



MOBILIZED FOR BLESSING OUR COMMUNITY

PRAYER JOURNAL

PRAYING THE SPIRIT'S BLESSING
TO PENTECOST

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THE FOUNDRY
PUBLISHING®

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The Foundry Publishing
PO Box 419527
Kansas City, MO 64141
thefoundrypublishing.com

U-709

Printed in the
United States of America

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Published in association with the USA/Canada Region for the Church of the Nazarene

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FOREWORD



Thank you for joining the Half-Million Mobilization's fifty-day journey of prayer from Easter to Pentecost. God has done his deepest works in my life through prolonged times of prayer. In my first church, a young layman by the name of Rob asked if we could hold an all-Saturday prayer meeting. I was a busy young pastor and only reluctantly agreed. In spite of myself, God did a deep work in my life that day, and his Spirit was poured out in a special way on our church in the services that followed.

I'm asking the Lord to do a deep work in your life, in our church, through our church in these next fifty days. Will you enter into this prayer time with that expectation?

Our Half-Million Mobilization theme this year is *Blessing Our Community*. I hope this time in prayer will do a deep work in our lives and our churches to be a mighty force for blessing our communities throughout this year ahead. The prayer time that led up to that first Christian Pentecost started as a sit-in. In fact, Jesus commanded his disciples to wait until they were clothed with power (see Luke 24:49). But when the Day of Pentecost came, God's manifest, miraculous, powerful presence resulted in those early believers exploding from sitting in to being sent out.

As we encounter his divine power through these fifty days of prayer, may the Lord mobilize all Nazarenes in unity, empowering us to bless our communities, bring people to Jesus, and become Christlike disciples.

We're ready! Let's get started!

—Stan Reeder
Director, USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene

PREFACE



Easter to Pentecost 2024 marks the third year that the Church of the Nazarene in Canada and the United States is coming together unified in prayer. We will pray for pastors, the laity, the church at large, and all who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

From May 1 to Pentecost Sunday in 2022, Nazarenes prayed for the *protection*, *direction*, and *revelation* of the Church of the Nazarene. The call to pray was followed by a call to speak. Through this initiative, the Spirit overwhelmingly confirmed that our focus must be on *unity*, *blessing*, *bringing*, and *becoming*. God hears and answers the prayers of God's people (see 1 John 5:14–15).

From Easter to Pentecost in 2023, we prayed for the *mission*, *vision*, and *strategies* of the Church of the Nazarene. Again, the Spirit spoke, filling the hearts and minds of God's people with four heart cries that are the foundations of the regional vision today:

1. The importance of “mobilizing all Nazarenes in **unity**,” we are united in Christ Jesus.
2. Calling local churches to engage in “**blessing** our communities;” to get out from within the walls of our churches and meet people where they are, trusting God's prevenient grace to go ahead of us.
3. Nurturing hearts for “**bringing** people to Jesus” through the Spirit's saving grace.
4. Growing in faith and holiness by “**becoming** Christlike disciples” through the Spirit's sanctifying grace.

We are calling the top-level strategy *The Cycle of Resurgence*. This cycle is the implementation of annual plans to fulfill our vision as the Spirit has graciously provided.



Starting Easter through Pentecost 2024, *Blessing Our Community* will be the focus of our prayers. The emphasis for 2024 is for local churches to engage with people in their immediate communities in order to serve them and show them the hope of Christ for their lives. Blessing our community is where it starts. We begin by making friends, building relationships, and attending to those divine appointments the Lord sets up for us when we serve.

This prayer journal contains weekly themes related to the heart cry of blessing our community. Each daily devotional will focus on a scripture related to this idea. We will pray for *The Cycle of Resurgence: Blessing Our Community*.

We encourage you to join in! Read and pray daily following this *Prayer Journal*.

—Jeff Alexander
Director of Strategy, USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene

DAY 1

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024



Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Scripture Insights

Death on a cross was a form of execution the Romans used to intimidate the people they had conquered and terrorize them into submission. It was a very painful way to die. But it was also degrading. They not only wanted to make you suffer, but they also wanted to strip you of your honor. As such, the cross was symbolic of the unstoppable military power of the Roman Empire and a symbol of shame and humiliation for those who were their enemies.

But Jesus changed the symbol. Jesus chose the cross. He died because his obedience led him there. He laid his life down as a ransom for many. Jesus took the symbol of Caesar's raw power and made it speak of God's sacrificial love. He took the symbol of shame and humiliation and made it speak of servanthood and salvation. *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:9–11).

When God raised Jesus from the dead, it was a way of saying *this way is better*. The resurrection vindicated the path of obedience that Jesus had chosen and declared that the real way to life is one that stops grasping and starts giving. Suffering love and servanthood to "the least of these" (see Matthew 25:40) may look like a step down, but in the kingdom of God, you have to step down to step up. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ takes humiliation and turns it into exaltation.

Today's Prayer

Father, thank you that Jesus's death and resurrection show us that the greatest life is the one given for the sake of others. Help us lay down our lives in the service of your kingdom.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—David A. Busic
General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 2

Monday, April 1, 2024



Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Scripture Insights

So now what? With the refrain of Easter Sunday echoing in our ears—*He is risen! He is risen indeed!*—what are we to do next? Said another way, how are we to live in light of the empty tomb? Thankfully Jesus answers our questions in today’s scripture.

Our first response to Christ’s resurrection is to love God with all that we are—heart, soul, and mind—engaging all of our being in love and worship of God. But that’s not where it ends, for Jesus also reminded us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This second command encapsulates everything *else* that the law and the prophets commanded of those who love God. Our second appropriate response to the empty tomb is to love our neighbors, which could also be called blessing our communities. This command calls us to pray for our neighbors, to see them as people made in the image of God (even if they have not yet come into relationship with Christ), and to love them unconditionally.

So, what now? We are called to love!

Today’s Prayer

Loving God, thank you for the gift of your Son, and for his sacrifice and resurrection! Today we commit all of ourselves to loving you. Please help us to also love others so that our communities might be blessed.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Joel K. Pearsall
President, Northwest Nazarene University (Idaho)

DAY 3

Tuesday, April 2, 2024



Ezekiel 36:26-27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Scripture Insights

There is gentleness in today's scripture. In response to a heart of stone, and the implication that we are unable to follow the decrees and laws of God, God gives. When we have a deep need for transformation, our good God gives us a new heart. When we are struggling with hardness within ourselves brought on by judgmentalism, self-righteousness, or us/them thinking, God takes that from us and gives us a heart of flesh. We are offered the gift of a new spirit. And it isn't any old spirit—it's God's Spirit.

And then what does God's Spirit do? Enables us to be who we were created to be—in right relationship with God and right relationship with ourselves and right relationship with our neighbors. After all, God's decrees and laws are about those relationships! Throughout Scripture, we are commanded to care for the people on the margins, and we are invited by Jesus himself to love our enemies. If we lived like that, what an incredible blessing we would be to our communities.

Our giving God has a gift for us. Will we receive it?

Today's Prayer

God, we need you. On our own, our hearts are like stone. Without your Spirit we are nothing. Heal us, fill us, and use us to bless all of our neighbors as we live graciously, gently, and generously as you do.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Olivia Metcalf
CotN District Superintendent, Upstate New York

DAY 4

Wednesday, April 3, 2024



Luke 22:27

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Scripture Insights

Recently, our family took a trip to Orlando, Florida, on an adventure to Disney World. I was fascinated when we entered the park, watching as thousands of others around us checked reality at the gate in order to immerse themselves in the fantasies each Disney experience offered. It was almost as if entire personas changed—from how they behaved to what they wore—to conform to the ways of the magic kingdom. As I get older, I find it more enjoyable to sit on a park bench and observe the characters walking by than to visit the attractions with my kids. And by “characters,” I don’t mean the ones employed by the park—I mean the guests! It is incredible how powerfully the Disney atmosphere can transform a person to adopt the ways of its kingdom.

In today’s scripture, Jesus quickly reminds the disciples how easy it is to conform to whatever kingdom we are leaning into at the moment. Even after Jesus intimately serves the Passover meal in the upper room, sharing the significance of the moment, they immediately fall back into a worldly mindset of power and position rather than recognizing that the way of God’s kingdom is humility and servitude.

As we look to bless our communities, let us remember Jesus’s example and the power of his influence to transform our lives to reflect the way of his kingdom through serving rather than being served.

Today’s Prayer

Dear Lord, as we strive to bless our communities, help us to shed worldly influences that entice us to pursue selfish ambitions that sabotage our witness. Transform our hearts to embrace humility and servitude, mirroring the ways of your kingdom. Guide us to serve others in our neighborhoods with love and selflessness, as exemplified by Jesus.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Darren Reed
Lead Pastor, One Hope Church of the Nazarene (Colorado)

DAY 5

Thursday, April 4, 2024



John 21:12-13

Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

Scripture Insights

Jesus is a master at setting people up. In the broader scene where we find our verses for today, the disciples had been out all night doing what they knew best—fishing. Whether it was out of uncertainty of their future purpose or simply the need to eat, they returned after Jesus’s death to doing what they knew. Though they had fished all their lives, this time was a bust. Then Jesus showed up, gave them instructions, and turned failure into overwhelming success.

Jesus was setting them up to reintroduce his purpose for the rest of their lives. As he had done so many times before, Jesus invited his friends to join him in the breaking of bread together, where he engaged Peter. *Peter, if you love me, feed my sheep. Peter, if you love me, follow me.*

Jesus continues to engage you and me today with the same purpose—first, to join him in intimate fellowship, then to follow him into his mission of loving others and blessing them in practical ways in order to share the good news of full salvation. May we be obedient.

Today’s Prayer

Father, as Jesus draws us into fellowship and mission, may your Spirit enable us to respond in obedience and empower us to love and bless those around us through our deeds and words. We deeply desire to bear much fruit as we abide in Christ.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Steve Ottley
CotN District Superintendent, Canada Central

DAY 6

Friday, April 5, 2024



John 13:14-15

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Scripture Insights

We have good news to share! Your church can be a church that blesses its community! We know that what lies behind us and before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. We have the Holy Spirit (see John 14–16)! Any limitations we feel in our lives are only guidelines, not stop signs. We know what Jesus, our greatest hero, is calling us to do. In today's scripture he tells us that he has already set the example for us. Churches who bless their communities are unselfish—serving because of their love for people.

When Jesus looked around the room that Passover Thursday night long ago, he saw a group with proud hearts and dirty feet. So he showed us by example how he wanted us to live—blessing others, serving others. He says to us, “You should do for others as I have done for you.” His pattern to provide blessing and serving communities of people is the example he wants us to create in every church all over the world.

A church doesn't have to be big to be a blessing! Together, let's live fully, learn continually, love generously, and leave a legacy of blessing our community through the way we minister.

Today's Prayer

Lord, we want to live fully, learn continually, and love generously today. Help us be a blessing to the people you put in our lives. May we think with your mind, see with your eyes, and feel with your heart today.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Larry McKain
CotN District Superintendent, Chicago Central

DAY 7

Saturday, April 6, 2024



Matthew 11:28-29

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Scripture Insights

Having a hero in your life is worth celebrating. Almost all of us would be thrilled to celebrate the influence of someone who has encouraged us along the path of life. Perhaps the most amazing thing is realizing that our risen Savior is the one who comes alongside us and represents the greatest hero of all time. Pathways and decisions we make in life can lead to some dark and troubling places. Yearning for the One who calls to us with a gentle voice is what happens when we open our hearts to him.

Because of the work of Christ, we are able to come to him with our heavy loads. Instead of being crushed by the unbearable weight that life may bring our way, we are able to rest. Rest is the promise. The souls of the weary learn from our Lord how to navigate this journey. His humility and gentleness redirect us, leaving us touched in such a way that all shame disappears.

Divine hope is what our hero reveals. Against the raging voices of this world, we exchange our painful yoke for his. Yes, his yoke is easy and his burden light.

Today's Prayer

Challenge us, Lord. Help us to bear your burden within our communities. Along the way, open our eyes to the needs of those around us. Keep us on the path that leads to your glory.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Carla D. Sunberg
General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 8

Sunday, April 7, 2024



Luke 10:37b

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Scripture Insights

These powerful words are a direct challenge from Jesus given at the end of a story aimed to answer questions from an expert in the law who first asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When he and Jesus agreed that the key was loving God and loving neighbor, the expert then persisted, asking Jesus who his neighbor was.

This is when Jesus launches into a story that reveals an unlikely hero—a Samaritan turns out to be the good guy in the story. The Samaritan, unlike the priest and the Levite, was the only one who acknowledged the need, ran to the need, and met the need of a man who had been robbed and left for dead. Jesus answers the question of who is a neighbor by illustrating what a good neighbor does. Good neighbors see needs, go toward needs, and meet needs.

Jesus is telling us how to bless our communities—by doing what this hero of the story did. See the need, move toward the need, meet the need. Go and do likewise!

Today's Prayer

Jesus, help us be good neighbors by seeing needs, moving toward needs, and doing what we can to meet the needs in our communities. Teach us what it means to bless our communities today!

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Wynne Lankford
Lead Pastor, Southside Church (Virginia)

DAY 9

Monday, April 8, 2024



Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

Scripture Insights

While attending seminary, I worked as a personal banker at a local community bank. Whenever someone inquired about borrowing money, the most important questions to answer were whether the borrower had the credit to support the application and the ability to repay.

The author of Proverbs wants us to take note that this is never a question when we consider investing ourselves in the lives of the poor. When we give to others and extend kindness to those in need, we are lending not to someone with questionable character or an uncertain ability to repay but to the One with perfect credit—the Lord of all creation, who always repays with abundant interest. In this divine transaction, we can be confident in the integrity of the borrower. Our heavenly Father is never at risk of bankruptcy, and our investments in God’s kingdom are always safe and secure.

Our reward comes not in the form of material wealth but in the form of love, joy, peace, and a deep sense of purpose as we join God as partners in seeing the new creation lived out in the here and now. Our trust in God’s character, God’s commitment to justice, and God’s faithfulness in rewarding our acts of kindness should embolden us to live generously.

As you offer your kindness and compassion to others, remember that you’re engaging in an exchange with the greatest rewards that far surpass earthly riches.

Today’s Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the privilege of investing in your kingdom. May our acts of kindness be multiplied by your Spirit, and may we trust in your faithfulness to see the new creation revealed through them.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Dale Schaeffer
CotN District Superintendent, Florida

DAY 10

Tuesday, April 9, 2024



Acts 20:35

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Scripture Insights

Paul does not merely tell us what Jesus said; he also tells us we must *remember* it. Why? Because we have a tendency to be more aware of our personal needs than of our blessings, which makes us less likely to be generous with others. Generosity and gratitude are linked. We will never be generous people until we are grateful people. Once we are grateful, we will have no trouble becoming generous.

The work of blessing is also the work of remembering: the provision we’ve given, the blessing we’ve already received, the grace that has been freely distributed to us, and the love of God that covers. When we remember how we’ve been blessed, we become a blessing to others. Gratitude first, and generosity will always follow.

How has God blessed you? What provision has he provided? What spiritual giftings has he bestowed? What opportunities has he placed before you? What protection has he given you? Don’t just think about it—thank him for it.

Today’s Prayer

Jesus, our desire is to be like you. You gave your life so we wouldn’t have to, and you gave your life so we would know how to. Make us aware of your work in our life that we are ignorant of. Do not allow us to retain the spirit of spoiled children.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Kevin Jack
Lead Pastor, Highland Park Church (Florida)

DAY 11

Wednesday, April 10, 2024



Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Scripture Insights

The older I get, the clearer I am that *my* light and deeds aren't what God has in mind in today's scripture—but rather deeds prompted *by him*, that emit *his* light. When we fail to walk by the Spirit, our community ministries can be good but not best, safe but not stunning, a form of godliness yet void of power (see 2 Timothy 3:5). But God still speaks. Sometimes a counterintuitive, bold, and better way emerges.

Avoid the sequence problem. Don't prepare a cautious, ordinary ministry idea and then ask God to bless it. Ask God what is needed most, now, here? Answers really do come—often novel, fun, even scary in scale. That's why you'll need confirmation (prayer, counsel, the Word).

Ministering outside your comfort zone is exactly where good deeds glorify the Father. Your Godward courage is what emits light before others. David Brooks writes in *Second Mountain*, "You might think a bright personality would come from an unburdened life, but if you look closely at joyful people you notice very often the most incandescent souls have taken on the heaviest burdens."

Today's Prayer

Lord, we're exhausted by limitless good things. They don't even seem to bear much fruit. Get us on your agenda. What is needed most, now, here? Please show us and equip us, for your name's sake.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Gregg Chenoweth
President, Olivet Nazarene University (Illinois)

DAY 12

Thursday, April 11, 2024



1 Samuel 12:24

But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

Scripture Insights

Today's beautiful scripture is actually an admonition issued by the prophet Samuel in a stern address to Israel. Previously a nation governed by judges, the Israelites decided they wanted a king, as was the custom of the surrounding nations. Samuel was not pleased—God alone is King, he warns. Yet, when he takes the matter before the Lord, God instructs Samuel to give the people their way. The resulting domino effect would change the destiny of Israel forever.

Samuel understands well that the people have chosen a lesser way. He knows also that God is faithful and merciful and will not turn his face from his children. *Actions have consequences*, he portends. *Nevertheless*, he continues, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a wise person lives with a grateful heart.*

We're not so different today. Though we have stumbled many times, we are awestruck by the fear of the Lord and the demonstration of his continuing grace to save and sanctify us on our journeys of faith.

Ponder the words of this poignant African American spiritual that is familiar to many still today:

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Where you there when God raised him from the tomb?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. . .*

Today's Prayer

Lord, may we live in awe of you.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Bonnie Perry
General Editor, Church of the Nazarene
Editorial Director, The Foundry Publishing

DAY 13

Friday, April 12, 2024



Psalm 112:4

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

Scripture Insights

In a world where evil seems to get its way, shattered lives and chaotic circumstances are too common in our communities. The question is, can we Christians afford to be inconsequential to the world around us when we proclaim that our God is good, gracious, and compassionate?

In reading Psalm 112:4, we can realize that, just as God desires for us to be like him in our being, it is also his desire for us to be like him in our *doing*. Therefore, being gracious, compassionate, and righteous should be an integral part of our holy living just as they are the intrinsic nature of our God, expressed clearly in Psalms 111 and 112. It is like the saying, “Like father, like children!”

We know God is active in bringing order to the chaotic, messy world around us by acts of redemption and compassion. We, as God’s people, need to be guided by his light in these dark days so we can be active in reaching out and blessing our communities with incarnational, tangible, compassionate ministries that bring transformational and eternal change to everyone.

Today’s Prayer

Our prayer today is threefold: 1) That we are enlightened by his light to be a blessing to everyone even in our darkest moments; 2) That we be intentional in blessing our communities; and 3) That we do it joyfully.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Pascal Permis
Haitian Ministries Facilitator, USA/Canada Region, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 14

Saturday, April 13, 2024



1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Scripture Insights

Peter reminds us that we have each been created by God to fulfill unique and extraordinary purposes on this earth. We have been endowed with gifts and talents that are intended to be used for the good of others as acts of obedience and gratitude. Serving others allows us to carry out God's will on earth while drawing us closer to him. When we serve others, we exhibit the qualities of a servant leader, just as Jesus did during his time on earth. He humbly served the needs of others, showing compassion and spreading the hope of God.

Our gifts should not be seen as a means for personal gain or recognition but as valuable resources to benefit others and glorify God. Good stewardship of God's grace involves utilizing our God-given gifts to serve others and make a positive impact on those around us. We should never let them go to waste or selfishly hold on to them. Instead, we should use them to spread the love and hope of Christ and to bring healing to a broken world. Peter encourages us to strive to be like Jesus, who served others selflessly with humility and grace.

Today's Prayer

Thank you, Father, for your amazing grace. Thank you for the unique gifts you have given to us. Fill us with your creativity, and show us how to use our gifts to serve others.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Debra Voelker

USA/Canada Regional NMI Coordinator, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 15

Sunday, April 14, 2024



2 Corinthians 5:20 (NASB)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Scripture Insights

One of my hobbies is to restore old muscle cars from the 1960s and '70s. While I enjoy turning old, rusted metal into beautifully restored classics, it does take a tremendous amount of work. When I don't know how to put something together or properly restore it, I often look for tutorials on YouTube. YouTube is a great place to learn new things, but I've noticed it is much easier to watch the video than to do the work!

We are called to go to church, read our Bible, and grow spiritually, but sometimes we forget to intentionally leverage what we have learned to bring transformation to the people around us. Today's scripture demonstrates that God is not a passive observer, and we are not called to be either. God is entreating people—urgently pleading in order to persuade them—and he desires to do that through us! God is engaging our community with our stories and experiences to prove that transformation is real.

Don't be a passive observer. Take everything you have learned as a follower of Jesus and use it to passionately engage others and transform lives!

Today's Prayer

Father God, help us to catch your passion for the lost. Make your appeal through us. Leverage every good thing you have invested in our lives to engage our communities for Christ.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Reggie Phillips
Director of Discipleship, Southside Church (Virginia)

DAY 16

Monday, April 15, 2024



Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Scripture Insights

It’s not enough to love God. The desire of our hearts must be to live life in obedience to the direct commands of Jesus. Today’s scripture captures the relationship and transfer of authority from the Father to Jesus, who modeled a life in obedience to the heart of the Father. In his authority, Jesus gave us direct commands to *go, make disciples, baptize, and teach*. Jesus is the door of grace who gives us access to the God who made a way for his Spirit to dwell within us.

My dad was in the military, and that experience formed his worldview and relationship with the Father. I have had the pleasure of witnessing him live under the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit since I was five. Do you know someone who lives on a need-to-know basis, trusting the Holy Spirit’s leading, especially in the context of relationships and discipleship? Discipleship happens in the context of relationship, and relationships move at the speed of trust.

May the depth of our relationship with the Holy Spirit inform our relationships with others. May you live life on a need-to-know basis, under the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—because only the obedient can teach others to obey.

Today’s Prayer

Jesus, you are the door of grace who gives us access to the glory of the Father. By your example, Jesus, and the gift of your Holy Spirit, help us love, trust, and obey you, that we would be known for love.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Irene Lewis-Wimbley
Missionary-on-Staff, Pekin First Church of the Nazarene
Director, Southside Community Center (Illinois)

DAY 17

Tuesday, April 16, 2024



Ezekiel 34:26

I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.

Scripture Insights

In the Northwest U.S., we understand mist, drizzle, sprinkle, pouring rain, sideways rain, showers, and floods. The year we only had one day of mist, fires swept through, leaving hundreds of people homeless. We were desperate for rain. Sometimes our spiritual lives can become dry, where we only experience an occasional drizzle of God's presence. How we need a fresh outpouring, the glory of the Lord to shower God's blessings upon us!

I love God's promise to the desert land of Israel to bring showers of blessing, the results of which we can see even today. Rain showers grow fruit and other crops; they quench thirst; they cause beautiful flowers to bloom. A scientist tested the water in the three streams of the Jordan River as it enters the Dead Sea and found new, fresh springs of living water flowing, so even the earth under the ground testifies to God's showers of blessing.

We need the presence of the Lord to cover us from above, to blow in from the side, and to spring up underneath our every step. May the glory of the Lord so fill us that we can't help but shower God's blessings of love on all.

Today's Prayer

Gracious Lord, please send an outpouring of your holy presence to fill us anew today. Fill our churches, that we might be a blessing to our communities. Help us to shower your love and care on our neighbors and communities.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Kelli Westmark
Lead Pastor, Lincoln City Church of the Nazarene (Oregon)

DAY 18

Wednesday, April 17, 2024



Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Scripture Insights

In our world today, we tend to position our faith lives around what we receive instead of considering how we can bless. When the church focuses on itself rather than others, we have a harder time persuading the world that Jesus loves them.

Why do you go to church? Are you considering only yourself, or are you also considering how you can encourage others? True community isn't centered around our needs alone. True community happens when we consider the needs of others before ourselves. What would happen if the members of our churches became more concerned about others than about themselves? We would never lack unity, and we would always have people eager to serve!

What if your individual needs are only fulfilled *when* you consider others? What if we find true meaning for ourselves by first loving others? Think of your church. Think of the relationship you have with the brothers and sisters in your church. Are you consciously considering how you can help when you gather, or are you only contemplating your own needs? If you focus on yourself, you will struggle with meeting together. If you focus on others, you might find you never want to miss a gathering.

This is all possible; it simply takes making the intentional choice to place others ahead of ourselves. If you find yourself struggling to go to church, start encouraging others any time you are at church, and see if that changes how much you like being there.

Today's Prayer

Father, help us be people who would rather help others than worry about ourselves. Teach us how to love the way you love. Show us how to sacrifice our lives for the benefit of others.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Wendell Brown
CotN District Superintendent, North Central Ohio

DAY 19

Thursday, April 18, 2024



Colossians 1:28

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

Scripture Insights

He is the one we proclaim! Jesus. Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. Our Good Shepherd, the light of the world, the resurrection and the life. He is the one we proclaim.

Although the identity of Jesus is largely defined by the nature of his life, it is most clearly understood through his death and resurrection. It is that which we proclaim. On the cross, Jesus absorbed the full force of darkness and turned it into a movement of divine love. On the cross, Jesus embraced the full range of human sin and drew it into a sphere of divine grace. On the cross, Jesus submitted to the will of the Father and, in turn, set many captives free.

The cross is not the end. On the contrary, it is the beginning of faith; it shows the extent of grace and reveals God's never-ending love for humanity. The empty tomb proves that darkness cannot overcome the light. Without the resurrection, the cross would be a hopeless dead end.

The resurrection is the dawn of a new morning and the hope of more yet to come. We proclaim the crucified and risen Lord, who sustains us as the bread of life, so that every single person may be mature in Christ. He is the one we proclaim!

Today's Prayer

Lord, come to us today. Lead us by your life-giving Spirit into all truth so we may find you as we meditate on your Word. Empower us to witness to your power wherever we go.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Simone Twibell
Assistant Professor of Intercultural Studies, Olivet Nazarene University (Illinois)

DAY 20

Friday, April 19, 2024



Ephesians 3:10-11

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Scripture Insights

It's shocking, isn't it? Ordinary us, everyday Jesus followers, are given the incredible trust to make God's wisdom known to rulers and authorities in heavenly places! When evil rulers and authorities seek to divide and destroy humanity, our witness declares heaven's ultimate authority, who is Jesus. We testify that God's eternal purpose is already realized. That purpose is, in the fullness of time, to unite all things in him in heaven and on earth (see Ephesians 1:10).

Church, we partner in uniting all things in Christ when, motivated by the fullness of the gospel, we move outside our normal spaces and into our communities. We speak powerfully not only to heavenly rulers and authorities but also to earthly ones. By going toward pain and bringing the healing touch of Christ, his eternal purpose is realized one life at a time. When faced with war, famine, disease, addiction, and oppression, we carry within ourselves the hope that brings peace, freedom, and love.

Where will you carry hope today?

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, we honor you today. May your mighty Spirit continually remind us that our words and actions carry hope and make your wisdom known, both on earth and in heaven. Help us live faithfully into this sacred trust.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Julie O'Hara

Program Director, Church of the Nazarene Preaching Collaborative

DAY 21

Saturday, April 20, 2024



James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Scripture Insights

How do we know a basketball player is a basketball player? How do we know a ballet dancer is a ballet dancer? Well, they play basketball, and they dance ballet. We know them by what they do.

James is not saying we earn our salvation by works. We can't earn our salvation. It is freely given to anyone who places their faith in Jesus. But if we are truly following Jesus, we will do the things that Jesus does. James is reminding us that true followers of Jesus will care for the needs of others and not follow the selfish ways of the world.

Some have accused James of being heavy on a works theology, as if we could earn our way to heaven by what we do. James is not saying that. James is saying, if we are followers of Jesus, we will do the things that Jesus does.

How do we know if we are truly Christians, genuinely followers of Jesus? We play basketball, and we dance ballet! Errr . . . I mean, we follow the ways of our Master.

Today's Prayer

Lord, examine our hearts. Help us to see the needy around us. May we not be insulated from the world. Instead, may we follow you into the broken, lonely, isolated, fearful, needy places in the world around us and minister in your name.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Jim Bond
CotN District Superintendent, Kansas

DAY 22

Sunday, April 21, 2024



Luke 10:33 (NASB)

But a Samaritan who was on a journey came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion.

Scripture Insights

Just what the doctor ordered! In Luke 10:33, Jesus is sharing the story of the Good Samaritan. Dr. Luke makes a point in this passage that speaks to us still today: the Samaritan saw *and had compassion*. Compassion isn't just a feeling—it is also an action. The world may *feel* sorry, but Christians are compelled by compassion to *act*—even toward those we do not know, or maybe some we don't even like.

Part of this story highlights the reality that Jews and Samaritans did not like each other. Yet here a Samaritan has eyes to see someone in need. He sees someone who is very different from him—and he acts. He is not concerned with what others will think. He is not concerned with what it might cost him. He knows it isn't safe.

Compassion isn't safe. It isn't about us, and it can be costly. Maybe that is exactly what the doctor ordered.

Today's Prayer

Give us eyes to see and courage to act so that we may bless our communities.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Jay Height
Executive Director, Shepherd Community Center (Indiana)

DAY 23

Monday, April 22, 2024



James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

Scripture Insights

For James, the ideal community was one that took God at his word. They put their faith into practice. They resisted temptation, overcame testing, and cared for widows, orphans, and the sick. Their faith showed up in acts of kindness, acts of grace, and acts of love. This was a community driven by what Jesus called the greatest commandments—to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbor. James wraps his letter in the prayer of faith, both in the beginning and the end, suggesting that prayer is the natural expression of faith for any believer—whether ill, in turmoil, or in moments of rejoicing.

We are encouraged to call for the elders to anoint and pray for the sick. The result, according to James 5:15–16, will be healing and forgiveness. These are the ingredients needed in our desperate, dying world. As carriers of the presence of the almighty God, the church should live God’s Word boldly. Praying for the healing of the spiritually and physically sick is an outward expression of an inward trust in God and his power. It is the church living loudly and boldly for Christ.

Today’s Prayer

Lord, give us hearts of compassion for the lost and broken. Give us the courage to live your Word loudly. We are desperate to see our communities, cities, and neighborhoods come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and receive healing.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Alshandra Visagie
Executive Director, Cactus Nazarene Ministries (Texas)

DAY 24

Tuesday, April 23, 2024



Isaiah 30:18

Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Scripture Insights

Today's scripture shares so much about the character of God. At the core of God's nature, he is gracious, compassionate, and just! I think you would agree that God showing up on our behalf in these ways is overwhelming. Not only do we not deserve the love that continues to pursue us, but he also *longs* to love us in this way.

When I think about longing, I remember when I started dating my wife. She followed God's call and served in missions for a summer in a city far from me. It was a long summer that created a longing in me to be close to her again. She was always on my mind, and I rearranged my schedule daily, anticipating her phone calls. I lived for those ten-minute calls.

It's hard to believe God longs for time with us. He looks forward with great anticipation to time spent with us. I am so grateful to be loved in this kind of way by the God who created us and everything around us.

Today's Prayer

Father, thank you for your grace, compassion, and justice. You are so good to us! Help us receive the love you have for us and, through your Holy Spirit, extend these same beautiful traits to those around us.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Kevin Donoho
Lead Pastor, Olathe College Church of the Nazarene (Kansas)

DAY 25

Wednesday, April 24, 2024



Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Scripture Insights

“Clothes make the man.” At least, that’s what my dad said when it was time to dress up. What I didn’t know was that he was quoting Mark Twain, who was paraphrasing Shakespeare, who was quoting Erasmus, who was paraphrasing Homer. Who knew dress clothes had a lineage all the way back to the seventh century BC?

Like it or not, scientific literature and our own personal experience demonstrate that what we wear impacts how others perceive us. In the athleisure world in which we live, this kind of research seems dated, but note this: in scientific studies, the person in the white lab coat gets better results than the equally qualified in plain clothes. This actually has everything to do with blessing our community. How we present ourselves influences the way others perceive us.

I’m not suggesting that our clothing will make us better servants of Christ, but I am encouraging us to hear Paul’s words in Colossians 3 to “clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” When we “dress” this way, it is evident that we truly are, as Paul says, “holy and dearly loved.”

Whatever garments you wear, be clothed with the fruit of the Spirit. Then you will be a blessing in your community.

Today’s Prayer

Lord Jesus—you who clothed yourself in flesh that you might reach us—enable us to clothe ourselves in your righteousness, that we might be a blessing to our communities.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Sam Barber
CotN District Superintendent, South Central Ohio

DAY 26

Thursday, April 25, 2024



2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

Scripture Insights

I grew up with chronic asthma, that condition where the airways in your lungs narrow and fill with fluid. Breathing becomes difficult, and you feel intense pressure in your chest. There were many times as a boy when it felt like a baby elephant was sitting on my chest. Asthmatic episodes are often called “attacks.” Many of those attacks resulted in my parents taking me to the emergency room for relief of those heavy symptoms. Thankfully, by the time I was eighteen, I had pretty much outgrown the worst of this condition, as is common for childhood asthmatics.

In my college years, I began to serve as a sponsor at Nazarene district kids’ camps. At one of the earliest of these, a young man experienced a severe asthma attack. Other sponsors became frantic, not knowing how to respond, which only heightened the anxiety of the one suffering. Because I could fully identify with what he was experiencing, I was able to calm and comfort him and give some guidance for treatment to those overseeing the camp.

The God of all comfort knows all the pressure we feel in our lives. He sees the attacks we face. He is with us and for us in every moment of heaviness and pain. He brings us through, and then gives us the grace to help those facing the same kinds of troubles we have endured.

If you feel pressure in your life today, ask the God of all comfort to strengthen you. He will—and then in some moment of trouble, you will be equipped to do the same for another.

Today’s Prayer

Lord, you know what we are facing today. Please be our strength, our shield, and our comfort. And Lord, you know someone else is dealing with the heavy pressures of life today to whom we might bring your comfort and presence. Show us who they are. Send us to them with your love and compassion.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Jeffrey Johnson
CotN District Superintendent, South Texas

DAY 27

Friday, April 26, 2024



Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Scripture Insights

Who comes to mind when you think about someone in your life who consistently puts the interests of others before their own? I imagine the person you are thinking about has both inspired and encouraged you along your journey through life and that God has used them to extend compassion and love to countless others along the way. The impact we can have on others when we put this principle into practice in our lives truly is profound!

The challenge we all must accept is that, rather than be consumed by our own selfishness and pride, we are called to look out for the needs of others. If we are willing to intentionally put this attitude of humility and compassion into practice in our daily lives, we will be able to fully step into our purpose and truly be a blessing to our communities.

We have an opportunity to make a profound impact in the lives of those around us. What will come to mind when others think about you?

Today's Prayer

God, we thank you for the compassion and love you have for us. Open our eyes to the needs of others and help us be a blessing to our communities today.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Tim Fisher
Lead Pastor, Crossroads Community Church (Indiana)

DAY 28

Saturday, April 27, 2024



Psalm 116:5

The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

Scripture Insights

Think about whom you saw. I saw people exercising (I finally went myself). I saw my rabbi friend counseling his congregant. I saw my daughter, excited she received a B+ in math. I saw a pregnant, eighteen-year-old mother of two. I saw an immigrant from the Philippines. I saw two eighty-year-old ladies serving their congregation. I saw an alcoholic.

What did you hear? I heard concern in people's voices. I heard laughter as some served. I heard heartache as people faced tough decisions. I heard forgiveness.

Today's psalm reminds us that our God is worthy to be praised for his mercy, righteousness, and compassion. Our God shows favor and keeps his promises! In the first four verses, the psalmist describes that God hears three times. Our God sees and hears the situation and desires to change it. This verse also serves as a reminder for us to see with God's eyes and hear with God's ears those we encounter.

How can I show compassion to my children when they are struggling with schoolwork? How can I show solidarity toward those of different faiths? How can I show compassion to teenage moms? How can I show grace toward persons fighting addiction? How can I show compassion to the immigrants we encounter in our restaurants, schools, grocery stores, and church outreach events?

Today's Prayer

Father, open our eyes and ears to see what you see and hear what you hear. We confess that too often we are hurried. Help us to slow down and be your hands and feet; may we offer compassion.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Ismael Flores

Lead Pastor, Rio Valley Church of the Nazarene (Texas)

DAY 29

Sunday, April 28, 2024



Luke 10:34-35

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”

Scripture Insights

In the story Jesus tells about the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan followed the religious leaders who had their chance and failed to bless the victimized man on the side of the road. This amazing Samaritan then becomes a shorthand reference for loving others. He expresses spontaneous concern. He sees a need, and he responds. His generosity is expressed in his detailed care—bandaged wounds, transportation, housing and meals, all expenses paid. This is generosity.

The Samaritan does not act according to personal judgments about the man’s worthiness. He is the wrong race, the wrong religion, has no way to make repayment—and maybe his injuries are deserved, who knows. Perhaps this Samaritan was the recipient of abundant grace. Those who have received lavish grace are more apt to give grace. These folks travel through life with a grace “care package” ready to give. As recipients of Christ’s grace, we should be prepared to bless others.

Today’s Prayer

May we be like the Good Samaritan. May we have eyes to see needs, hands to serve others, the means to respond generously, and hearts that live our lives out of love for others so that others may see Jesus.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Virgil Askren
CotN District Superintendent, Colorado

DAY 30

Monday, April 29, 2024



1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Scripture Insights

First Corinthians 15 is a masterful discourse on the resurrection of Christ, and it can be tempting as we read it to imagine that Paul is going to end his deep theological chapter with words such as: *don't lose heart because great hope awaits in the life to come*. Yet Paul doesn't do exactly that. Instead, he does one better, connecting our future hope to our present responsibility. This is great news for us because Paul is saying to all the unseen heroes and heroines of the faith that what we do in the Lord here in the present truly matters.

We aren't told exactly how God will take our small acts of service and love and transform them, but we can rest assured that God will somehow weave everything we have ever offered to God into the glorious tapestry of God's new creation. The resurrection of Jesus, Paul is saying, is somehow proof that God will do exactly that!

Thank you, Pastor Paul. What an encouraging word for a church who desperately needs to hear it. Our labor in the Lord, big or small, matters here and in eternity.

Today's Prayer

Almighty God who fills your church with resurrection power, fill us today anew with a resurrected hope that holds to the unwavering belief that our labor in and for you is not in vain.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Gabriela Rodriguez
Lead Pastor, Trinity Church of the Nazarene (Oklahoma)

DAY 31

Tuesday, April 30, 2024



Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Scripture Insights

The features that define us—our talents, temperaments, and uniqueness—don't occur by accident. We are custom-made by God. Some translations of Ephesians 2:10 have Paul stating that we are God's *masterpiece*. The term in Greek is *poiema*—the root of our English word “poem.” A poem epitomizes elegance in its thoughtful articulation, structured layout, and choice use of words. The rhythm of every line and the deliberate selection of every word unite to enrich the overall understanding. The creation of such artistry reflects the poet's expertise, purpose, and attention to detail.

God's craftsmanship is evident in each one of us as he uses his divine abilities to mold our traits and give us our unique looks and capabilities. Paul emphasizes that God's plan for us isn't an afterthought. Instead, it is a blueprint, designed before time began, “before the creation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

Embrace your uniqueness as God's handiwork, God's *masterpiece*, and use it to illuminate your community. Your distinct talents and abilities are a gift designed to be shared. Whether through art, leadership, compassion, or intellect, your contributions can inspire others, foster unity, and be a tangible blessing to those around you. You're custom-made for purpose!

Today's Prayer

Heavenly Father, may we, as your precious works of art, realize that you do not love us because we are valuable. Instead, may we see that we are valuable because you love us.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Rob Beckett
Lead Pastor, Shepherdsville First Church of the Nazarene (Kentucky)

DAY 32

Wednesday, May 1, 2024



Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

Scripture Insights

Growing up, I always dreamed of the day I would be an adult. I loved the idea of driving wherever I wanted, eating anything I wanted, and choosing my bedtime because 9pm came very quickly for an energized ten-year-old. At the same time, I also didn't envy the bills my parents had to pay or the hours they spent deciphering how insurance worked. I wanted the benefits of adulthood without the responsibilities that came with it.

In today's passage, Paul invites readers to consider the responsibilities that come with the benefit of freedom in Christ. The freedom Jesus gives us, rather than being a self-serving gift to simply be enjoyed, should propel us into loving service. This made me wonder if freedom in Christ is often seen as an achievement rather than an empowerment. Do we want the benefits of the freedom Christ gives us without its responsibilities? When we embrace Christ's freedom, we must not only enjoy the advantages but also recognize and act upon the responsibilities that come with it. Maybe this is the heart of what Paul is asking—are we willing to give up the comfort of solely enjoying God's freedom and accept the responsibility of serving one another in love?

Today's Prayer

Lord, you have called us into a life of freedom. Help us acknowledge where freedom has become a self-serving achievement rather than an empowerment to serve. We invite your Holy Spirit to lead us today with everyone we encounter.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Yhoshua Ticum
Connections Pastor, The Naz Church (Ohio)

DAY 33

Thursday, May 2, 2024



James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Scripture Insights

There's nothing like good food. The aroma when food is nearing completion hints at the taste soon to be enjoyed. The beauty of an artistically crafted meal or baked treat cues anticipation. The only problem is, regardless of how incredible and satisfying any food might be, nothing can nourish us beyond the next few hours. Inevitably, hunger will arrive again, and again, and again.

Although the purpose of food preparation is ultimately to eat, hunting down a new recipe is an enjoyable way to start the process. Reading recipes can be inspiring, but they will never satisfy if left on the page. Instead, recipes are designed to become a plan, informing us of the ingredients to be gathered, time taken in preparation, and steps required to create something wonderful to eat.

Likewise, God's Word left on the page can certainly be inspiring—but that is incomplete. Rather, these words become a plan, informing our thoughts and actions, time to be taken, and steps required to turn words and thoughts into tangible reality. And, just like excellent food, God's Word is most fulfilling when others are invited to share in the doing and enjoying. Better than a good meal, putting God's Word into action leaves lasting effects.

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, may your Word inspire us to create divine recipes of kingdom truths. Guide us to plan, to act, and to invite others to join your good work. Remove all obstacles and free us for joyful obedience.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Julie Cheney
Lead Pastor, Tulare Church of the Nazarene (California)

DAY 34

Friday, May 3, 2024



Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Scripture Insights

Discipleship teacher. Small group leader. Tech/media team. Social media manager. The list of church jobs is never-ending, and it can keep us pretty busy.

Today's scripture is always my go-to verse when I get caught up in doing the work of the Lord. It is a reminder that each day we are given to live, we have to sacrifice our own feelings, desires, and wants with the help of our almighty God. These natural tendencies are only able to come under control when we offer ourselves to God in a holy and pleasing way. This means we come with the right spirit and a mindset that honors the Lord.

We can be a blessing to our various communities when we show our everyday living as our true and proper worship. How we live together, how we serve one another, and how we treat others is a representation of our true and proper worship. When we are a living sacrifice in our community, we can show that how we do what we do is just as important as *what* we do.

Today's Prayer

Lord, help us to live sacrificially as we submit to your way. We desire to be a blessing in our communities so that your kingdom will come and your will be done as we live in a holy and pleasing way to you.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Cassandra Trotman

Worship Leader, Orlando Metro West Church of the Nazarene (Florida)

DAY 35

Saturday, May 4, 2024



Hebrews 13:16

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Scripture Insights

Today's scripture reminds us to do good and to share with others. This admonition comes immediately after encouraging the reader to continually offer to God sacrifices of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

Which is more important? Praise or service? Worship or works? By connecting these, the writer is showing us how they are essentially two sides of the same coin. Sincere praise is best followed up with service and generosity to others. Works of service reveal the truth of our professions of faith. Both are important.

We receive in worship so we can give in service. We are encouraged to offer sacrifices of praise and worship as well as sacrifices of good works and generosity. With such sacrifices, Hebrews declares, God is pleased! This is good news. Worship matters. Church matters. Works of service matter as well, and they flow naturally from our worship. One is incomplete without the other.

Through Jesus, and in the name of Jesus, we are called to offer sacrifices of praise as a worshiping community alongside intentional good works of service and generosity to our larger community. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, thank you for inviting us to be part of your family. We love to worship you. Thank you for inviting us to join you in the community to share your love with others. Bless our communities through us.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Mark Lindstrom
CotN District Superintendent, North Arkansas

DAY 36

Sunday, May 5, 2024



Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Scripture Insights

Paul says we should do everything in the name of Jesus. Instead, we tend to do mission in the name of our local church, our denomination, or some other way we distinguish ourselves from other Christians. The church has, at times, done damage to Jesus's name in our eagerness to bring the world to him. Sadly, some actions of the church have earned us a bad reputation. Jesus, nevertheless, retains his good character.

There has been a not-so-subtle shift in church culture that comes at the expense of the proclamation of good news in Jesus's name. We might say, let's simply be present in the world, abound in acts of compassion, bless our communities with justice, and do good things as often as possible without the burden or responsibility of proclaiming Jesus.

Nazarenes believe that proclamation, presence (proximity), and purity make the gospel effective! Paul reminds us to tell those to whom we are sent that Jesus sent us and that he alone should get the praise for the life and acts of mission we practice.

Today's Prayer

Father, help us proclaim Jesus when we love and live among those who desperately need you. When we go to bless our communities, make us bold and not ashamed to proclaim the one who sent us.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Mark Bane
Director, Evangelism and New Church Development, USA/Canada Region

DAY 37

Monday, May 6, 2024



Matthew 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Scripture Insights

By nature, I'm a problem solver. It's part of my biological makeup as well as part of the work I do. I want to help. So when someone shows me or tells me about something that is broken, I naturally want to get to work and throw out ideas about how to fix it. Usually, I try diagnosing what happened to make things go wrong in the first place before diving into any resolution. But sometimes, I forget that every problem I encounter has a face or two attached to it. Jesus never forgets this. When he sees a problem, he knows there is a person on the other end.

Today's scripture says he "had compassion." The Greek word underneath our English translation is *splanchna*, which refers to our "inward parts"—our intestines. So we can paraphrase this verse this way: "When Jesus saw the crowds, his guts hurt!"

In order to bless my community, I think my guts need to hurt a little more at the pain I see all around me.

Today's Prayer

Our Father, Jesus always draws us deeper. May we see people as you see them today, not as problems to solve but as people to bless. May we lead all who follow us with a pain in our gut for those who feel harassed and helpless.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Brett Rickey
CotN District Superintendent, Oregon Pacific

DAY 38

Tuesday, May 7, 2024



Psalm 86:11

Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Scripture Insights

When David went through difficulties in his life, he desired to remain teachable, flexible, and adaptable to God's plans. We notice that in today's scripture David reminded himself not to be too wise in his own eyes. The opposite of a united heart is a divided heart, which gives us multiple options, some of which are not pleasing to God. Could David be admitting that his heart is playing tug of war? David's desire in prayer was the undivided heart, singular loyalty to his God.

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, he said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). This totally focused and devoted heart is what God desires from and looks for in us.

Today's Prayer

God, we ask you now to end the tug-of-war that goes on in our hearts. We ask that you would give us humility and a desire to see clearly your will for our lives. We thank you for your faithfulness to us and ask that you grant us undivided, all-in hearts that want nothing more than to please you.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Brian Wiesinger
Lead Pastor, The Crossing Church (Colorado)

DAY 39

Wednesday, May 8, 2024



Luke 15:20

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Scripture Insights

God is more than a judge casting a decision on our actions or a coach trying to improve our performance. The heart of God is of a parent who loves, delights in, and longs for his children. Jesus is trying to help us see that this is the fundamental nature of our Creator. God is judge and coach, yes, but above all—God is our loving Father.

Before the prodigal son cleaned up his behavior, changed his heart, or made amends for all his mistakes, his father saw him, was full of compassion, and joyously received him. When God's children wander, God longs for us to return. As soon as the father saw the beginnings of the son's movement toward him, the father did not hesitate to run the rest of the way to his son. This father loves and delights in his wayward son. Our God loves and delights in us!

If we begin to let this truth begin to trickle into our internal belief that this is our Creator's heart toward us, it will have a profound impact on the way we see ourselves and others. God longs for your freedom from self-condemnation and the condemnation of others.

Today's Prayer

Lord, help us to embrace our belovedness. Our shame and self-condemnation are repelled by this notion. We are not worthy, yet you who know us best also love us best. May we fully receive and fully extend this incredible grace.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—David Goodwin
Youth Pastor, Central Church of the Nazarene (Kansas)

DAY 40

Thursday, May 9, 2024



Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Scripture Insights

I have walked for exercise most of my life, usually for miles in the community where I live. However, when my husband and I moved into our newest church's parsonage, I decided to take advantage of the extra-large yard and walk in a circle around the edge of the yard, as if it were a track. Little did I know the Lord was guiding my path to blessing my community.

As I walked along the edge of the yard, I met my neighbors and began chatting with them. Sometimes, my thirty-minute walk turned into a one-hour walk because of all the neighborly conversations. Over time, trust was built, and my husband and I decided to host a neighborhood cookout. The neighbors responded positively, and all invitees came; some even brought other neighbors. As a crowd of twenty-one people sat on our back porch while my husband flipped burgers in the pouring rain, we made a memory and solidified relationships for the Lord's glory that the next pastor was able to continue to cultivate.

If you are willing to bless your community, trust that the Lord, in his vast knowledge, will make your paths straight—or maybe circular, as the need arises.

Today's Prayer

Lord, open our eyes to opportunities to bless our communities that are right at our fingertips. Give us the courage to do what you show us for your glory.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Debra White Smith
The Wesleyan Woman (Texas)

DAY 41

Friday, May 10, 2024



Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Insights

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to his followers in John 14:16: *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.* Our biblical Wesleyan doctrine declares that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people. The Holy Spirit is at work convincing the world of sin and offering the saving grace of Jesus. After a person receives Jesus, sanctification by the Holy Spirit is available to the believer. The Holy Spirit is the faithful companion who sustains us in our growing journey of grace until the day when we will be with Jesus for all eternity. With today's scripture, the apostle Paul assures all believers that God is working in our lives through the Holy Spirit, completing what Jesus started.

Today's Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, how we long to know you better. Please guide us and teach us from God's Word how to become more Christlike. We thank you for working in our lives to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Roberto Hodgson
Director, Multicultural Ministries, USA/Canada Region

DAY 42

Saturday, May 11, 2024



Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Scripture Insights

In a world filled with angst and division, today's scripture serves as a guiding light to remind us of the profound importance of kindness, compassion, and forgiveness in our daily lives. It encourages us to set aside our grievances, resentment, and judgments, choosing empathy and forgiveness instead. We are called to embrace others and prioritize the well-being of our neighbors over ourselves and our own desires. By extending kindness and compassion, we not only heal the wounds of others but also invite the mending of our own hearts and lives.

It's easy to find excuses to hold onto anger, grudges, or bitterness. Instead, let us be kind and compassionate to one another, mirroring the boundless forgiveness God has shown us through Christ. Through simple acts of love and forgiveness, we can bridge divides, restore broken relationships, and create an environment of harmony and unity. In doing so, we become vessels of God's grace, radiating his love to a world in need of healing. May we be reminded often that we have been forgiven much, and it is our privilege to extend that forgiveness and love to others.

Today's Prayer

Lord, help us to become more like you every day as we reflect your love and grace to those around us. May our words and actions be filled with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness in stark contrast to the harsh and judgmental world in which we live.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Justin Pickard
USA/Canada Regional Youth Coordinator

DAY 43

Sunday, May 12, 2024



Genesis 12:2 (NASB)

And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

Scripture Insights

You have likely heard the phrase “blessed to be a blessing,” which originates from the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:2. God would bless Abram and make his name great—*so that* Abram would be a blessing to others.

Blessing others has a boomerang effect. In Genesis 11, we find the story of the Tower of Babel, where the people desired to build a city with a tower that reached to the heavens. Genesis 11:4 says they wanted to “make a name for [themselves].” In doing so, they would not be scattered across the whole earth. Their selfish desire resulted in the opposite effect. Rather than staying gathered in community, their selfishness led to their scattering. It always does.

By contrast, in Genesis 12, God offers another path. God will bless Abram. Abram isn’t blessing himself. God will make Abram’s name great. Abram isn’t making his own name great. Abram is called to take the incredible blessing of relationship with the Father and use it to bless others. In doing so, guess what? Abram will find community! His people will be rooted in one place and will not be scattered.

If you desire for your church to be a place of true community, then it starts with blessing others.

Today’s Prayer

Father, with the many blessings you have given us, we desire to be a blessing to our communities. Help us to bless our neighbors; as we do so, may they come to know and follow you.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Scott Rainey
Global Director, Nazarene Discipleship International

DAY 44

Monday, May 13, 2024



Numbers 6:24–26

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Scripture Insights

The prayer in today’s scripture is the assurance that God is the source of blessings. It announces God’s desire to bless his people and indicates that blessing is God’s idea. Blessing is not something God’s people must beg for; it is a matter of receiving it and passing it on to the rest of the world.

This prayer speaks of the light of the presence of the Lord and the result of living in the divine presence. God supplies the wording of this blessing because it articulates his willingness to respond in grace and generosity. The Lord is eager to turn to his people, to smile on them, to protect them, and to provide complete wholeness and peace.

The prerequisite for this abundant and unlimited flow of blessings is the presence of the Lord. The implication is that blessing is God’s initiative, so it is essential that all our efforts to bless our communities be the result of our seeking God’s direction. And, since God is the source, we can be assured he will provide the necessary resources. Most important, we can proceed with boldness and confidence because we know we are asking and acting according to his will.

Today’s Prayer

Father, help us not to hoard your blessings for ourselves but to spread them to all the nations, according to your will and directions. Help us advance your purposes by prioritizing the good news of Jesus Christ.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Samantha Chambo
Regional Education Coordinator, USA/Canada, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 45

Tuesday, May 14, 2024



Proverbs 11:11

Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

Scripture Insights

It happens in the marketplace—where pressures mount, where fear and suspicion drive us to label instead of listen, where uncertainty pushes us into defensive postures, where “the mouth of the wicked” captures so much airtime. Into this space—beyond the safety of the sanctuary and the self-assuring echo chambers of social media—venture the upright. They cannot be less daring, for their hearts have been captured by the mandate to be imitators of God and live a life of love (see Ephesians 5:1–2). For them, only one label applies to everyone: neighbor.

They see their neighbors, look into their eyes, learn their names, hear their stories. Against the impulse to gain the upper hand or eliminate risks to their own resources, the upright walk in the marketplace with humility and generosity of spirit—listening, learning, engaging with integrity and sensitivity, rooted in Christ, clothed with compassion and kindness (see Proverbs 11:1–10; Colossians 3:12). They cross all kinds of barriers and divides. Like the Samaritan. Like Jesus, who dared to be fully present in real moments with the wayward and despised, exemplifying and offering life.

Hope takes hold in spaces laid waste by the wicked. With each embrace of neighbor, the entire community is uplifted.

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, examine with us our last twenty-four hours, these last seven days. Open our eyes to see all around us always and only neighbors, pursued by you. Let our lives become the uplifting blessing of the upright.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Stan Rodes
Administrative Director, Global Clergy Development, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 46

Wednesday, May 15, 2024



Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Scripture Insights

Isaiah brings us great news for today: God is with us! Our God is not some distant, unattached being who ignores or disengages from humanity. Instead, God is intricately connected to humanity, moving and working in our world and journeying alongside us every step of the way.

As you seek to engage your community just as God engages with us, you may be considering the energy, resources, money, and time that will be required. You may be anxious about doing it “right,” or unsure of how to best be a blessing to your community, or even where to begin. Let the words of Isaiah bring you hope today. God will strengthen you and help you! You are not alone. Trust in the Lord’s help and partnership with you as you pour out his blessing and love to the world around you.

God is with us—close to you even now as you read this—and God is trustworthy to be with you as you go and engage the world. God is already at work in every person we come across. Our call is to engage the work that God is already doing, trusting that God’s presence is with us always.

We need not fear! God is with us!

Today’s Prayer

Holy God, open our eyes to seeing the ways that you are moving and working in the world. Give us courage to partner with you in all that you are doing. Give us the assurance that you are with us.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Bethany Acre

Youth & Discipleship Pastor, Central Church of the Nazarene (Kansas)

DAY 47

Thursday, May 16, 2024



Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Scripture Insights

A man went to visit Yosemite National Park, but because of a mix-up in his schedule, he wound up with only one hour to spend there. He rushed over to the ranger headquarters and said, “I only have one hour to spend in the park—tell me what I should see.”

The park ranger said, “If you only have one hour to spend at Yosemite, then my advice is to climb up to the tallest observation point, look over the entire park, and just cry—because one hour is not enough time to do it justice.”

I think about that story when I read this passage. Paul was amazed at the sheer magnitude of these blessings from God. The blessings he writes about in the verses that follow are: hope (1:18); power (1:19); peace (2:14); freedom and confidence (3:12); strength (3:16); grace (4:7); the armor of God (6:11). And here is the best part. They are all ours—every single one of them!

This thought is expressed well in the familiar hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”: *Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth; thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow; blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

Today's Prayer

Father, thank you for the spiritual blessings that you freely give to us. May we never take them for granted or fail to remember that every good and perfect gift comes from above.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Daryl Blank
Lead Pastor, Springdale Nazarene Church (Ohio)

DAY 48

Friday, May 17, 2024



Galatians 3:14

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Scripture Insights

Several years ago, I heard the firsthand-account story “Let My People Go,” by Cal Bombay of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. In an unnamed, war-ravaged nation, slavery was a way of life. People in the north captured women and children from the south—many of them Christian—and sold them as servants and concubines. The stories were devastating. Bombay shared the heartrending, sometimes infuriating account of the 1997 mission to return the slaves to their southern homeland, to buy or to redeem them, and to set them free again in the name of the Lord.

The word “redeem” literally means “to buy back.” Jesus’s death *redeemed* not only Abraham’s descendants but also *every* nation (see Genesis 12:3). The blessing given to Abraham is something far more precious than prosperity or honour; it is the blessing of a right standing with God through faith. This same blessing is for all who would by faith come to Jesus Christ! What freedom!

Church, this blessing we are given is too spectacular to keep within our own walls. We must share this good news of redemption with our neighbours, that they too may be blessed by right standing with God! Can you testify to receiving such a blessing?

Today’s Prayer

Precious Saviour, may your sacrifice for our redemption not be forgotten. Holy Spirit, we receive you by faith. Father, give us the opportunity and the boldness to share this blessing with those who hunger for such good news.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Rose Brower-Young
CotN District Superintendent, Canada West

DAY 49

Saturday, May 18, 2024



1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Scripture Insights

Why is love listed third in today's scripture? Peter's teaching in the chapters leading up to this verse is radically countercultural to his contemporaries and deeply offensive to our modern ears. This verse serves as both a concluding exhortation for what has come before and an introduction to what follows. Peter directs his teaching to those who have received the gospel and desire to faithfully live it out in the midst of the world we find ourselves in.

Peter exhorts his readers to embody five virtues. The first, "be like-minded," and the last, "be humble," deal with understanding in community and, in fact, share a common root word. The second, "be sympathetic," and the fourth, "be compassionate," deal with emotion and passion.

This leaves the third, "love one another," standing on its own. In his *New Beacon Bible Commentary* on 1 Peter, Dan Powers recognizes the chiasmic structure of this list that is more common in Hebrew literature than Greek (a-b-c-b-a).

The chiasmic structure gives us the key clue as to why love comes third in the list. It is the cardinal virtue, the hinge on which all the other virtues rely, and it is expressed in Christian community by our willingness to be of one mind (like-minded and humble) and one passion (sympathetic, compassionate).

Today's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, may your Word become the prevailing reality of our lives together. May we experience these virtues in fellowship with one another as we humbly choose to agree with your revealed truth and passionately participate in each other's suffering. We pray this in the name of Jesus and for his sake.

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Scott J. Sherwood
President, Nazarene Bible College

DAY 50

Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024



Luke 24:49

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

Scripture Insights

Pentecost started as a sit-in: the last recorded words of Jesus were “to stay in the city.” Taking the gospel to the nations required being “clothed with power from on high.” The word “power” in the Old Testament refers to great human strength (think Samson, for instance). The word in the New Testament refers not to human strength but to divine power. The Greek word is *dunamis*, and from it we get the English words “dynamo” and “dynamite.” Divine power is electric and explosive.

Jesus operated “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14), and he promised to clothe us in that same power. It is a power that can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). It is a resurrection power (Ephesians 3:18–20). Once they received that kind of power, a sit-in was not possible. That power resulted in being sent out to accomplish the impossible! As Samuel Chadwick noted, on the Day of Pentecost, “no one needed to ask if they had received the Holy Ghost. Fire is self-evident. So is power!”

Today’s Prayer

On this Day of Pentecost, we ask for a fresh clothing with your divine power, an “immeasurably more” kind of power, a resurrection power, a power that will be self-evident and that will move us from sitting in to being sent out!

What is the Spirit saying to you today?

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—Stan Reeder

Director, USA/Canada Region, Church of the Nazarene

NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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Jesus called his disciples the salt of the earth and the light of the world, encouraging us not to lose our saltiness and urging us to let our light shine in the world (see Matthew 5:13–16). We take this command of Jesus seriously to be salt and light in our communities. We are called to be a blessing to others around us.

Will we follow as the Lord has called us? Will we go into our communities and be a blessing to our neighbors and share the hope that is Christ within us?

This booklet is an invitation to participate in our third annual Half-Million Mobilization call to prayer. Join with your fellow Nazarenes across Canada and the United States in praying for the Cycle of Resurgence and *all* Nazarenes around the world to be *Mobilized for Blessing Our Community* in 2024. Pray for the Spirit’s empowerment to go from within the walls of the church buildings where we gather, out into our local communities to meet people where they are and be a blessing in their lives.

We will unite together in prayer from Easter Sunday on March 31, 2024, all the way up to Pentecost Sunday on May 19, 2024. This booklet contains fifty daily scriptures, devotional reflections, and prayers for all of us to read, meditate on, and pray through together. May the Lord bless your work as you do the work of the Lord in blessing others.

www.usacanadaregion.org/pray

