



# prayer *life!*

## Weekly Prayer Focus

April 12, 2020

### He Lives!

*And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." –Matthew 20:17-19*

How does the saying go? "Life is what happens while we're busy making other plans." One day long ago, the Creator of heaven and earth, slipped into a stable unnoticed, while the world looked the other way. Clearly the most momentous things happen when we're preoccupied with other things. That's why Christ tells us repeatedly to be watchful (Matthew 24:42; Mark 14:34; Luke 12:37; 21:36).

This warning applies especially to those who are called of God. No Christian just happened to decide to believe on Jesus as Savior. *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him* (John 6:44). Jesus hand picked His disciples to proclaim the good news of His kingdom, but as He revealed God's plan of redemption to them weeks ahead of time, they were oblivious. They were focused on other things.

Toward the end of His ministry, Jesus told His disciple what would happen when they got to Jerusalem.

- He would be betrayed: *the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes* (Matthew 20:18).
- The leaders of His own people would condemn Him to death: *and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles* (20:19a).
- The Romans would abuse and crucify Him: *to be mocked and flogged and crucified* (20:19b).
- He would rise from the grave: *and he will be raised on the third day* (20:19c).

Luke described the disciples' reaction. *And they understood none of these things and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said* (Luke 18:34, literal translation). Matthew's account gives a glimpse of what the disciples were really focused on. *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and ... said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom"* (Matthew 20:20 and 21b). They had their own plans.

Nothing distracts us from hearing what God has to say as much as our own personal agenda! Jesus told his disciples exactly how His plan of redemption would unfold, and they still missed it. Even after hearing the news of Jesus' resurrection, two of His disciples complained in dismay, *But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel* (Luke 24:21). They were so caught up in their own expectations they couldn't see what was happening. Amazing!

But Christ cut through the fog of their self-centered expectations and misdirected intentions. After appearing to His followers for forty days, ascending into heaven, and sending His Holy Spirit into His people, the light dawned. We live today in the hope of their eyewitness testimony.

Jesus went to Jerusalem, knowing He would be rejected. Then He carried His cross, expecting to be crucified. He allowed Himself to be put to death, knowing He would rise again. His disciples heard Him predict it, then they watched Him do it. They weren't ready for it. They weren't expecting it, but it happened, and it changed their lives—and ours—literally forever.

After years of security, prosperity, and freedom, we have a world of plans, distractions, and preoccupations. Lord, help us not to miss what you're doing! Strengthen our faith. Free us to proclaim new life in Christ. Turn our focus from what we want and expect. Open our eyes to what you're doing, so we can serve you faithfully.

To the praise of Your Glory.

## Prayer for the Week

Like Martha was, we are *anxious and troubled about many things* (Luke 10:41). How will I keep my job? What's going to happen to my investments? Will I—or someone I love—get the virus? Do our leaders know how to handle this situation?

There is one focus that brings peace. There is One Person who makes a difference. Look to Him. Jesus offers hope to you and everyone around you. Train your eyes on Him. He is the Lord of all that happens—good and bad. He's the One who works everything together for good.

The world needs the peace and the hope that only Jesus can give. Receive God's peace from Him and ask Him to spread it to others through you. Ask God to make you contagious with His eternal hope.

**Sunday (Church):** *Jesus Christ is risen indeed!* Praise God! Glorify His name. He has conquered sin and death. *When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself* (John 12:32).

**Monday (Home and Family):** Ask God to lead the next generation and future generations of your family to Himself.

**Tuesday (Job/School):** Pray for the colleague or friend you work most closely with or whom God has put on your heart. Ask God to meet their spiritual and personal needs.

**Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community):** Pray for the neighbors to your left and right. Ask God to use you in their lives.

**Thursday (Our Nation):** Pray that Jesus, the Lamb of God, will be exalted and embraced in our land, so we worship Him as He is revealed in Scripture, not as we imagine Him to be.

**Friday (The World):** Pray for spiritual transformation and physical healing for those suffering in from corona virus, which is threatening people in every nation.

**Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing):** *Rejoice!* The tomb is empty. Jesus Christ is alive, and by God's grace, your name is written in the book of life.

## Prayer for Our Leaders

Pray for wisdom for our church leaders, as they lead us through the demands of this time.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Steve Dalgren, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, Karen Sherwood, and Dani Tiqui.

## Prayer Record

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

| Date | Request | Date | Answer |
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*[Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* —Hebrews 11:3