



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

April 14, 2019

### The Cross Before the Crown

*So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"*

*Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. —John 12:13-15, 20-25*

Everything unfolds according to God's plan, including His answers to our prayers. That's one reason why we need to learn to pray, *not my will, but yours, be done* (Luke 22:42b). The Father knows what He's doing. We don't. What God is up to is far greater than we can conceive. Prayer unites us with His plans.

Those who trust Jesus for forgiveness from sin would not have come to know forgiveness, if God had followed merely human designs. Those who seek God's glory will never see His glory, if He does things according to our desires. As so often happens, our prayers focus on the most direct path to what we want, while God is doing an infinitely thorough work in the lives of everyone on earth. So, as the saying goes, "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine."

In Jesus' day, God's people were ready to anoint their king—Now. But even then, there were people in Corona that God wanted to save. God's kingdom is bigger than we can conceive. The Jews longed for the world to be put right. Their hunger for righteousness made them long for a King who would compel the world to follow God's law. But as the Jews cheered for their Messiah, there were Greeks present who also wanted access Jesus. And Jesus had a plan for them too.

John's story of the Triumphal Entry tantalizingly records their desire and the efforts of Philip and Andrew to introduce them to Jesus, but Greeks were unclean. The time wasn't right for them to meet God incarnate. Jesus still had work to do. His blood still had to be shed for the salvation of the world. His cross had to come before His crown.

Today, Christians ache at the evil surrounding us. We see Christ rejected and the world doing what is right in our eyes. We long to correct the world's evils: to end abortion, restore marriage, stop drug use and sexual immorality. Defiance galls believers who understand that rebellion is ultimately against a God who loves us, and against His Son, who shed His blood to wash away our sins. If only we could make repentance happen throughout our land and around the world—Now.

Palm Sunday is a day to glorify our King. Praise is fitting for the upright. So is trust—and submission. The same Christ who put off His coronation until He had forever conquered sin and death is still doing His work. He's not tardy. He's thorough. *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance* (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9).

We need to let God be God and allow Him to be the One who adjusts our prayer focus. Letting go of our aims, submitting our prayer requests to His agenda is one way we follow Christ in death. We can't say blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, without first saying Your will be done. The heart of praise is trusting submission to the will of the Father, who does all things well, by working in and through His people. To the praise of His glory.

## Descent Into Hope

As humans, we tend to aspire. We strive for the things we hope for and measure our progress by seeing how much closer we've come to our goal. But God uses a different yardstick. He measures our progress toward Him in terms of what we lose more than by what we gain. How can He pour His riches into our hands if they're already full of the stuff of this earth, which is passing away?

The work God is doing in Northpoint is a renovation. Things will be torn down before there's a rebuilding. We'll need to let go of some things before we can embrace the good calling God has for our church. Before it's an organization, Northpoint is a body—believers bonded to Christ first and then to one another. And we love Christ, because He loved us first. And we love our church out of love for Christ.

Pray for our leaders to lead us to Christ. Ask God to create in them a love for Christ above all, that delights in the God of the Word proclaimed in the Word of God. Ask Go to adjust our priorities to resemble His.

Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

## Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. –Psalm 118:22-26a*