

MARCH

30 Days of Prayer

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HOW TO USE **THIS PRAYER GUIDE**

These devotions with prayer prompts are intended to assist our church family as we seek Christ personally in our daily time with Him and corporately during our monthly family prayer service. It is vital that we pursue the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership.

**DEFINED BY THE WORD
DEVOTED TO PRAYER
DEPENDANT ON THE SPIRIT**

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Unified in their Decisions

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

The anointing of David in 1 Samuel 16 is an incredible passage. God told Samuel that He would provide a king for Israel Himself among Jesse’s sons. Samuel was to anoint the one God named to Him. Eliab was first, and Samuel was certain that he was God’s choice. God’s response is recorded in verse 7 above, and seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel without being chosen. David, the youngest son, was tending sheep when Samuel told Jesse to send for him. Samuel then anointed David as God’s chosen future king. This would have a resounding impact on the rest of Scripture and history, helping prepare the way for Christ.

As our Pastor Search Committee serves diligently to identify our Vision and Preaching Pastor, they must look beyond the tangible and temporal to discern the heart for the eternal. Certainly things like ministry experience, education, and communication skills are important, but his heart for the Lord and people is of utmost importance.

The choice of our new Pastor will have profound impact on our church for many years to come. Just as God saw David’s heart, He sees the heart of our next Pastor. He has already identified and chosen him. We are very grateful for the Pastor Search Committee as they strive to see as God sees, joining together in unity to identify who God has chosen.

Questions to Consider:

Why is it important to see people the way God does? How can you grow in wisdom and discernment?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our Pastor Search Committee as they complete the search process and make their recommendations to the elder body.
- Pray for our church family to be unified in calling the man God has chosen to lead our congregation.
- Pray 1 Corinthians 2:12 *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*

A Vision for Our Church

Key Scripture: *Matthew 16:15-18 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

In the above passage, Jesus asks what is likely the most crucial question in all of Scripture: “Who do you say that I am?” This question cuts through experience, education, and opinion to get at the heart of what we believe about Jesus. Peter’s honest answer that Jesus is the Christ and God’s Son was revealed by God through faith. It is this confession of Jesus that provides the vision and mission for the church.

Peter’s proclamation is the rock, or foundation, that the church is built upon. This foundation is the sinless life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God’s Son and our Savior. It shapes and focuses the vision and mission of the church with laser-like precision to preach the Gospel and make disciples across the globe. We glorify Him as a church through obedience to His commands, by loving Him, and by loving others.

The new title of Vision and Preaching Pastor emphasizes the importance placed on vision for our church moving forward. God’s unchangeable mission for our church is to bring glory to Him by proclaiming and teaching Christ. Our new pastor will have a clear vision of the why, who, what, and how, helping to lead us as we fulfill God’s mission.

Questions to Consider:

How would you answer Jesus’ question: “But who do you say that I am?” Why is vision important for us as a church? Do you understand God’s vision and mission?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our church to continue to follow God’s vision and mission.
- Pray for our new Pastor to have a clear vision for the why, who, what, and how of following God’s vision and mission.
- Pray for our church family to be of one heart, mind, and accord in glorifying God.

Defined by The Word

Key Scripture: *2 Timothy 4:2* “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

We are praying that our next Pastor is defined by God's Word, meaning he is Bible-centered, that everything he does and says is from the Word and no other place. When Paul was instructing Timothy on the attributes of a Pastor, he spoke of the characteristics of Christ. When Paul instructed Timothy on what a Pastor does, he said that he was to “preach the Word.”

It is the Word that the church needs - the inerrant, infallible, all-sufficient Word of God. The church of Jesus Christ should desire this above all else. It should be our only source of ultimate truth that teaches us everything we need to know for salvation and living a life that is pleasing to God.

Our next Pastor must be prepared to preach the Word “in season and out of season,” when it is convenient and when it is not, when he will be loved for it and when he will be persecuted for it. For the Christian, this commitment to the Word by our Pastor will allow the Word to “correct” us when our thinking is wrong; the Word will “rebuke” us when we are walking in disobedience and the Word will encourage us as we prepare for the return of our Lord.

Pray our new Pastor will do this in a Christ-like way with great patience and careful instruction.

Questions to Consider:

Is your life centered in the Word of God? Are you open for the Word to correct, rebuke and encourage you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the elders would be unified as they interview and assess the candidate.
- Pray that Richland Creek Community Church will be a church that desires to be corrected, rebuked and encouraged by the preaching of the Word.

The Transition

Key Scripture: Acts 13:1-3 “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

Ministry transition can be the very definition of bittersweet. It is hard to leave what you’ve known and those you love, but there is great excitement for what God has in store and the new relationships that will be formed. This transition can be handled graciously and go quite smoothly, or can be done carelessly and cause unnecessary damage.

In the above passage from Acts 13, we see a healthy and glorifying ministry transition. God called Barnabas and Saul out of the church at Antioch for a new and specific purpose. The church responded by praying and fasting, followed by an anointing and acknowledgment of God’s call. They sent them away gladly, and ministry at the church continued while Barnabas and Saul followed their calling. There was no contention, even though some may have preferred that they stay. We hope and pray for this type of transition for our Vision and Preaching Pastor.

Questions to Consider:

Why is this transition so important? How can you help prepare for our new Vision and Preaching Pastor?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our new Pastor to handle this transition in a godly manner. Pray for his current congregation to send him out well.
- Pray for comfort and understanding among his current congregation, that they see God’s mission for him, and for their church.
- Pray for his family to handle this season well, that their hearts would be comforted and strengthened.
- Read and Meditate on Isaiah 43:18-19

God's Character

Key Scriptures: *1 John 4:8, "...God is love"; 1 John 1:5, "...God is light..."; John 4:24, "God is spirit..."; Psalm 119:68 "You are good..."*

This month we are looking at the attributes, or character traits, of God. As believers, we are called to be *"increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Colossians 1:10). To be sure, we cannot know God exhaustively, but we can know what He has told us about Himself. Scripture is the location of God's self-revelation; therefore, we can be sure what we know about God is true and *"profitable for training in righteousness"* (2 Timothy 3:16). While these attributes or character traits can be thought of as descriptions of God, we must proceed thoughtfully.

To be sure, when we talk about attributes of God we are thinking about who God is and what God is like. Knowing God is the single most important endeavor we can engage in. Yet, we must inspect our hearts and ask why we seek to increase in the knowledge of God? What's our goal? What will we do with this knowledge? The Psalmist in Psalm 119:10 would answer, *"With all my heart I have sought you."* So it should be with us. Our goal here is not to know about God (although that is helpful) but rather to know God intimately and personally so that we may love and enjoy Him forever.

Moreover, it is vital to remember God is not an assortment of attributes; rather, He is the embodiment of all these character traits simultaneously. Wayne Grudem explains, *"Each attribute is simply a way of describing one aspect of God's total character or being."* Furthermore, *"Every attribute of God also qualifies every other attribute."* Remembering these cautions will guard us from misunderstanding God's character.

Questions to Consider:

Do you understand the difference between knowing about God and knowing Him? Has your knowledge of God led to a growing love for God? Why or why not?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, help me increase in the knowledge of You so that I may love and enjoy You forever.

Communicable and Incommunicable

Key Scripture: *Genesis 1:26, “Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness...”*

People love to organize, classify, systematize, and standardize information. We have charts, graphs, software, and entire stores dedicated to organization. Understandably, organizing information makes processing and understanding it easier. Such is the case with the attributes of God. Over time, scholars have come up with varying classifications of God’s attributes that have helped Christians sort through the kinds of attributes we see in Scripture. For simplicity’s sake, one system of classification, perhaps the most well-known one, is presented here: communicable and incommunicable. This way of thinking about God’s attributes is helpful in that they aid us in understanding the ways God is like us and the ways God is not like us.

Let’s start with definitions. Communicable: those attributes that God shares with us. Humans exemplify these attributes—to some degree, but not in totality. For example, God is love (1 John 4:8), and we too can (and are called to) love. However, we do not love with the perfection, scope, or capacity with which God does. Incommunicable: those attributes that God does not share with us—attributes that are true of God alone. For example, God is omnipresent (*God is present at every point of space with His whole being, yet God acts differently in different places*), while humans are only present in one place at one time. To be sure, other attributes are not as clear cut, and some scholars view the classification of attributes (within the categories of communicable and incommunicable) differently. Still, this classification can be helpful as long as we realize it is not entirely precise.

Questions to Consider:

Can you see some attributes that God has shared with you? Why do you think God shared these attributes with us?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me reflect you well with all those around me.
- Let my life point others upward to the One who made and saved me.

Perspective and Balance with God's Attributes

Key Scripture: *Psalm 119:18, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."*

Over the next twenty-three days we will look at many of God's attributes. Before we move forward, it would be wise to consider two pitfalls in our learning.

We must be careful not to separate or detach these attributes from their context or the entire Bible. As with all Scripture, we must be diligent to handle God's Word rightly. That means viewing verses within context, as well as within the entirety of the canon. To cut off "Scripture from Scripture" results in misunderstanding and imbalance—another pitfall.

The definition of balance is "not out of proportion." Again, Grudem is helpful, "*When Scripture speaks about God's attributes, it never singles out one attribute of God as more important than all the rest.... Every attribute is completely true of God and is true of all of God's character.*" In other words, no attribute can diminish or eclipse another attribute. Yes and amen—God is love (1 John 4:8). But God is not solely love, nor is God more love than wrath. Another example: if we consider (or weigh) the attributes of God such as holiness, justice, or righteousness so heavily (like on a scale), we very well may disregard God's compassion, kindness, and mercy. That would present a God who rightly demands justice but has no mercy, kindness and compassion to save us. That is not a picture of God consistent with Scripture. Polarizing the attributes of God is catastrophic, for it presents a God who is not true. One last example of this grave error is the common saying, "God is a God of justice in the Old Testament, but a God of love in the New Testament." Truth be told, the God of the Old Testament is the same exact God of the New Testament.

Questions to Consider:

Have you favored one attribute over another? Which one? Why?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, give me understanding that I might know You rightly.

God is Love

Key Scriptures: *Ephesians 5:1-2, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”*

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

As these verses point out we are able to understand what love is by understanding who God is. Love is one of God’s most well-known attributes. Because love originates with God He is also most worthy of love. It is because of this that we start in discipleship by learning how to direct the love we have been given through salvation back to Him and to those around us. We are called to both love God and love others.

Love often is displayed in a very fleeting, conditional, worldly manner. To love someone is often wrapped up in temporary emotions. People base their love on the things someone else has done or not done for them, the conditions of life. However, as Christians we have the privilege to understand unconditional love through the sacrifice of our Savior! The Scriptures point us to the fact that when we remain in the love that God has shown us we are remaining in Him. When we fully understand God’s love, it gives us an understanding of how to love those around us. We are called to walk in love. This should be an overflow of the love God has given us. Just as Jesus showed us, this should be unconditional and sacrificial. We do not get to choose who is worthy of our love but rather should freely and graciously give it out as an example of Christ’s love for us.

Questions to Consider:

Have I accepted God’s unconditional love? Do I display unconditional love in my daily life? What must I work on to love God and love others well?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that you will walk in love daily.
- Pray that you can share God’s love with those around you through your words and actions.

God is Holy

Key Scripture: *Revelation 4:8, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."*

When John describes the throne room of God in Revelation chapter 4, he describes the four living creatures that never cease to say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is THE LORD GOD..." They stand in the presence of the Almighty God and can do nothing but cry out in praise and worship of a holy God. In Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up and exalted, and the train of His robe fills the temple and one Seraphim called out to the other and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

Oh, how I wish that we at Richland Creek would daily stand with the angels and cry out in worship to a holy God. That we would live our lives in the pursuit of all things holy. That we would forsake the things of this world and long for the moment when we enter into the presence of the holy God to worship Him forever.

God does not dwell with sin, and He does not allow sinful people to dwell with Him in heaven. God expects His people to be holy. When an unholy person entered into the presence of God in the Old Testament, they would drop dead because they were not holy enough to be in His presence. 1 Peter 1:16 says, "*YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*" To pursue holiness is to pursue God. When Isaiah caught a glimpse of God's holiness, his response was one of worship and complete surrender to the will of God. If we fully understood God's holiness we would also stand with heaven and continuously cry out "*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY...*"

Questions to Consider:

When was the last time I sat and basked in the holiness of "THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY"? Am I in pursuit of holiness? Will you sing with heaven?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray and ask the Lord to help you live like you actually believe that He is holy.
- Pray and ask the Lord to help you pursue holiness in every area of your life and the church.

God's Righteousness

Key Scripture: *Psalm 145:17, "The Lord is Righteous in all His ways and kind in all His works."*

Righteousness is the quality or state of being morally correct and justifiable. God's ways are always just and right. He is the creator of the universe and all that He created was good. He created man in His image to be in right relationship with Him. Tragically, Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To be sure, God would have been fully justified by destroying Adam and Eve and starting over—but God, being rich in mercy, preserved them and provided a way for them to be restored. What we see since the time of Adam and Eve is that all people are born into sin and, therefore, are separated from God. Romans 3:23 explains that *"all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God."*

When we sin, we despise His righteousness.

John Piper writes, *"God would be unrighteous if He passed over sins as though the value of his glory were nothing. But He didn't. God saw His glory being despised by sinners—He saw His worth belittled and His name dishonored by our sins and rather than vindicating the worth of His glory by slaying His people, He vindicated His glory by slaying His Son."*

2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us, *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* We can trust the Lord because He is just and always fulfills His promises, even His promise to punish sinners with the fullness of His wrath. We can know for sure He fulfills His promises because, on Jesus, He poured out His full wrath the sin of all mankind. Truly, He is a great, trustworthy God who is worthy of our love and loyalty.

Questions to Consider:

Do I truly understand the righteousness and holiness of God? Is there any unrepentant sin in my life that I need to confess to God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father God, thank you for Your love and mercy by providing a way through the death of Your Son Jesus that we can have forgiveness of our sins.

God's Omnipresence

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

Read Psalm 139. The beginning and end of this Psalm (vs.1, 24) highlight the fact that God "knows" the reader, and has complete knowledge and intimate understanding of the reader's thoughts. Now, in this middle section of the psalm, this knowledge is further extended to the reader's physical self. God is reminding the reader of His *omnipresence*—He is present everywhere at the same time.

God's knowledge of us and His presence in our lives is complete and perfect. There is no area of our lives in which He is not present. Even when we feel spiritually and physically distant from Him, He is there; He is working; He is guiding. *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it"* (vs. 6).

Questions to Consider:

Read Jeremiah 23:23-24.

How does the Lord describe Himself in these verses? Are you in a season where you feel distant from God in some way?

How do these passages bring comfort? Do you know someone struggling to believe the presence of God in the midst of their circumstances? How can you share hope with them?

Prayer Prompts:

- Read and pray over vs. 2-5 from Psalm 139. Use these verses to worship the Lord for His perfect presence and knowledge.
- Lord, you knew me before I ever saw the light of day. Your presence in all areas of my life, from the very beginning, is a thought too vast for my human mind to comprehend. You are such a big and glorious God; let me worship You in the way You deserve, and trust You unreservedly in all areas of my life.

God's Omniscience and Omnipotent

Key Scripture: *Psalm 147:5, "Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit."*

Read Psalm 147. The God we praise has unlimited power (omnipotence) and unlimited knowledge (omniscience)! *"How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise Him!"* (vs. 1).

This psalm in its entirety is a psalm of praise, acknowledging the Lord's understanding of the world He created and His power over it. While He is the powerful God who created the universe and numbered the stars (vs. 4), He is also the God who builds up Jerusalem and sustains the exiled (vs. 2, 6). He understands our need for healing (vs. 3) and strengthening (vs. 6) and is the giver of unailing love (vs. 11).

Wayne Grudem states, *"As we imitate God by utilizing the limited power He has given us to accomplish the things He desires us to do, we show a faint reflection of His infinite power, and thus we bring Him glory."*

God is able *"to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think"* as Paul tell us in Ephesians 3:20. In Matthew 19:26 Jesus states, *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

Grudem also brings out that... *"God is always, at all times, fully aware of everything. His knowledge never changes or grows. Nothing surprises Him; nothing is hidden from Him."*

Questions to Consider:

What does Jesus have to say about his Father's omnipotence? Read Hebrews 1:3. Who is sustaining all things and how is it being done? Read Hebrews 4:13. How does this verse comfort you and convict you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray Romans 11:33-36 back to God, using these verses to thank Him for the depths of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge.
- Lord, in your great power, you created the universe and you created my inmost being. Your understanding of all is unlimited. Let these facts bring me great comfort and increase my trust of you in all circumstances. *"Nothing is too hard for you...O great and powerful God...great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds"* (Jeremiah 32:17-19)!

God's Immutability or Unchangeableness

Key Scripture: *Malachi 3:6, "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."*

Nestled amid other attributes in Malachi (love, justice, grace, faithfulness, wrath, and sovereignty), we see the truth of our unchanging God. The Israelites were still around because God doesn't change; He justly kept His promise to preserve His people.

Wayne Grudem and Louis Berkhof summarize immutability (unchangeableness) as *"God is unchanging in his being, perfections [character, attributes], purposes, and promises."*

Synonyms for immutability can aid our understanding: steady, true, consistent, stable, and predictable. Humans are not reliable; we change our minds on a dime. Consequently, we are then tempted to take our view of mankind and wrongly apply it to God.

God's attributes are not like different hats He wears at different times, changing them as He reacts to what we do or based on His mood for the day. No. He is perfectly being and doing these eternally. In Psalm 102:27 we are told, *"But You are the same, and Your years have no end."* James 1:17 says, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."*

Within today's attribute, we see an important connection to all others—no aspect of God's character changes. The impact is constant harmony, each attribute steady and undivided from the rest. For example, God is not simply just or loving; but just *and* loving, just *in* loving and, just *while* loving. He never sets aside His love and picks up His justice. Every attribute is consistent and active due to God's never ceasing character.

Questions to Consider:

How is God growing my trust of Him? Where am I inconsistent in my growth in Christlikeness? What plan should I put in place to be intentionally obedient?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank You for giving us a secure foundation. I confess areas with which I am inconsistent in exhibiting Your character. Grow my understanding of You so it may grow my desire to be transformed by You. Help me be obedient in the areas I identified today.

Eternality

Key Scripture: *Exodus 3:14* “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God’s eternity is difficult to wrap our heads around. People think in terms of time, as we understand it—a series of beginnings and endings, starts and stops. Our workdays, school years, sports events, and hobbies are bound by time. Yet, God, as self-existent Creator of time, sits above it, not subject to or limited by it.

Wayne Grudem defines God’s eternity as: “God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time, and he acts in time.”

In today’s verse we see both God’s nature and His name revealed in “I AM.” Unlike American culture, biblical names explain foundational information about the person’s essence. God eternally is who He says He is. He is continuously all of His unchanging attributes.

God’s “I AM” declaration, repeated by Jesus in John 8:58, deeply connects to His “I will” statements in Scripture. Moses could trust God when He said, “I will certainly be with you” (Exodus 3:12). Likewise, our awe of God is deepened when we realize how perfectly faithful He has always been, is, and forever will be. From eternity past to eternity future He is, indeed, an awesome God worthy of ceaseless praise and obedience.

Questions to Consider:

Why should God’s eternity deepen our faith and lead us to worship Him? What is the impact on today? How is our perspective of the future shaped?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank You for being the Eternal King, Alpha and Omega, the Almighty. From everlasting to everlasting, You are God (1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:8; Psalm 90:2).
- Thank You for beginning my time on this earth, offering an unending relationship with You, and sustaining all my days. Deepen my trust in Your eternal character. Give me patience for Your timing.

Sovereignty of God

Key Scripture: *Psalm 115:3, “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”*

God is the definition of sovereignty. Supreme in authority and infinite in power, He alone has absolute freedom to do whatever He chooses, whenever He chooses, in any way in which He chooses. There is no greater authority. There is none higher, nor one more powerful, than Almighty God. A. W. Tozer writes, *“There is not one rope or chain or hindrance upon Him.”*

According to the Scriptures, God spoke the universe into existence. God continues to uphold and sustain all things—in the heavens and on the earth. From major events that lead to the rise and fall of nations to the minutest details of an individual human life, nothing escapes His notice, and nothing happens outside of His will. God determines. God commands. God permits. God appoints. God rules over creation, and over human history, according to His eternal purposes. God sets the course. Always, and in all ways, His plan prevails.

The sovereignty of God includes the act of salvation through His redeeming work in Jesus Christ. *“You have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”* (John 17:2-3)

No one is beyond His reach. Of all the people in this world, Christians ought to be most at peace. Yet, we worry instead of worship. We doubt instead of doing what God commands. How often are we weighed down by fear instead of walking by faith? In those moments, let us remember the truth and be filled with hope. God is sovereign over all. *“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”* (Romans 10:36)

Questions to Consider:

What circumstances are you facing today? In light of God’s sovereignty, how can you walk in a different way daily?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God for His sovereign authority and power over the world and His sovereign care over your life.
- God help me to remember Your sovereignty when I am tempted to walk through circumstances in fear instead of by faith.

God's Transcendence and Immanence

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 12:1-6; Romans 8:31-39

Key Scripture: *Isaiah 12:4-6, And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*

There are several titles for God that give us a great description of who God is and what He does. One of these titles is Isaiah's special name for God, the Holy One of Israel. This name communicates something very specific about God—namely, the combination of both his transcendence and immanence.

Transcendence means that God is so far above us and separate from us such that there is no comparison. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, above space and time, and exists of His own nature. In comparison we are weak, unwise, confined in our place and time, and depend on Him for our existence. Immanence, on the other hand, means that God is near to us and that His care for us is personal and intimate. You may be thinking that these two seem to be exclusive from one another. How can God who is so far above us commune with us, a blind and deaf people? But this is exactly who God is!

When Isaiah uses the name the "Holy One of Israel" he is communicating that the immense power that wiped out pharaoh's army in an instant and the burning wrath that flooded the whole earth, that very anger and justice, is at work accomplishing redemption for His people! Imagine the absolute power God Almighty used to accomplish our restoration. God is far above what we could imagine, but He draws near to us, His people, with unbounded strength and glory.

Questions to Consider:

How does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross display this title of Holy One of Israel? In what ways does it depict both transcendence and immanence?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise the Lord that in His great power He has accomplished salvation for us.
- Pray that your personal holiness will continue to grow so that you can reflect the holiness of God.

God's Mercy

Key Scripture: *1 Peter 1:3–4, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”*

Can you think about a time in your life where you deserved to be punished, but instead of being punished you were extended mercy? Maybe you were driving too fast because you were late for work and without realizing you were speeding, you found yourself being pulled over by a law enforcement officer. While you were guilty of speeding, the officer chose to be merciful (to not give you what you deserve) and not write you a ticket for speeding.

In the Old Testament, we see God's demonstration of mercy to the Israelites through His covenantal promise. He maintains His covenant to them through His great love. While many times they deserved punishment, wrath, or death, God upheld His covenantal love and promise while extending mercy to them. In the New Testament, in Jesus we see how mercy is extended to all people. It is only because of Jesus that we are able to receive the greatest demonstration of God's mercy—namely, the gift of salvation.

God is both merciful and just, for they are two sides of the same coin. To be in relationship with God means the punishment for our sin must be paid in full, and we are unable to do that on our own. God demonstrates both His great loving mercy and His righteous justice in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus on the cross in our place.

Questions to Consider:

Have you personally experienced the mercy of God (Psalm 103:8, 10–12)? How does your life look different because His mercy has been poured out on you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, may the mercy you have shown to me empower me this day to be merciful to those around me.

God's Justice

Key Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:4, *“He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.”*

Would God be just if He didn't judge sin? Would God be right and fair if He left sin unpunished?

The attributes of God cannot be separated from one another but are indivisible and equally all God's nature and character. As we consider the justice of God, we do so in light of all of His attributes—some of which are righteous, holy, all-knowing, infinitely wise, jealous, and also Judge. Because God is just, He judges in uprightness, or what ought to happen or ought to be.

Sin, however, is rebellion against God. For those who have trusted in Christ, the payment for their sin was paid, or satisfied by Christ's sacrifice. *“Christ bore our sins in His body on a tree”* (1 Peter 2:24). *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1). For those in Christ this brings great comfort.

We are also comforted that God will right all wrongs. What may seem as if someone has *“gotten away with murder,”* the child of God can rest in the truth that our Father, in His perfect time, and His perfect way, will repay (Romans 12:19–21). God's character guarantees all wrongs will be judged.

Great fear should arise for those separated from Christ, knowing that a just God must judge according to His nature. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil”* (2 Corinthians 5:10). But, there is still good news; God longs to be gracious and show compassion (Isaiah 30:18–19). Salvation from the judgment of God is found in Christ. Today, trust Christ as your Savior. God has shown Himself just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25–26).

Questions to Consider:

Would God be just if He did not judge sin? In what or whom am I trusting in order to be in right standing before a holy God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank you, God, that all of your ways are just.
- Thank you that Christ bore the wrath of sin for all who trust in Him.

God is Wise

Key Scriptures: *Psalm 147:5, "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite"; Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"*

Often in Scripture we see the words "wisdom" and "knowledge." Though these words are related, they are not the same. Knowledge is information gained through intellectual understanding, personal experience and personal relationship. Wisdom is discernment for what is right and true and is based on application of experience, knowledge, and good judgment. Wisdom **builds** on knowledge.

There are numerous passages in God's Word that speak to His infinite wisdom. God's wisdom is perfect, consistent, limitless and everlasting. God's attribute of wisdom is one that is both communicable to us, in part, and also incommunicable as He is infinitely and perfectly wise.

A.W. Tozer writes, "*Wisdom, among other things, is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means. It sees the end from the beginning, so there can be no need to guess or conjecture. Wisdom sees everything in focus, each in proper relation to all, and is thus able to work toward predestined goals with flawless precision.*"

This perfect wisdom described above can only be achieved by God and God alone. For believers, wisdom is applying God's Word to daily living and living a life pleasing to God. How can we obtain this wisdom? Through consistent Bible study, obeying the Word, and prayer. We can ask God boldly and confidently to give us this wisdom, for the promises of His Word are true as James 1:5 tell us, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*"

Because God is infinitely wise we can trust that His decisions are always wise, and that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Question to Consider:

Do you recognize that wisdom is a gift from God?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray James 1:5. Father, You are perfectly wise. I pray that You will give me wisdom that can only come from You as I seek to follow You in obedience.

God's Faithfulness

Key Scripture: *Psalm 100:5, "For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."*

What words come to mind when you think about what it means to be faithful? Loyal, unwavering, committed? While these are strong words to describe faithfulness, God's faithfulness encompasses so much more because it is who He is. If He ever stopped being faithful, He would also stop being God.

Throughout Scripture, we see that when God says He will do something, He does it. God committed to being faithful to His people from the past to future (See Genesis 1, 2, 15; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 31; Philippians 1; Revelation 22). We see as far back as Genesis His faithfulness to Adam and Eve. We see God's faithfulness all throughout the Bible but especially on the cross. Those who place their faith and trust in Jesus are forgiven of their sins—past, present, and future. Faithfully, God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be. By this, God's steadfast love and faithfulness are on full display. What's more, even in our unfaithfulness, God remains faithful (Rom 5:8).

A verse from a hymn written in 1893 says, *"Never a trial that He is not there, Never a burden that He doth not bear. Never a sorrow that He doth not share, Moment by moment I'm under His care."*

You can rest in the fact that God is faithful. We are often not faithful to Him, but He is always faithful to us.

Questions to Consider:

What are some specific times in your life where you have seen God's faithfulness? Did you spend time worshipping Him and thanking Him for being faithful? Have there been times you have doubted His faithfulness even though He has shown His faithfulness time and time again?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, thank you that you are with me in all circumstances. Help me to never doubt your faithfulness. I can see all throughout Scripture where you have always and will always be faithful to your children.
- Forgive me for those times when I have not trusted you to be faithful.

The Goodness of God

Key Scripture: *Psalm 34:8, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!”*

When we say that God is good, we must remember that we don't get to define what good is. Scripture shows us in Genesis 1 that God is the one who defines for us what is good. In the Word we learn that God is the very definition of good and whatever He declares as good is a reflection of who He is because He is the standard of goodness. Wayne Grudem reminds us, *“What is good? Good is what God approves.... All that God does is worthy of approval.”* Since God is both the standard for goodness and the One who demonstrates what good is, we must ourselves compare what we feel or think is “good” to what we see God do throughout His Word.

Scripture shows us many examples of the eternal goodness of God. We see it in Creation, the giving of the Law, His covenantal promises, His holiness, and we see the greatest demonstration of His goodness in His plan to redeem us from our sin. Let us not forget that God in His great goodness does not desire that anyone would perish but that all would come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We must then recognize that apart from the goodness of God, none of us would have salvation.

Today the Psalmist challenges us to seek the One who is eternally, completely and truly good. Blessed is the one who finds refuge in Him!

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” – James 1:17

Questions to Consider:

What things in my life have I deemed “good” that the Word of God would prove otherwise? Do I have enough faith in God to trust Him to bring about goodness in my own life even when I don't know what that outcome will be?

Prayer Prompts:

- God, forgive me when I look to places and people other than you and your Word for good. Forgive me when I forget all that you've done for me.
- God, thank you for how you have always been faithful even when your people have been unfaithful.

God Is Gracious

Key Scripture: *Psalm 145:8a, “The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.” Psalm 103:8, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.”*

The Lord is gracious, kind and slow to anger and I am so grateful for that. I can echo what Psalm 103 and 145 (please read the whole chapter) say because the Lord has not dealt with me according to my sins but rather He has been gracious to me. He has redeemed me and dealt kindly with me when I deserved to be treated harshly. The Lord is gracious when I mess up, and He is gracious when I am weak. He is gracious when I do not listen to Him and when I neglect His Word. God is gracious to me when I sin and when I am unwilling to repent. He is slow to anger, and there are many days that I am grateful for His patience. God should have been done with you and me a long time ago, but He is gracious and slow to anger. God should have destroyed all humanity for our vile and sinful behavior, but He is gracious and slow to anger. We must not forget that God is kind to us every day even when we do not deserve His kindness. He is slow to anger no matter how many times we disobey. He is abounding in love toward all.

What a great and gracious God we serve. I hope that today you will rejoice that the Lord has been gracious to you. Remember when the Lord saved you? He did not have to, but He did. Remember when the Lord was kind to you the last time you blew it? He did not have to be kind, but He was. We should praise Him for being gracious to us.

Questions to Consider:

What is the greatest sin God has forgiven you of? Are you being gracious to others the way that God has been gracious to you? Are you able to rest in God's grace, knowing that He has removed your sin from you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray and thank the Lord for the grace that He has shown you throughout your life.
- Ask the Lord to help you demonstrate grace to others.

God's Patience

Key Scripture: *1 Timothy 1:16, "But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."*

2 Peter 3:15, "And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him."

Romans 9:22–23, "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory."

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

The patience of God is best understood when we meditate on it alongside His other attributes such as love, mercy, strength, power, goodness, meekness, justice, and holiness.

God's patience directly manifests itself in the love He shows us in our salvation. Yet it is our sin that clearly demonstrates the Lord's patience toward us as He extends mercy rather than wrath. His forgiveness is firmly rooted in His patience. Therefore, if He were not perfectly patient, we would have no hope for salvation.

His patience is also proved in His omnipotence, justice, and perfection as He exercises His will and providence throughout time. His patience shows us His strength, endurance, and power. May we bow in humble reverence and thanksgiving, giving glory to the Father for His great patience toward us.

Questions to Consider:

What can you learn from having a right understanding of God's patience?

Prayer Prompts:

- I praise You, Lord, for Your perfect patience. I confess my lack of obedience in response to the patience You have shown to me, the ways I have not been patient with Your plan, and when I test Your patience. Thank You for patiently waiting for me to respond rightly to Your love.
- Please help me to reflect Your patience in my interactions with others and give me courage to offer You my repentance.

The God of All Truth

Scripture Reading: John 18:33-38; Psalm 86:8-13

Key Scripture: Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name."

There are several one-off statements in the Scriptures that simply say, "God cannot lie" (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 6:18), but the reality of God's character is deeper than this. The reason He cannot lie is because He is the embodiment of truth itself. In fact, since He is all-knowing, "truth" is simply thinking the same thoughts as God. Let me illustrate this. Imagine how the knowledge of things like gravity was still unknown in the 1600's. But God, being all-knowing has a firm grasp on all of these facts. After all, He was the creator of them. So, when Newton "discovers" the laws of gravitation in 1666 or Einstein further clarifies them in 1905, they are really only uncovering the knowledge God already has.

This is what makes Jesus' encounter with Pilate in John 18 so ironic. Jesus says, "I came to bear witness to the truth." This truth is gospel, the message that He is God in the flesh who will very soon take away the sins of the world. But without understanding the weight of the situation Pilate exclaims, "What is truth?" and storms off. Truth was literally staring him in the face, and he simply couldn't see it. We often play the role of Pilate. Even as believers we put aside the truth of God for a lie because it offers a convenient justification for sin. We absolutely cannot compromise in this area. We must continue to shape our thinking to fall in line with God's thoughts and reflect His truth. In so far as we believe, speak, and live truth, we will reflect the God of all Truth.

Questions to Consider:

What lies have you encountered that tempt you to deny the truth of God? What does God's Word say about these lies? Can you recall specific passages that refute them? How does Scripture memorization help combat the lies of Satan?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray through John 16:13-14 that the Spirit would continue to guide you into truth and that you would be open and attentive to His guidance.
- Pray that God's truth, particularly the gospel, would be constantly fresh on your mind, heart, and lips.

God's Wrath

Key Scripture: *Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."*

The wrath of God is not something we like to think about, but Scripture has a great deal to say on this topic. We would do well to meditate on this attribute of God.

God's wrath is nothing like the anger of man. The wrath of God is described as a consuming fire against ungodliness or unrighteousness. God's wrath is the righteous anger of a holy God who hates sin (Psalm 5:5, 11:5). God does not lash out in anger, but is merciful, gracious, and slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love (Exodus 34:6).

God is the righteous just Judge whose very nature requires He judge sin (Psalm 7:11). "He will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:7). God cannot "write-off" sin but must address it. He did so on His own Son Jesus Christ, "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (Romans 5:9).

The wrath of God is satisfied in the person and work of Jesus Christ. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Those who trust in Christ for salvation receive the righteousness of Christ. Our sin was laid on Christ (Isaiah 53:4–6). Therefore, in Christ we have no fear for we are saved from the wrath of God by "Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). This is wonderful news for those in Christ.

Those who have not trusted Christ are under God's wrath (Ephesians 2:1–4). Yet, God patiently delays His wrath to lead men to repentance (Romans 2:4). "God has not destined us for wrath but to obtain salvation through Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Questions to Consider:

Have I placed my faith in Christ who will deliver from the wrath to come? Does the wrath of God on the unrighteous spur me to share the gospel?

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God His wrath was satisfied in Christ.
- Ask God to give you boldness to share the gospel with those still under the wrath of God.

God is a Jealous God

Key Scripture: *Exodus 34:14, “for you shall not worship any other god, because the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”*

Human jealousy is often a negative emotion, but put in a proper context can be a beautiful response if done in a godly manner. In the other attributes we have studied this month, we have seen that God deserves our praise simply because of who He is. However, we often turn aside and run from acknowledging His deity, His sovereignty, His glory and the fact that we are His bride. All of these things cause God to be jealous because this praise rightfully belongs to Him. As humans everything we have is because of God. So unless we are defending His glory, we sin when we are jealous.

God will always defend Himself by being jealous of His deity, sovereignty, and glory because no one else should possess those. This is why we are told numerous times to not worship any other god. He alone deserves all worship from His creation whose purpose is to bring Him glory. He alone is God. When we choose to put something else in His place in our lives, we are instigating His jealousy.

We see God’s jealousy for His people when anything tries to steal His people’s hearts away. Whether it is a distraction from idols or our own wandering, God will pursue His bride. He has redeemed us through Jesus and will lovingly pursue us because of His jealousy of whatever we are turning our love and attention to.

God is the only one that will be perfectly jealous; however, we can be jealous in a godly manner. We must be jealous for godly things. As Christians we can join God in His jealousy when we see ourselves turning to other things rather than Him. When we see ourselves or others being distracted by idols or giving glory to something that is not God, godly jealousy can occur along with desire that praise and worship be summited to the right place—God.

Questions to Consider:

Do you possess a godly or worldly jealousy? Are you inviting God’s jealousy by worshiping someone or something else?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that you would acknowledge God’s deity, sovereignty, and glory in your life.
- Pray for yourself and those around you to focus on God and not get distracted by other idols.

God is Spirit

Key Scripture: *John 4:23-24 "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

John 4:1-26 recounts Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman, correcting her perverse worship and teaching that you can't create your own worship. God instructed the Jews how and where to worship and the Samaritans decided they could do it their own way. Jesus gives instruction that *"true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."* and that *"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

The spirituality of God is an attribute that is certainly difficult to understand. God is a being who is not made of matter, is different from everything that He has created and is far more excellent and superior than anything in existence. He cannot be perceived by our sight, smell, touch or hearing, even though we try. Because God is spirit, God is immaterial and invisible- though He is free to reveal himself as He sovereignly chooses. God is not seen (*John 1:18 - No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*), cannot be seen (*Exodus 33:20 - He further said, "You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!"*), and will never be seen (*1 Timothy 6:16 ...who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.*).

Though God's total essence can not be seen by us, God has been gracious to give us a **visible** and **full** manifestation of Himself solely through the incarnate Son! Jesus has come to show us who God is because Jesus IS God. God, in His great mercy, made a way for humans to be restored to God, through Jesus.

Questions to Consider:

Do I truly understand what it means to say God is spirit? Do I limit His being in the way I think of Him?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank you for revealing yourself to us, in Jesus. I praise you that you are Spirit and therefore greater than anything in existence!

The Cornerstone of Our Faith

Key Scripture: *Luke 24:1 “On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.”*

The Resurrection is a cornerstone of our faith. It is a nonnegotiable to understand the Gospel and salvation. It is crucial we remember why. Over the next three days, we will touch on three reminders we learn from the resurrection.

First, the resurrection reminds us the perfect and final sacrifice for sin has already been made. The women came to prepare Christ's body after the crucifixion. This must have jolted their minds back to the horrific scenes of the cross.

Though Jesus was put to death by a coalition of historic forces, it would be a mistake to suppose those powers were the final determining factor. Jesus was not driven to death by man, Christ went to the cross in the freedom of His obedience to the Father's will, and the Father gave Him the authority to choose to die. Jesus did not lose His life, He gave it (John 10:17-18) and had the power to do otherwise (Matthew 26:53)! Christ was not bound to the cross by Roman nails, but by His unconditional love for us. He was not a helpless victim of cruel circumstances, but our High Priest willingly choosing to sacrifice His life to fulfill an eternal plan (I Corinthians 15:3).

The Perfect One was made the sacrifice, therefore, the price of sin was completely paid. The sacrifice of Christ need never be made again (Hebrews 10:10-12). The resurrection is proof of that. The resurrection reminds us that Christ was acceptable as the only possible, perfect, and effective payment for our sin. Victory is His and can be ours.

Questions to Consider:

Do you recognize the power of the resurrection and its impact upon your life? Have you forgotten the incredible sacrifice leading to it? Have you acknowledged what Jesus has done by trusting in Him as your Lord and Savior? Who could you tell today about the resurrection?

Prayer Prompts:

- If you have not already done so, ask God to save you from your sin by trusting in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Ask God to reveal to you someone with whom you can share about the resurrection.
- Ask God to help you to never forget the sacrifice Christ made on the cross and His testimony of victory through the resurrection.

God's Sovereign Purpose

Key Scriptures: *Luke 24:2-8 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "* 8 Then they remembered his words.

Continuing from yesterday, the **second** truth the resurrection reminds us of is the sovereign will of God. The women were confused when encountering the resurrection, but they remembered His words. The word "must" in v. 7 is crucial. The cross and the resurrection were necessary parts of a divine plan. Everything Jesus said was true! God keeps His Word even when it involves what seems impossible.

Before the beginning of time, God had a sovereign purpose. He seeks to bring glory to Himself by redeeming us into relationship with Him. Through the cross our pathway is cleared, and through the resurrection Jesus is declared Lord (Romans 1:4). Death could not contain His perfection. Because of His Lordship we too can know freedom from eternal death and have confident faith that His promises are certain.

Through His resurrection we know He is Lord over all and, as promised, will return one day. Those who trust in Him will live with Him forever and those who do not will perish forever without Him. The empty tomb is our guarantee (John 11:25-26).

Questions to Consider:

Do you study His Word to the point you can remember what He has promised? Do these promises create faith and hope for you in your life? Do they provide the definitions for how you live and make choices?

Prayer Prompts:

- Ask God to help you hunger for and fall in love with His Word and promises.
- Pray you are faithful enough to rest in the confidence of His sovereignty. If you doubt His complete Lordship, pray God will show you the truth clearly.

A Time of Celebration

Key Scriptures: *Luke 24:9-11* When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. *10* It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. *11* But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Third, the resurrection reminds us to celebrate the victory! At first the disciples were still not convinced. Can you imagine the range of their emotions? For three plus years they had given up everything to follow this rabbi. For what? They sat in dark locked rooms fearing every noise lest they be the next target of the religious leaders. The grief of their loss and the fear for their future must have been intense! They heard the story of the women, but it was not enough. The first skeptics Jesus faced were His own disciples.

Jesus therefore, appeared, revealed Himself, and transformed these cowering cowards into mighty missionaries and into powerful preachers ready to stand up to Rome itself. Only the unmistakable appearance of the risen Christ could overcome such doubt and replace it with unshakable faith. Think about it. Within days of the empty tomb thousands of people's lives were changed. These changed people were to tell others about Who changed them. Nothing has changed about that!

Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11). He has commissioned us with an ongoing mission to tell others. We must allow Him to reveal Himself to others through us. The resurrection of Jesus shines with power from birth to death. The resurrection really matters and is worth celebrating every day. Easter really matters and is worth celebrating as a time to remember what He has done for us! Let us celebrate the change He brings in us and through us.

Questions to Consider:

Does the resurrection matter to you? Have you experienced the celebration of a changed life? Are you sharing with others about the change Christ brought to you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Ask God to stir up a spirit of celebration within you this Easter season. Ask Him to give you the privilege of sharing with someone else about the change Christ has brought to you. Ask the Lord to never allow you to forget these reminders of the resurrection.

Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. We are so grateful for the faithful servants who have dedicated their time and talents to writing this prayer guide.

To God Be the Glory!

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.