



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

May 19, 2019

A Light in the Darkness

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. –1st Peter 2:9-10

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. –Acts 2:32

Take I-10 West, exit at La Brea, go left on Wilshire, and you'll come to the La Brea Tar Pits. You may have gone there as a child to see the discovery that brought to light the extinct species that once roamed the Los Angeles basin—mammoths and saber-toothed cats. If so, you'll remember the depictions of how they died—struggling to free themselves from the tar that dragged them down into the pit of death.

A Bible reader can't fail to recognize in these images the trap of human sin and its consequences. The very struggle to be free drove them deeper into the quagmire and increased the agony of their inevitable death. God's Word honestly portrays the fate of fallen humanity, despite our noblest intentions and best efforts. *All have sinned and the wages of sin is death* (Romans 3:23 and 6:23). God in His grace won't let us deny this fact, because He's determined to save from sin. And He's given His message of salvation to the people He's redeemed, so we can proclaim it to the world.

As 21st century Christians, we're not eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection. But as people who have set their hope in that historical fact—which the apostles witnessed and proclaimed—we've been delivered from the curse of sin and have eternal life. We are witnesses to the living reality that the living God has set us free from the curse of sin.

The curse of sin is more than punishment for wrongs we've done. The curse of sin is the grip sin has on us—on our drives and desires. Sin twists the image of God in each of us into raving defiance of our Maker. It perverts the blessings of life into ceaseless demands for more. It makes our Maker and the Giver of Life—the One faithful and true Guide for life—into our mortal enemy, because we reject Him as Lord. And so, every craving of our heart dominates our destiny, turns us against Him, and brings death.

Sin turns our highest aspirations into objects of pride that we boast of in defiance of God. The gifts God has given us—our families and homes, our work and accomplishments, the beauty we love and the truth we cherish—become objects we covet and cling to instead of God, even though they drag us away from Him and down into hell.

Sin turns our innocent pass times into idols. The movies we watch, our favorite TV shows, sports, quilting, cooking, gardening are all joyous pass times that easily become domineering addictions. Even ministry morph from being our gift of service into a way to shine before others and an attempt to impress God. Charitable giving turns from a humble offering into a display of personal goodness. Worship stops focusing on praising God and becomes a matter of personal taste and self-satisfaction.

This is the evil inside each one of us. In His grace, Jesus enables us to see our sins—especially our favorite ones—and confess them for what they are so we can be forgiven. He turns our focus from the sins of others back onto ourselves, so we can see our own sin, confess it, and be clean. God has broken sin's curse and made us new. He's pulled us from the pit and set us free.

And of this, we are all witnesses. The Good News we proclaim is the historical fact that's central to our faith. Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave. It's also the present reality that Jesus reigns in heaven and in our hearts, so we're no longer slaves of sin doomed to die.

This is the Good News everyone needs to hear and the Gospel we have to proclaim. To the praise of God's glory!

The Truth about Truth

Truth Is Essentially binary. Darkness and Light, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, Death and Life. Wisdom accepts this fact, trusts God with it, and obeys Him. The world wants it own way and questions God’s right, His wisdom, and His intentions in calling the shots. There is no gray without black and white, but the doubts of this world blur essential distinctions.

Where God calls us to embrace His righteousness, the world questions the truth. While God calls us to proclaim salvation in Christ, the world asserts that no one’s perfect, but we’re not really all that bad. Permissiveness masquerades as grace, and indifference pretends to be love.

We are passing the time when passivity works. Tensions are mounting in our land, confrontations developing, and conflicts arising. Playing it safe is becoming the most dangerous thing we can do. We need to proclaim the truth. The Church must be distinct, and events will no longer allow us to blend in.

Ask God to wake up His Church. That’s what “Revival” means. The world needs God’s people to shine God’s light, and sting with *the salt of the earth*. Pray for God to do what He alone can do—transform us into agents of change and ministers of reconciliation, who call the world out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

Pray for our pastors and elders to lead the way. Pray for ...

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Chelsae Grant, 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 light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. —John 1:5