



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

March 31, 2019

### Faith and Repentance

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. —Hebrews 12:1-2*

I've never been in a small wooden boat on a stormy sea, bailing for all my worth, and watching the water inside rise faster than my best efforts to stop it. Situations do arise, though, that overwhelm my strength and force me to give up. That usually means it's time to stop and pray. When Jesus' disciples cried to Him, *Master, Master, we are perishing!* His rebuke went right to the point. *'Where is your faith?'* He asked. They couldn't bail fast enough. They needed to trust Him to calm the storm.

Faith always has an object, and the sin we stumble into the most is either trusting in the wrong thing, or not fully trusting the only One who is always mighty to save. It's a good habit to prepare for Good Friday and Easter by responding David's prayer: *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* (Psalm 139:23-24). Let God point out the doubt and misplaced faith that keep you from knowing His love and power.

*Lay aside every weight:* Alternative objects of faith come in all shapes and sizes. Things we trust instead of Christ can be illicit, like seeking love outside of marriage or stealing from an employer. It can also take a more socially acceptable form, like neglecting family for the sake of work or habitually overeating. Abraham sinned by protecting himself with a lie. Rebecca sinned by stealing her father's idols, just in case they had powers she could find useful.

Other examples: Do we trust America's system of government or a particular leader or party more than God? Do we truly believe our God reigns, even if our nation fails? Do we trust the Lord, whether or not we are gainfully employed? Are we equally secure when we're sick, as well as when we're healthy?

The Holy Spirit is expert at pointing out where we trust God's gift more than we trust Him. He delights in helping us see what's really on the throne of our hearts and teaching us to put Jesus in its place.

*The sin that so easily besets us* is simply a lack of faith—doubting God's ability, questioning His love, wondering about His willingness, and lacking confidence in the wisdom of what He allows. We were made in the image of God and we're responsible to use our best judgment. But we so easily slip into self-reliance mode and leave our Maker out of consideration.

God graciously leads us through dark valleys and times of great difficulty. Those times of financial reversal, of breakdowns in health, or overwhelming distress come from God's caring heart and deliberate purpose. He works faithfully to train us to walk by faith, follow His leading, and receive His power. His power parted the Red Sea. That same power dwells in the heart of the Christian. God provided manna in the wilderness every day for 40 years. He will never neglect anyone who trusts in Him.

Confessing sin gets rid of the dead weight that bogs us down in our walk with Christ, so let Him search your heart. Ask Him to reveal the weights you need to lay aside and identify the sins you depend on rather than trusting and obeying Him.

Develop the habit of asking what God will do with each challenge you face. Cultivate the art of praying in faith, believing that God is able. His tests get harder as our faith grows stronger, so *Count it all joy, ... when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing* (James 1:2-4). God knows what He's doing, and He always works for our good and to the praise of His glory.

## Praying in Faith Believing

Pray for faith at Northpoint that believes in God as well as in His Word. Pray that God will make Himself as alive to us as He is in the pages of Scripture. We have a world to take on and a kingdom to build. Only God's power can accomplish His purpose. Pray for faith that trusts God to do exactly that through us,

In all of our prayers, we pray for our needs as individuals and as a church body, led by the men God has called to shepherd us.

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

*We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.*

*We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

*And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. —1<sup>st</sup> John 5:18-21*