



..... *10 days of*

PRAYER & FASTING

SEPTEMBER 5 - 14, 2022

 **connect**
grow
multiply

Dear Church,

As a people of God, we want to know Him and make Him known in every corner of the world. There is no greater power for us as His people to accomplish this mission than by seeking His presence through prayer and fasting. Prayer and fasting fuels the believer to continue in the mission He has set before us. As we, the church body, run together toward Jesus, we will see lives transformed with the truth of Jesus. E.M. Bounds says, "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed." Martin Luther says, "As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray." Whether you are reading this as a brand-new believer or a long-time follower of Jesus, our lives are transformed daily by the truth of Jesus. In his letter to the Romans, Paul describes this process of continuous transformation in Christ in this way:

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Imagine a church full of believers who are, by the mercies of God, daily pursuing to be transformed by the truth of Jesus. Some of you have experienced this and are looking to experience Christ more deeply. A church sold out in this way will never know the full extent of the impact made on this side of eternity.

When the Lord describes the type of fast that pleases Him in Isaiah 58, He describes a fast which embodies self-denial for the benefit of others. (Isaiah 58:5-7) Then the Lord makes this promise of what He will do with this response from His people:

"Then your light will appear like the dawn, and your recovery will come quickly. Your righteousness will go before you, and the Lord's glory will be your rear guard." (Isaiah 58:8)

As a church, let us see what may happen if we, corporately and individually, pursue Christ. Let us find out together as we follow Him with absolute surrender.

You are loved, and you are prayed for!



Pastor Michael Gossett

DAY ONE

PURSUE HIS SPIRIT (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16)

In the Mosaic Law, the only fast that is referred to is on the Day of Atonement. (Lev. 16:29; Num. 29:7) Let us consider the significance of this. On this day, the people of God fasted, and the priest entered the sanctuary to make reconciling sacrifices for the sins of the entire nation. The priest would offer one goat as a sin offering, and a second goat was led away and released into the wilderness. This first fast of God's people was a solemn foreshadowing of Jesus and the New Covenant under which we now live. Today, we are God's temple, and the Spirit of God dwells in us if we are a follower of Jesus. (1 Cor. 3:16)

Reflect today on this verse and consider what it means that the very Spirit of God dwells in you. How is your life different eternally because God's Spirit dwells in you? How is your life different today because God's Spirit dwells in you?

A Prayer for Our Church: Church Staff

Pray today for our church staff. We have two committees praying through openings on our staff team. Pray for the Worship Committee as they seek God's man to lead our church in worship. Pray for our Discipleship Committee as they seek to fill positions in our Kids, Students, and Adult Ministry. Pray that the Spirit of the Lord would go before us and that our church staff would be sensitive to the Spirit. There is nothing we can do outside of the Spirit of the Lord!

DAY TWO

PURSUE HIS STRENGTH (ISAIAH 41:10)

Let's pursue His strength as we begin the second day of this fast together. In Isaiah 41:10, the Lord makes this promise to His people: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Reflect today on this verse and consider what it means to pursue and rely on the strength of Christ. In a fast, we are reminded of the limitations of our finite body. We know from 2 Corinthians 12:9 that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. In other words, by recognizing our limitations, we begin to focus on what it means to live life in the power of His strength.

How is your life different today because you have the strength of Jesus? How is your life different knowing God's people are held onto with His righteous right hand? Let us be a church that recognizes our finite strength and overwhelming weakness and let us pursue His strength today.

A Prayer for Our Church: New Churches

This year as a church, we have seen nine new churches planted in Africa. Pray that we continue to see church multiplication worldwide as we obey the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations! Pray for the leaders in those nine churches. Pray for new church plants and for lives to be transformed by the truth of Jesus in Tyler and around the world.

DAY THREE

PURSUE HIS FAITHFULNESS (LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23)

As we wake up today and enter the third day of our fast together, consider Lamentations 3:22-23, which says: “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

How powerful it is to consider that the mercies of the Lord never come to an end! How poignant it is to know that they are new every morning! When you and I awoke this morning, we awoke to brand new mercies. As we pursue daily to be transformed by the Lord, we are met with His faithfulness and His mercies.

How is your life different today because we rely upon the Lord’s faithfulness? How is our life different today because we are sustained by the daily mercies of a God who will never run out of those mercies? Reflect on and pursue His faithfulness today.

A Prayer for Our Church: Our Prison Ministry

This year our Women’s Ministry has seen 97 professions of faith inside the prison walls. Pray that the peace of Christ continues to flood through our prison ministry and that we will continue to see life transformation. Pray that we would be able to launch campuses within prisons and that we would continue to see life transformation for the men and women who are incarcerated.

DAY FOUR

PURSUE CHRIST'S PEACE (ISAIAH 26:3)

Today as a church family, we together pursue the peace of Christ. In Isaiah, we find a powerful promise in which we can all find comfort and assurance. "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). I love this verse for a few reasons. First, we all need the "perfect peace" that Jesus promises to live lives that are daily transformed by his truth. Secondly, the imagery of someone who keeps their mind remaining on Jesus is powerful. It is impossible to do without trust. I can't help but remember the story of Peter walking out to Jesus on the water when considering this verse.

Today as we fast together, let us keep our minds on Christ. Today let us fully trust in Christ. Let us together pursue the perfect peace of Christ. How will your life look different today as you navigate your day with the perfect peace of Christ?

A Prayer for Our Church: Our Recreation Ministry

Pray for our Recreation Ministry as they host various sports leagues and camps. Our Recreation Ministry engages the unchurched with every sports season hosted. Pray that the efforts of this ministry would see continued growth and life transformation.

DAY FIVE

PURSUE CHRIST'S PROVISION (PHILIPPIANS 4:19)

Today let us consider the provision of the Lord. Paul thanks the church for their sacrificial partnership in the Gospel, and toward the letter's closing, Paul says, "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

What is powerful about this passage is that Paul is not placating the church to raise more money. He admonishes the church toward a sacrificial living that trusts in the provision of the Lord. Paul is teaching the church about the faithfulness of the Lord's provision from inside the walls of a Roman prison! Even from the walls of the prison, Paul trusted in the provision of Jesus.

How would our lives look differently today if we did not seek our financial security or insulation first, but we lived sacrificially for the Gospel because we—deep down in our core—trust in the provision of the Lord? Let our church be one that together lives sacrificially so we can see lives transformed with the truth of Jesus.

A Prayer for Our Church: Our Church Budget

Take time today to pray for a joyous generosity in our church. Just like in the first-century church, our budget is not only a reflection of our dependence upon God but is used to meet the needs of others and to accomplish the mission of the Gospel. Pray that we would begin to make up our budget deficit and finish the year well so we can achieve all that the Lord is calling us to do. Pray that we would be wise stewards of the resources God provides and that those resources would be used to further the mission!

DAY SIX

PURSUE LOVE (JOHN 13:34-35)

What would it look like if we could be identified as a follower of Jesus? What would it look like if our lives embodied the transformation that the blood of Jesus has purchased for us? In John 13, Jesus commands his followers to love one another in the same way that Jesus has loved us. Then, in verse 35, Jesus says, “All people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

Pray for our church today that we would be a people marked by their love for one another. Pray not only that we are marked by our love for one another, but pray that the truth of Jesus would transform more people because they see that we have Christ’s love.

A Prayer for Our Church: Christmas at Green Acres

Pray for this year’s Christmas Tree Lighting at Green Acres. Pray that our church would be a beacon of Christ’s love every year at Christmas. Pray that all in our community would know the love of Christ and the joy of personally knowing the Savior who came at Christmastime.

notes



DAY SEVEN

PURSUE HUMILITY (PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4)

As we begin day seven, let us consider our pursuit of humility. Humility is an essential trait in the life of every believer and, therefore, in the life of every church. For a church to exist together in unity, the church must first exist in humility. Consider these words of Paul in Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.”

One of the most often cited markers of the first-century church in Acts is how they sacrificed for one another. (Acts 2:44-45) They sold their possessions to meet the needs of others. They were not concerned about their interests but the interests of others.

As a church body, let's together pray today that we would be a people that exemplify the humility of Christ. Let us adopt the same attitude as Christ, who humbled Himself from God to the Suffering Servant. (Phil. 2:5-11) When we consider Christ and what He has done for us, our preferences seem less and less important.

A Prayer for Our Church: Espanol Campus

Pray for our church as we continue to engage the Spanish-speaking community in our region. Pray for the Espanol Connect Group we launched this year to continue reaching people in our community. Pray for our church as we seek a campus pastor to lead a Spanish-speaking campus in the Crosswalk.

DAY EIGHT

PURSUE PURITY (1 PETER 2:11)

The pursuit of purity is the focus of our time together today. The tendency that I have when I begin to think of purity is to think of sexual purity, but the pursuit of purity is much broader than that. To live a life transformed is to live a life that pursues holiness in every area of our life.

Take some time to consider what it would look like to cultivate purity within your heart, purity within your motives, and your conversations and thoughts. To be a people who pursue Christ, we must daily pursue purity. In Peter's first letter to the saints who were living as exiles throughout the Roman empire, he encouraged them to live in this way within the context of the Roman empire: "Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul."

As a church, pray that we would be a people of purity. Pray for yourself and others in our church family that we would pursue purity and dwell together in purity.

A Prayer for Our Church: Residency Program

Our church launched a brand-new residency program this summer for those pursuing vocational ministry. Pray for the residents who serve on our staff and are being developed for ministry. Pray that the residency program would multiply new leaders for ministry.

notes



DAY NINE

PURSUE RECONCILIATION (MATTHEW 5:23-24)

A life transformed with the truth of Jesus pursues a clear conscience with the Lord and others. Right in the center of Paul's defense before Governor Felix in Acts 24, he says, "I always strive to have a clear conscience toward God and men" (Acts 24:16). This is consistent with the behavior that scripture admonishes all believers toward. Jesus says this in the Sermon on the Mount:

"So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

This is the importance of reconciliation and seeking forgiveness. Can you say, like Paul, that you always strive to have a clear conscience toward God and men? Is someone coming to mind today as you pray through the topic of reconciliation? Jesus is clear on the importance of reconciliation. He thinks horizontal reconciliation is prioritized over a sacrifice at the altar. How powerful is this thought from Jesus to know that He desires us to be reconciled to one another as a prerequisite to worship!

Pray with me today that everyone in our church family would experience the freedom found in a life of reconciliation pursued.

A Prayer for Our Church: Continued Unity in Our Church

I am thankful for our church's unity through the transitions we have experienced. Pray that the Lord would continue to protect the unity of our church. Pray that each member of our church body would preserve that unity of our church and protect our love for one another.

notes



DAY TEN

PURSUE FAITH (HEBREWS 11:6)

Hebrews 11:6 teaches us the importance of the role of faith in a life transformed by the truth of Jesus. It is fitting for us to end our prayer and fast with a pursuit of great faith.

“Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Consider the words of this verse today as we prepare for our night of worship. “The one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Here we learn that faith is essential for the pursuit of Christ.

Pray today that our church family would be known for her devout and unwavering faith. We have seen God move in a mighty way in the life of our church, and together through faith, we continually draw near to him and beg that he would continue to move in a powerful, tangible, and palpable way in the life of our church family.

May we have the faith to see more lives transformed with the truth of Jesus!

A Prayer for Our Church: Flint Campus & 10-10-10

This year we re-launched our Flint Campus and have seen the Lord move in a big way in Flint. Pray that the Lord would continue to bring life transformation. Pray that the Lord would open the door for more campuses to be planted and that we would be able to celebrate more baptisms this year as a church as we pray and serve toward 10-10-10!



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