



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

June 16, 2019

The Church Compassionate

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." —Matthew 9:35-38

"Daddy, can I help?" Those four words used to strike fear into my do-it-yourselfer heart. They meant my kids had discovered my escape and in child-like faith invaded my faltering attempts at home repair. Juggling children and my fixer-upper aspirations never exactly worked, and I was typically torn between my love for my kids and the need to get things done.

Somehow, my Father never had that problem. He knew how to include me and welcomed my help.

Jesus had some pretty busy days, and the needs around Him often stacked up well above His head. Matthew records a busy time when He crossed the Sea of Galilee, taught His followers, healed a paralytic, fended off challenges from His enemies (three times), called a disciple and joined him for dinner, healed one woman and raised another from the dead, gave sight to the blind and speech to the mute, continued healing the multitudes, then looked up, only to see crowds of people coming to Him for more. Just reading about it takes your breath away!

In human form, the infinite God was limited to one body and could only do so much, yet His infinite heart felt compassion for the masses of people wandering in a world cut off from its Creator. So the God-Man did what humans do when life gets overwhelming. He asked for prayer.

Christ came in human flesh to die in our place for our sins. His death and resurrection were central to His great plan of salvation for the whole world, in which He intends to include us. But God is no do-it-yourselfer. While, only Christ could accomplish our redemption on the cross, He extends His compassion and offers His salvation through His people. Jesus wants us to share His heart and complete the task He began while He was on earth.

Jesus asked for prayer because He wants our help to reach a lost world. When the Holy Spirit descended from heaven, it answered the prayer Christ told His disciples to pray. The Church is the constantly regenerating answer to Christ's prayer for laborers to go into His harvest. We are the answer to Jesus' request—just as He intended.

Like Jesus, we live in a world clamoring in vain for hope. Whether they know it or not, those who surround us are *harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*. Christ sees our human struggle and knows it's of our own making, but He's full of mercy, and in compassion He longs to deliver.

Our job as His Church is not to add our voice to the clamor of the crowd. We're more than just another voice competing to be heard. We are the People of the living God—the Risen Christ—who is mighty to save. And save He will, as His people proclaim the hope of the Gospel to those around us—the people He sent us to.

Our heavenly Father does a much better job than I did at including His children in His work. Pray for God to send His laborers into His harvest. And when you pray, ask if you can help. In childlike faith, tell your Father, *Here I am! Send me* (Isaiah 6:8).

To the praise of God's glory!

A Second Chance

He who has ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13:43). Christ's oft-repeated words are more than an admonition. They're a second chance. If you think you're free to choose as you please, think again. Being cut off from God by sin also cuts us off from the freedom and ability to hear God's voice. Jesus offers it it back.

You hear the rancor and conflict in the news, and it affects every level of society. I've never seen a time when people clamped their hands over their ears so firmly. Dialogue has all but disappeared, disagreement gets defined as hate, and Christian truth receives reflexive suspicion whenever it's brought up.

Stiff knees and backs have plagued humanity since the fall, and only God's infinite grace in Christ Jesus can enable us to kneel before our Maker. Hearing and heart problems threaten our eternal souls, because of the human impossibility to listen and respond to the LORD our God.

But Christians believe in miracles. God can give us an ear to listen to the Holy Spirit, but it will take a miracle. He's willing to lead us to people he wants us to reach, but it will take a soft heart that only He can give. God is able to save the souls of those around you, but it will take faith that He can and will.

Ask God to give His Church ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to respond to Him. Watch and pray and expect Him to work in miraculous ways—in you.

Continue to pray for our pastors and elders.

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

And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." —Isaiah 6:5-8