - **Elevation, Maverick City Music**
7. No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus - **Steffany Gretzinger**
8. Defender - **UPPERROOM, Abbie Gamboa**

Jesus Cares for You

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7

Devotional

"I would like to personally invite you…" (to buy a ticket to my event)
–signed, Nationally known speaker

Ever get one of these emails? Or a thousand? Don't lie and say they don't catch your eye! As absurd as personal communication from a celebrity seems, research backs them up– studies show that including "you, your and yours" in a subject line increases clicks by up to 30%! So for one millisecond, they tapped into your deep desire to be seen and loved. Then your head took over, and you realized there's no way that that person would send an invitation like that to Y-O-U.

But what happens when the invitation doesn't come from a celebrity, but from the Creator of the universe? Like the invitation in 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

When you read that, does your hope last longer than a millisecond? Could it actually be true that the mighty God of the universe actually SEES YOU? AND could He not only see everything about you but still LOVE YOU and desire to meet YOUR need? Y-O-U?

David, in Psalm 139, captures this mind-blowing truth well– "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain it"(v6). David was proclaiming the Gospel here even before he fully understood it. That kind of all-seeing and all-loving love is only found in heaven, where we could never attain it with our minds or with our best efforts. That's why love Himself had to come down to us.

Jesus IS that high, lofty love, descended down to PROVE IT to you. He displayed that love to an outcast woman at a well in John 4. Proof that He wants to meet you at your lowest place. To a grieving widow in Luke 7:11. Proof that He feels the pain you're feeling and wants to heal you with resurrection power. To 12 teenage boys he rescued from purposeless lives in the Gospels. Proof that He cares about you discovering your designed path and helping you walk it out.

Throughout this week, we'll talk about Jesus' care and provision for you. I want to challenge you to be humble. Humility receives. Pride wants to earn. Your mind could interrupt after a millisecond and say, "you don't deserve that kind of love. You haven't EARNED it." But I want you to respond back– "No, but Jesus did!"

Jesus cares for you, friend. He cares about your needs, big and small. As we'll see through the rest of the week, He cares about your pain, your pressures, your practical needs, and your people. And with His care comes great provision for you. Yes, Y-O-U.

Reflection

If you really believed Jesus cared for every detail of your life, how would that change how you carry today?

Prayer

God, I don't want to push back against your love. I want to receive all that you have for me. I humble myself before you and receive your care for me. Thank you for loving me beyond what I deserve. Thank you for sending Jesus to prove your love for me. Holy Spirit, continue to give my heart eyes to see what my mind wants to resist. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read and meditate on Psalm 139
Read the stories of the woman at the well (John 4) and the widow of Nain (Luke 7). Notice how closely Jesus draws near to love them personally. Place yourself in their shoes and imagine what it was like for them to receive Jesus' love and provision.

Jesus Cares About Your Pain

Scripture: Mark 5:25-34; Luke 4:18

Devotional

Has pain ever had a domino effect in your life? One thing started to go wrong–maybe in your body, your finances, your relationships–then that thing affected another thing, which affected another thing. Pretty soon, you're like the toddler who tried to pull one small toy out of the closet, but it caused the whole pile to come tumbling down... Now you're just sitting in a big mess, buried in misery and broken Lego sets. And you don't want anybody to see that mess, which causes the domino of your community to crumble, which leaves you lonely in it all. Pretty soon, you're wondering if God Himself really sees you...Pain.

In Mark 5, we see a woman in a mess of pain. The pain began with a blood condition. That condition made her unclean, which meant no one could touch her. Down goes the domino of relationships. Desperate for help, she spent all she had on doctors, who only caused her to "suffer" more. Now she was broke, alone, and hurting in every way. A mess of pain.

Then she heard about Jesus–the One who seemed to specialize in healing, especially broken people. Commentators say it was probably a mixture of faith and superstition that caused her to place her hope in touching Jesus' clothes. She didn't want to be seen. Her uncleanness kept her away from others—so did her shame. So if she could just somehow sneak in and swipe that healing unnoticed, then she could work on digging out of the mess of pain and put her life back together.

What she didn't know, however, was that Jesus cared. Jesus didn't just care about her broken body, but about her broken life.

"Who touched me?" He said as He turned to lock eyes with her. Caught in His gaze (oh Lord, haste the day...), the woman felt seen like never before. She responded by falling down at His feet and "telling Him the whole truth." One gaze from Jesus lifted every ounce of shame. She had already received what she came for, but Jesus was about to give her so much more.

"Daughter." This woman had been separated from all human contact. She belonged to no one. But in an instant, she's claimed by Love Himself.

"Your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."She had hoped Jesus's clothes would heal her body, but it was Jesus' love that made her whole. He not only made her whole in her body and soul, but He pronounced her wellness in front of everyone, restoring her back to the community. Jesus saw her. Jesus cared. Jesus made her whole.

Jesus wants to do the same for you. What's the condition that has caused a mess in your life? Have you turned to the "doctors" of entertainment, alcohol, success, and lust to find a cure? Have you let it isolate you from people God's placed in your life to help you? Do you know that Jesus wants to lock eyes with you? As you do, He wants to hear you pour out the WHOLE truth, holding nothing back. You will feel exposed and scared. But He's not trying to hurt you, He's trying to heal you.

Tired of trying to clean up your mess of pain on your own, piece by piece? Have you heard of the Jesus who heals and restores? He's passing your way today. Go touch Him.

Reflection

What pain have you been trying to hide or heal on your own, and what would it look like to bring the whole truth of it to Jesus today?

Prayer

Jesus, I'm making my way through the crowd to you. I don't just want to bump into You. I want to touch You. I know You alone have the power to heal my pain and clean up my mess. I've held on to so much for so long, and as much as it hurts to expose it, I want to pour out the whole truth to You. I believe you see me and love me. You don't shame me. You only want to restore and heal me. I receive your love. I receive your wholeness right now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Pete Scazzero
Read Experience Jesus. Really. by John Eldridge

Jesus Cares About Your Pressure

Scripture: John 2:1-11

Devotional

Can somebody please invent something that will help me recover that last bit of toothpaste in the tube??? After all, WE'VE PUT A MAN ON THE MOON! But seriously, you feel me, right? You know there's more in there, so if you can just squeeze or press hard enough, you'll get just enough minty gel for one more brush.

Ever feel like life is doing that to you?
Perform! Provide! Protect! Produce!
Work harder! Longer!
Buy one more! You need the new one!
Your kids need shoes (again)!
Your wife is unhappy!
Your husband won't listen!

Each day you wake up to the squeeze. Expectations from everyone and everything rolled the joy out of you a long time ago. Do you have anything left? Can you ever get the toothpaste, the life, back in the tube?

Pause and ask yourself, where is Jesus in all of this? Do you feel pressure from Him too? To be perfect and do everything right? If you do, let me take you to an unexpected place–a party.

In John 2, Jesus began His miracle ministry at a wedding, of all places.Weddings were the biggest party around in those days, and there was great pressure on the host to make sure everyone had a great time, which, in those days, meant–buy plenty of wine. Well, whether or not the couple couldn't afford it or somebody forgot to RSVP, all the disciples and they drank too much (I blame Peter)–either way, they ran out of wine.

This may not seem like a big deal to you, with abundant wine being a Costco trip away. But in those days, the host was not only facing permanent social disgrace, but in some instances, he could've faced legal troubles. The pressure of the moment must have crushed him. Goodbye, wedding bliss. Hello, public shame. Thankfully, somebody remembered to invite Jesus to the party.

Jesus faced His own pressure here. Not only did He have the stormclouds of suffering on the cross looming, but here was His own mother putting pressure on Him to display His miraculous abilities. I love how He handled this–He responded to her with "Woman" instead of "Mother," which communicated a shift in the relationship, not disrespect. Jesus was saying that He only acted out of response to His Father, not pressure from man.

He must've heard from His Father, because He gave the command to fill the water pots used for purification (a powerful lesson in itself!). The servants, facing their own pressure from their master, evidently placed all their trust in Jesus because they filled the pots to the brim, expecting big things (again, another lesson!). They drew some out, took it to the master, and he gave it two thumbs up–party back on!

Commentators say that the wine was so good and there was so much of it left over, that the couple would've been able to sell it after the wedding for quite a profit! Because they invited Jesus to the wedding, they went from being broke and ashamed to blessed and promoted.

Have you invited Jesus into your pressure? Or have you shrugged it off as too small for God to care about, deciding you can handle it on your own? How's that working out for you?

No, if Jesus cares about wine at a wedding, then He cares about...
Food on your table.
Shoes on your kids' feet.
Your job responsibilities.
Your marriage tensions.
Y-O-U

But you have to send Him an invitation. And then, you have to do exactly what He says. Stop carrying weight you were never meant to carry. Put the pressure on Jesus today. He carries because He cares...for YOU.

Reflection

Where in your life do you feel the most pressure right now—and have you truly invited Jesus into it, or are you still trying to handle it alone?

Prayer

Father, I realize now that I've let life squeeze the life out of me. The voices of expectation have been so loud that I haven't stopped to hear YOUR voice. Please forgive me. By your grace, I cast all of my cares upon you right now, in Jesus' name. I take a deep breath in You, breathing out anxiety and breathing in Your peace. Thank you for not putting pressure on me. Thank you for being my safe refuge that I can run to, trusting that you're fighting my battles as I rest in You. Teach me how to not just visit this peace, but to live in it, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read these Psalms that deal with pressure:
Psalm 55:22
Psalm 61:1-2
Psalm 62:5-6
Psalm 46:1-3
Psalm 34:17-19

THURSDAY

Jesus Cares About Your Practical Needs

Scripture: Matthew 17:24-27

Devotional

Some of the greatest battles between fear and faith happen in the driveway, from the mailbox to the front door.

As you sort through the stack of mail, you see the bill that you'd forgotten about. Then there's another letter from the credit card company. Wait, the power bill was how much? Before you even make it through the front door, your mind has already calculated how short you might be this month. Maybe you see your devotional guide and remember that yesterday you prayed to cast your care. You say another prayer to ease the anxiety.

But does Jesus just want to treat the anxiety, or does He actually care about helping you pay the bills??

Great question. Peter had the same question in Matthew 17:24-27, when the temple leaders approached him about whether or not Jesus would pay the temple tax required of every Jewish man. Peter gave a short "yes..?" as if to suggest he might want to double-check that answer with Jesus (and possibly because he was nervous about paying that tax himself).

Peter must've felt like he was walking up his own driveway of dread, perhaps wondering how Jesus would respond. Would He be angry and say, "Why would you bother me with such a worldly thing like taxes?" Or, "I'm the Son of God! Those matters are beneath me."

Instead, Jesus met him at the door and responded to Peter's thoughts before he could even speak. Jesus's explanation showed that he cared so much that He would pay the tax even though He wasn't obligated to. Then He turned His care into action, giving Peter a supernatural but surprisingly specific plan: catch a fish with a hook.

Now, the hook part might seem odd, but remember, Peter was a professional fisherman, and professional fishermen used nets. Peter would've had to humble himself to pick up a pole and catch the single fish that had the tax-paying coin in its mouth. Don't miss the power-packed messages in this simple story.

First, Jesus cares about meeting your practical needs. He knows about the unexpected bill before you do. They don't scare Him. You represent Him well and run your race better when you are fully supplied and are not buried in debt. Second, Jesus has a plan to help you meet those needs. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). With His glory comes provision (Philippians 4:19). Third, and this is often missed–that plan often involves your humility and work! Many times, people get themselves in debt out of ignorance, but they stay in debt because of pride. They won't ask for help. They won't seek counsel. Or they won't go out and work a job that seems beneath them. Then they ask God for a miracle that would solve the external problem, but not the internal one.

Jesus was also showing that part of the provision of God's hands involves putting ability in your hands! God gave Adam a job in the garden because there is dignity in work.

Sometimes God's provision shows up as an idea, a skill, or a season of sweat. But the harvest? Totally worth it.

So invite Jesus into that walk up the driveway. You may be surprised and find that He already has a plan to show you before you even get the words out. If you look closely enough, you may see how He's already been trying to prepare you for that need even before it came due. He sees. He cares. For Y-O-U.

Reflection

What practical needs are you facing right now, and what step of humility or obedience might Jesus be prompting you to take?

Prayer

Father, I know You see the needs in my life. I know You care about providing for me. I believe that You have a plan to lead me into Your provision. I humble myself before you, ready to take whatever step you're asking me to take. Thank you for giving me supernatural wisdom and ideas for how to meet this need. By your grace, I'll take one step after another, walking in the direction you give me. Thank you for being my provider, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Philippians 4:19
Matthew 6:31-33
Psalm 37:25

FRIDAY

Jesus Cares About Your People

Scripture: Mark 5:21-43

Devotional

Holding your first newborn child is a life-altering experience.In your arms is a living key that unlocks rooms of love in your heart that you didn't know existed. Parental instincts kick in, and you know that you'll do whatever it takes to protect and care for this precious life. Jairus ran through the streets with this instinctive love coursing through his veins, desperate to find Jesus–the only One who could save his daughter. In order to get to that point, he must have wrestled with the same question that you might have felt with people you love who are going through difficult times– does God care about _____ as much as I do?

After all, you would do anything for your father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent, friend, etc.--they're your people! Your heart breaks for what they're going through. Maybe it feels like nobody understands, especially not to the point where they're willing to go out of their way to help. And maybe, if you're honest, you even start to question that about God. Does He REALLY care to the point of helping? You know the correct, churchy answer is "yes," but do you really BELIEVE that deep down in your heart?

Jairus did believe. We see his faith in action in 4 ways:
· He came to Jesus–we must put ourselves in the presence of Jesus.
· He fell at His feet–we must sincerely humble ourselves before Him.
· He begged Him earnestly–we must bring our requests fervently.
· He declared with his mouth–we must speak words of faith, not fear.

He did all the right things. Checked all the boxes. The miracle is on the way. But then a curveball...With the clock ticking on Jairus' dying daughter, Jesus takes a detour to minister to someone else.

Have you ever felt like you worked hard to get in a place of faith, but then let anxiety creep in when the answer didn't come right away? We don't see Jairus get frustrated, which must have meant that he trusted Jesus' heart as much as he trusted His hands. Then came a moment when Jairus realized that Jesus wasn't just randomly healing a woman–Jesus was building Jairus' faith.

When Jesus told the woman, “Daughter, your faith has made you well,” Jairus must have realized that Jesus didn’t just want to heal his daughter because he had gone through all the right motions. Jesus didn’t just want to heal Jairus’ daughter to prove He was God. He wanted to show something deeper—He’s not just a Healer. He’s a Father, too. And fathers care. Fathers want their kids well. And nobody cares more than Father God.

If He’s a Father and not just a healer, then you can TRUST Him! Even if there’s a delay, you can know that He is working. Even if the enemy comes and says (like Jairus’ servant), “It’s too late. Stop wasting God’s time with that,” you know that a Father has all the time in the world for His children. That includes Y-O-U.

So, for those hurting people in your life that need a miracle, settle in your heart that Jesus is the Healer, Restorer, Deliverer, and Provider. Then do what Jairus did at the beginning of the story–come to Jesus, humble yourself before Him, make your request known, then declare faith with your mouth. But also do what Jairus did in the middle and at the end of the story. Trust in Jesus’ heart as much as His hands. If there’s a waiting period, listen to what He might be speaking to you or doing around you. Don’t let any outside voices pull you into fear. Fear not. Only believe.

Stand in your place, intercessor–with one hand holding heaven and the other holding your people. Jesus did that for you. Now He’s with you, heart and hands, to do the same for others.

Reflection

Who in your life are you carrying before Jesus right now—and what would it look like to trust His heart in the waiting, not just His hands?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for caring about my people even more than I care about them. Thank you that I get to follow in your footsteps and take on the role of intercessor. I come to you now and humble myself before You, the only One who has the answers. I make my request known to You. Now, by your grace and Spirit, I speak out a confession of faith over my loved one right now. Take some time with this. Listen and let the Holy Spirit give you these words. I thank you for showing me all of the steps to take and strengthening me in the waiting. Thank you for loving and caring for me and my loved ones. May you be glorified in all of this, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

Read about people interceding for loved ones:
· The Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13)
· Four Friends & the Paralyzed Man (Mark 2:1–12)
· Mary & Martha Grieving for Lazarus (John 11)

FRIDAY

Jesus Cares About Your Passion

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Devotional

Have you ever walked away from something and said, “What just happened???”
You start thinking through every detail of how everything was set up perfectly for a certain outcome. All of a sudden, this goes wrong and that goes wrong, and now you’re left picking up the broken pieces. Maybe that roller coaster was a spiritual one, where you had so much zeal for God, but then you hit some rocky spots. Now you feel disappointed, mostly in yourself and maybe even God.

In those moments, do you ask Jesus what He thinks? Or do you assume that He’s looking at you from afar with a cosmically disappointed frown while slowly shaking His head? Is He distant? Or is He near?

At Jesus' greatest moment, the climax of all history, the glorious resurrection of our Savior, when that stone rolled away and Jesus walked out, He saw...nobody. No waiting party. Not one of the disciples was there to say, "Jesus! We knew it! You hinted at this and we just knew you would come out of that grave!" No, Jesus' followers didn't stay with Him at His lowest point. But He came to find them at theirs.

On Resurrection Day, two disciples were walking back to a village called Emmaus, their heads hanging in sadness. Jerusalem was behind them—and so were their broken dreams and the hope that the Messiah would deliver them from Rome. They were replaying every detail, wondering what went wrong. And since misery loves company, they struck up a conversation with another Traveler who came up beside them. Seeing the two men were downcast, the Traveler began asking questions about their sorrow.

Well, apparently, this Traveler is an expert on Messianic prophecy (hmm...) and begins to show them every Old Testament place that speaks of the suffering the Savior would go through. No response. Crickets from the two disciples. They're taking it all in. The next thing we see from them is that they beg the Traveler not to go. "Abide with us," they say (hmm...I see you John 15). Their minds were reeling, their hearts were burning (v32), but it wasn't until they shared a meal together that the pieces came together. The Traveler took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. At that moment, they "knew Him," not as the Traveler, but as Jesus the risen Savior. And then He vanished! (Mic drop)

Maybe you know all of the right verses about why you shouldn't be disappointed. You know about "the joy of the Lord is your strength"(Neh 8:10), "count it all joy" (James 1:2), "All things work together for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28)...But have you sat down to commune with Him lately? Have you implored Him not to leave and invited Him into your home? Your quiet place? Your car?

Could it be that Jesus is right there and you don't even know it? Could it be that Jesus wants to ask you some questions and invite you to process some things with Him? Is it possible that even though He knows everything you're going to say, that there's still a benefit in you saying it? Could it be that you've been feeding on the Word but you've overlooked communion with Jesus, the Bread of Life? I don't say that to shame. I say that to give you hope in your shame.

Here's the bottom line: Jesus wants to meet you in your lowest place. He cares about your joy. He cares about your peace. He cares about your hope. If He died for you in your lowest place of sin, as His enemy, won't He visit you in your lowest place of disappointment, as His child?

So abide with Him today. Let Him heal your broken heart. Get that joy back. Get that hope back.

Wake up, oh sleeper! He's alive, and you have people to tell!

Reflection

Where in your life have you lost hope, and could it be that Jesus is already walking with you there, waiting to reveal Himself again? What is He saying to you right now? What are you seeing of Him in this moment?

Prayer

Jesus, forgive me for when I've had my head down in disappointment instead of looking up to see You. You've been there all along. Thank you for coming after me. Thank you for caring about my joy. I'm leaving my depression behind to come abide with You. I ask you to restore hope, joy, and passion in me. I'm going back to Jerusalem–back to my place of purpose! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dive Deeper

· Read about Peter's restoration in John 21. Jesus came after him in his place of shame!
· Pray Ephesians 1:17-23 and 3:14-21 over yourself, asking God to give you eyes to see Jesus.

Sermon Notes

WORD OF LIFE