



JANUARY 25TH - FEBRUARY 14TH, 2021

PRAYER AND FASTING BOOKLET

CROSSPOINTCITY.CHURCH / 21 DAYS

How to Use This Booklet

Over the next 21 days of prayer, we hope that the Lord will use this time in a significant way in your life. This is a time to clear out the distractions of life, focus your heart, and seek the Lord together as a church. This booklet contains a daily Scripture reading, reflection, questions for personal prayer, and corporate prayer points for you to use during this 21 day period. Our hope in providing this booklet is that it will assist you in focusing your heart each day. Here are some ways to make the best use of your reading each day:

Read

Each day will begin with a short reading of Scripture. Above all else in this booklet, this is the most important part! Begin each day by hearing from the Word that God has spoken to us. The daily reading is directly connected for the daily “theme” that is listed at the top of the page.

Reflection

After reading each passage on your own, you will find a short reflection on what you have just read. Spend time going over each reflection and continue to think through what the Scripture is teaching you and how God wants to use that truth in your life.

Questions for Personal Prayer

Each day you will find a few questions listed to prompt personal prayer in response to the Scripture reading from that day. During this time of personal reflection, begin to pray over whatever the Lord may prompt in your heart each day.

Corporate Prayer

The last portion you will see each day is a section for corporate prayers. This section is here to corporately align our prayers as a church family. Some of these needs are Crosspoint specific, while others are prayers for people and places outside of Crosspoint. Pray over anything that God calls to your mind as you read through the corporate prayer list each day.

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FASTING GUIDE

Over the course of these 21 Days of Prayer, many will find it significant to fast during this intentional season. Below is a short guide for those considering fasting:

What is Fasting?

The goal of fasting is to draw near to God. Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose. Fasting is a way to express our desire for God and our holy discontent in a fallen world. Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Scripture References for Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18

Matthew 9:14-15

Luke 18:1-14

Types of Fasts

Complete Fast

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

Selective Fast

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

Partial Fast

This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.

Non-Food Fast

This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

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Day 1 Recalibrate

Read: John 1:1-18

Reflection:

Pastor James recently described 2020 as a dumpster fire of a year. Well, that's a pretty accurate description. We experienced a global pandemic, extreme political divide, growing racial tensions, economic struggles, depression, oppression, isolation, and many other challenges. Unfortunately, these things didn't stop with the coming of a new year and people are looking for answers to the darkness that seems to be overtaking our world. The good news is that a solution exists.

Reflecting on John 1, we see the solution for darkness is light. And not a light source made by man that is easily extinguished by sin and mortality. No, the light needed for the darkness we are experiencing is Jesus. John describes Jesus as the light that darkness could not overcome. Jesus is the one who brings life to those trapped in a world of death. We are introduced to King Jesus who brings grace upon grace that is sufficient to bring life and light to the darkness in and around us. By faith in Jesus we are made children of God and given an inextinguishable light. Understanding this truth and asking Jesus to recalibrate our anxious and broken hearts is a great starting point for our 21 Days of Prayer.

These 21 days are far more than a church learning to practice a discipline over the course of three weeks. No, it's more about a church placing their lives in the hands of the Jesus we read in John 1, and confessing how desperate we are for Him. We need His grace! So, at the outset of this season of prayer, let's start recalibrating and asking Jesus for his help.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What are the dark things in your life that need to be brought into the light? Confess those things to him and ask for his strength to overcome.

Corporate Prayer:

- For God to use these 21 days to make our church more prayerfully dependent on him
- Spiritual growth of people participating in 21 Days of Prayer

Day 2 Death to Life

Read: Romans 5

Reflection:

Our current digital age seems to be growing more divisive by the day. Every news report and headline we read seems to create a great divide over differing opinions. The political climate is more angry than ever, while unity with others seems more uncommon by the day. The bumper video along with the Habakkuk series captured this reality quite well. What is growing at an alarming rate is our tendency to view more people as enemies than friends. The reality is, we don't enjoy being around people who disagree with us, who belittle us, who mock us, and especially those who legitimately wrong us.

Paul leans in on this reality in Romans 5. We are reminded that even for a "good" person, sacrificial love is rarely extended. The idea that sacrificial love would be extended to a "bad" person or an enemy is unthinkable. Knowing that love for our enemies is nearly non-existent in our world today, makes the grace of God all the more amazing. We are told that Jesus, the sinless Son of God, came to earth to save his enemies. Jesus didn't come to save friends who were kind towards him. No, he came to save the ones who mock him, belittle him, disrespect him, spit on him, and even kill him. He came for his enemies! The grace of Jesus is magnificent when we remember that Jesus came for us when we were his enemy. While we were at our worst, Jesus came to deliver us. Today, thank God for his amazing grace that brought us from death to life!

Questions for Personal Prayer:

How have you seen the faithfulness of God in your life recently? How can you give thanks to God for loving you even while you were at your worst?

Corporate Prayer:

- For our Church to be thankful for his faithfulness
- That God would make us more aware of his presence

Day 3
Increase, Decrease

Read: John 3:22-36

Reflection:

Our lives tend to shine spotlights on the things that matter most, and we usually spend a significant amount of time, energy, and resources on these things. So, what things do we spotlight? It could be our jobs, our hobbies, our sport teams, the music we enjoy, other people, and a number of other things. However, there is one thing that usually steals the spotlight from them all. That one thing is ourselves! We may like to think we don't do this, but the truth is we have a tendency towards pride, self-exaltation, and even the desire to have others think well of us. What is even more dangerous is that this behavior can even exist within the church. We can be prideful in our serving, giving, devotional commitment, or even our greater morality as compared to those around us.

John the Baptist points out something in our verses today that is both challenging and liberating in regards to the pride that exists within us. John, above many others, had much to be "proud" of. Jesus spoke very highly of John. His incredible story is captured in the gospels as he leads and teaches a vast number of people. Knowing just how much he had going for him makes his words in verse 30 all the more powerful. John says that Jesus must increase in his life and he must decrease. How desperately we need this reminder in our lives today. We tend to be ok with Jesus increasing as long as we can increase with him. We are even happy to give him the greater platform as long as he lets us join along for the journey. The problem is, only one person will receive the spotlight in our lives. The spotlight will be on us, or it can be on Christ. Today, let's pray and ask God to fill us with humility and give us great joy in decreasing as Christ increases in us.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What area(s) in your life claim the spotlight at center stage? Where and when do you find yourself most tempted to think about your own spotlight as opposed to Christ's? Pray that Jesus takes the spotlight at center stage in your life!

Corporate Prayer:

- Year 2 of our MOVE initiative and the 2021 ministry for Crosspoint
- Vision and direction for the Crosspoint Elders

Day 4 Flourishing

Read: 1 John 1:5-2:6

Reflection:

Our current cultural climate is filled with the unrealistic expectations for people to achieve some sort of worldly perfection. We are influenced to present a perfect, polished, neat, and tidy version of ourselves like we have it all together. We are also convinced this is what thriving or flourishing looks like. However, we know all too well how quickly our culture will turn on someone if they fail to live up to the perfect expectations of the masses. You can probably think of a specific example of a celebrity going from hero to villain simply by a tweet, Facebook message, or a phrase used in an interview. You may even find yourself in the midst of this very same experience.

The truth is there has only been one perfect person to walk the earth, and his name is Jesus. See, God has far greater wisdom, exponentially more grace, and a tender compassion that the world can't understand apart for Christ. We know all too well that we are not perfect. The moment we think we have it all together is the moment we step right into sin. If we are honest, we often find ourselves stumbling back into old sin patterns from time to time. John brings a great bit of relief as he acknowledges the reality that we are sinful in 1 John 1:8. We can breathe a sigh of relief. Why can we be relieved? Because Jesus is our advocate. We are relieved because Jesus has atoned for all of our sins if we have trusted in him. Where the world casts people out upon a misstep, God invites us to confession. Consider the kindness of God that he would look at us, the very ones who have done wrong, and invite us to confess our sins and receive his grace. God's grace is far greater and much deeper than you and I can even begin to imagine.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

How does God's grace drive us to grow in our obedience to him? What sin are you carrying that you need to confess to the Lord?

Corporate Prayer:

- Broken marriages to be restored
- For God to raise up strong and godly families throughout our community

Day 5 Imitation

Read: Philippians 2:1-11

Reflection:

When we are children, we spend a lot of time imitating people around us. We usually act like our parents, our older siblings, our favorite movie character, or the great sports heroes we look up to. We may not realize it, but we do the same thing as adults. Our behavior is being shaped and influenced by the people we look up to, people we work with, go to school with, and even characters we see on tv. We are essentially being molded into who we imitate or who has the greatest influence in our lives. The question is whether our lives are being formed to be more like Jesus or are we being shaped by the broken patterns (and people) of the world?

Philippians 2:1-11 shows that the Christian life should be influenced and shaped by Jesus and the incredible humility he displayed when humbling himself to become a man. The text also gives us insight into the counter-cultural life of following Jesus. Just as he humbled himself to come and serve, we should aspire to be like him. It's good for us to examine our lives to see if we possess his character and imitate his behavior more than that of anyone else. Today, take some time to consider whether you are maturing to look more like Christ, or if your life is being shaped in some other way. No matter where you are, remember that Christ is never finished with you and he is committed to completing the work he has already begun within you!

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What currently has the greatest influence on the person you are becoming? How does the example given by Jesus need to change the person you are today?

Corporate Prayer:

- Passion to know the Lord through his Word
- Make us a church that is desperate and dependent on God

Day 6 Anchor

Read: Psalm 119:1-24

Reflection:

Many have experienced the strange feeling of being on a float in the ocean, only to realize they are drifting in a different direction by the waves beneath them. For beach lovers who board a float and find themselves drifting off to sleep, it can be terrifying to wake up and realize you are hundreds of feet down shore from where you began! The human heart, already prone to chase sin and wander from God, can be just like that float. Our world, much like the ocean, is always moving and shifting and we can look up and find we have moved and shifted with the cultural waves without ever intending to move.

What will prevent a heart from wandering? What can keep our hearts tethered to the ways of Christ? We look no further than the Scriptures. For the wandering heart, Psalm 119 reads as an anchor to keep us steadfast in the ways of the Lord. This Psalm is an invitation to devote our lives to knowing the Word of God. We don't simply want to know it in our heads. No, we want to be moved within our hearts. Right now, we are being pulled in a certain direction. There is no doubt about this. The promise of Psalm 119 is that when we allow our hearts to be pulled by the Scriptures, the result is a life that is growing in godliness every day.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Think about your life over the past year, have you, maybe unintentionally, been pulled in a direction that is not towards life in Christ? How does this reading help you clarify your current direction?

Corporate Prayer:

- For those that are struggling in our community, for them to come to know Christ
- For our direction to match God's heart, to reach others with the Gospel without delay

Day 7 Running Free

Read: Hebrews 11-12:2

Reflection:

Picture, if you will, that you signed up to run a 5K race in order to benefit your favorite charity. The day of the race arrives and you get ready to head to the starting line. You first put on your race jersey and running pants, then your thickest winter coat, your heaviest pair of jeans, your largest pair of boots, you strap ankle weights to your legs, and grab the heaviest books from your bookshelf for a backpack on your back. You are ready to run! Obviously that image is ridiculous. When a runner wakes up on race day, everything they choose is to aid their speed, not retract from it. Living in the day to day of our lives, it is easy to forget that we, too, are running a race.

The writer of Hebrews gives us multiple examples of people who were filled with faith as they pursued Christ and ran their race. When chapter 12 of Hebrews opens we see the author point out that, just like all of these past witnesses of faith, here is what you need to do to run this race fully committed to God. We are to “lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely”. The author uses two words here, weight and sin. That would lead me to ask what the difference is in these words. We know what sin is, any activity that is contrary to God’s will. It is obvious why carrying and nurturing sin would make it difficult to run with faith and focus on God. When we recognize sin in our lives, we have to immediately put it to death and remove it from our lives. We cannot run while carrying sin. But what about weights? I believe this is something Pastor James has talked about when he says we take “a good thing and make it a God thing”. Weights are something that burden us, that keep our eyes on ourselves or our circumstances and not on Christ. Weights can be accidental idols in our lives that have made their way to the throne of our hearts. In order to run this race well and to pursue Jesus, we have to identify both the sin and weights in our lives and lay them aside, at the feet of Jesus. This is a battle we fight everyday as this world and our enemy are seeking to steal, kill, and destroy our lives. Today, make the choice to throw off what is not of Christ and pursue him with your heart, mind, body, and spirit.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What sin is present in your life right now that needs to be put to death? What “weight” exists in your life that seems to be keeping you from growing in godliness?

Corporate Prayer:

- For Crosspoint students to make disciples for the next generation
- For wisdom and spiritual growth of small group leaders for students

Day 8 Life Changing Gift

Read: Ephesians 2:1-13

Reflection:

Have you ever received a gift that made you incredibly excited? I'm sure we can all think of gifts like that. Perhaps it was a toy, a piece of jewelry, some trendy clothing, or even the newest iPhone or watch. I can remember getting my first bicycle for Christmas. After a few crashes, I was riding without the training wheels and exploring my neighborhood. This simple gift gave me a sense of freedom and independence and I rode countless miles on that thing. What about an unexpected gift that has radically changed your life? This may bring to mind more significant gifts. The truth is, as believers, we have indeed received such a gift. This gift is a new life given to us by God's grace in and through Jesus Christ, which happens to be the starting point for living the mission of God in our lives.

In our passage today, we see the immeasurable love of God put on display as he gives us a gift that not only changes our lives forever, but changes our purpose for living. Prior to receiving this gift, we are described as dead in our sins, disobedience, and even children of wrath. This sounds harsh, but it's true. We are spiritually lifeless without Christ and unable to live God's purpose for our lives, which is to accurately reflect God's image to the world. The good news is that God loves us way too much to leave us this way. He came to us when we couldn't be any worse, took our sinful, broken, and empty lives and made us alive in Christ.

Think about this for a moment. The perfect, holy, sovereign God of the universe extends the gift of his amazing grace to us in and through Jesus Christ and even gives us the faith to believe. Amazing! So what's our response? Putting our faith in Jesus. When we do this, we are no longer seen as enemies of God who are far off, but rather sons and daughters brought near to God. This positional change brings us into the family of God and makes us representatives of Christ. Now, we can fulfill our purpose for living, join God in the good works he has prepared for us in Christ, and rightly reflect his image to the world. What a Gift!

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Are there any areas in your life that you need to give to God so he can make you more like Jesus? Will you spend time today thanking God for the incredible Gift of Jesus?

Corporate Prayer:

- God to restore those who are broken hearted and suffering emotionally
- For the Lord to heal those who are facing physical pain

Day 9 Called to Go

Read: Matthew 28:16-20

Reflection:

When we read the words of Jesus in this passage, certain words may jump out to you. One word that jumps out to me is authority. No matter who you are, when you hear the word authority it has some type of connotation to it. To some authority represents a generous and kind parent, but to others authority has been used to hurt or harm. The first mention of authority in scripture is in the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1:26. This passage says “then God said, “let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion (authority) over the first of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Originally, the authority on earth was given to Adam and Eve by God as they lived in God’s perfect world. Unfortunately, when they chose to disobey God’s command, they handed their authority over to the enemy, Satan. When Christ came to the earth, he paid the payment for sin through death on the cross, and rose again triumphing over the evil one. Then, before Jesus departed to sit the right hand of God he tells us that all authority has been given to him.

In this passage known to us as *The Great Commission* Jesus makes it clear that he is ruler of heaven and earth and nothing is outside of his power, sovereignty, and control. He is King over all! In light of this, he gives us our mission to live out in our daily lives. We are chosen and called by God to go and make followers of all people groups around the world by sharing the Gospel, leading believers to be baptized, and teaching them how to obey the commands of Christ. We are able to do this because we are doing this in his authority, the authority that is over all. This is amazing! What a privilege to be on mission for God.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Do you live in a way that acknowledges that Jesus has authority over all?
We are called to a mission of reaching and teaching those far from God, is this mission an active part of your life? Are there areas in your life where you struggle to be on mission? Ask the Lord to help you surrender those. Would you ask God to put someone in your path to share the Gospel with this week?

Corporate Prayer:

- Guidance and wisdom for Elders, Pastors, and Ministers at Crosspoint
- Godly leadership to continue to develop in every ministry

Day 10 Clay

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:5-18

Reflection:

Yesterday we read about our call to go on mission. Today's passage reminds us that as we walk through this mission, our circumstances may be hard but they will not overcome us. We are called jars of clay. Clay is not indestructible or able to hold up against an incredible weight. Clay can chip easily, crack, and break. Think about 2 clay flower pots. One that is empty and one that has been filled to the brim with cement. Now put a 500lb weight on them both. Only one will be able to stand up to the pressure from the weight. The second pot doesn't crumble because of what it is filled with.

This is the point Paul is making in our passage. That the power we have for life doesn't come from us but from the Lord. We are afflicted but not crushed, we are struck down but not destroyed. I don't know what your last year looked like, but I think this is an apt description of the last 12 months for many people. However, even with all that has come against us, we are filled with the life of Jesus. We have the same Spirit in us that raised Jesus from the dead. Because of Christ, we have already overcome. This is how, instead of buckling under the pressure of this world, we are called in Christ's authority to move towards it, reaching out to others with the life changing Gospel message.

Our passage ends with a reminder to not lose hope. If we keep our focus on what is going on around us in the world, we will quickly lose heart and hope. However, if we keep our focus eternal, we will see that what we are dealing with in the "now" doesn't hold a candle to the bright light of eternity with the Lord.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What current circumstance has taken your focus off of Christ and created a lack of hope? What area of our world burdens you towards prayer knowing that many do not have the filling of the Spirit to be able to walk through these struggles?

Corporate Prayer:

- World Engagement Partners: Joel and Amanda Griffin, *Engage Guinea* and *Food for the Hungry*
- The Gospel to advance around the world to unreached people groups

Day 11 Empowered to Go

Read: Acts 2:1-41

Reflection:

Sometimes I think that we forget just who our God is. We get so mired down in the nitty gritty of what daily life looks like and we do not consider just who it is that we serve. We serve an all powerful, omnipresent, omniscient, everlasting, and very much alive God. He is the supreme creator of the universe and he has our back. I can remember going to Asia the first time to serve when I was 19 years old. Our main goal on this trip was to find and identify where a certain semi-nomadic people group had founded villages in Southeast Asia. We were going to begin establishing ties with them to distribute copies of the Bible which had just that year been translated into their native language. After several days of fruitless searching, we found a village consisting of the people group we had set out to find. Our translator (a believer and a member of this tribe) spoke with the village elders for several hours before explaining to us that the elders of the village had been receiving dreams for months from God who had informed them that foreigners would bring them his teachings. I was floored. Never in my life had I seen God take such a direct hand in events nor did I consider that he would use us in that way. We promptly handed over the Bibles and after hearing the Gospel, several of the village elders prayed to receive Christ that day.

The passage we read today reminds us that God is going to have an active role in the mission laid out before us to take the Gospel to our local community, our nation, and to the rest of the world. And it is with this knowledge that we ask you to start praying big prayers. Ask God to go before you, allow you the opportunity, and empower you to share the Gospel with others.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Do you feel powerless at times to live out your faith? In what area(s) so you feel weakest? At work, at home, at school, at church, or out in public, etc..

Will you ask God to give you Spiritual power in every area of your life so you can boldly live out the Mission?

Corporate Prayer:

- For missionary families from our church living abroad in Northwest Africa, Guinea, Scotland and South Africa
- That the big "C" Church of Bartow county would continue to be a light in the darkness and boldly proclaim the Gospel in our words and actions.

Day 12

Humble Sacrifice

Read: John 13:1-20

Reflection:

Today's reading serves as the foundation for our entire MOVE series. In the summer of 2019, Pastor James introduced this idea to our church in a message called "Floor People." The heart of this message was the call for us to return to the ONE thing we are called to do, and that's to fulfill the Great Commission (refer to Day 9). If we are going to pull this off, then we must follow Jesus' example that he demonstrates in our passage today and "Leave the Table for the Floor."

Something that I always think about when reading these verses is Crosspoint's conviction that "Service, Not Status, Determines Greatness". What does this mean for us? Well practically it means that instead of gaining honor through self-promotion or exaltation, we receive it through following the example of Jesus himself and putting others before ourselves.

Think for a minute about how significant this was. Right before Jesus washes the disciples' feet, they are in the midst of an argument trying to establish which of them is the greatest and who will get the most honor from Jesus when he comes into his Kingdom. The Supreme Ruler of all creation, aware of the crucifixion that is coming, chooses to take this last moment with his followers to remind them in verses 15-17 that if they want to be honored, then they need to humble themselves and serve one another as he is serving them.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Would your friends identify you as a person of humility? What are you sacrificing for the Lord and others? Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for the coming devotional days, which will continue touching on community and the cost of living like Jesus.

Corporate Prayer:

- That we as individual followers of Christ would live humbly and would serve one another in love and kindness
- That through serving in our community our church would be seen as a place of help and refuge. A place where anyone could and would come for help.

Day 13 Loving Others

Read: John 13:31-35 and Matthew 5:43-48

Reflection:

John Piper says, “Love belongs to God’s nature. It’s woven into what he is. It’s part of what it means to be God. The sun gives light because it is light. And fire gives heat because it is heat.” How we love one another is literally how Jesus says non-believers should identify us as his followers. However over the last year it has become clear that we are sorely lacking in this area and the ones who lose are those who are destined to spend eternity apart from Jesus Christ. Are Christians in the United States famous for how we serve the community, how we help the poor, how we pray for and serve those who disagree with us? Or does the world around us all too often get a front row seat to how much we can show our hatred and disdain for one another?

This is one of the hardest things that we are called to as Christians because it is asking us to set aside our pride, humble ourselves and truly love one another despite our differences. What kind of impact do you think it makes when someone you should hate by any earthly standard has to face the fact that you love them instead? What opportunities to share the Gospel can arise from serving someone that believes they are your enemy? What are you willing to do for the sake of someone’s salvation?

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Are you loving others like Jesus?
Are you loving those who disagree with you?
Are you loving those you would consider enemies?

Corporate Prayer:

- That as a church body we can love one another as Christ loved us and be an example to everyone around us

Day 14 Better Together

Read: Acts 4:23-37

Reflection:

“We Need Each Other.” This is one of our convictions here at Crosspoint. Here is how we describe it: “We believe our God is a God of community. As his people, we too must share in community both for spiritual growth and to bear his image rightly in the world. Doing so requires more than surface level interaction but true devotion, commitment, and deep love for one another (Acts 2:42-47). Therefore, we will be a people of authentic relationships, knowing they are vital for us and instrumental in making the Gospel more believable to the outside world (John 17:21, 1 John 4:11-12).” We have unpacked some of this in previous days. However, let’s look at our text today and see what it looks like in the church as a whole.

After Peter and John boldly proclaimed the truth to the religious leaders who had opposed Jesus and had him crucified, we find them gathering together with other believers for a time of prayer. Prayer is the key. We call out to God because we need God. That’s what they were doing. Luke tells us that during their time of prayer, they were ALL filled with the Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (v.31). The Spirit gives us boldness and confidence to share the Gospel individually and together, because sometimes it is hard. Not only do we see boldness, we see they were unified in heart and soul. I would say that’s pretty unified. It’s reflected in what happens next. They sacrificed personal property, possession, and financial resources so needs that existed could be met. This is how we are called to live our lives today. We should willingly sacrifice for one another and the church. The truth is, God has called and equipped us to be better together.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

- As part of your commitment to do things together as a church would you join a Crosspoint small group?

Corporate Prayer:

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Day 15 Bread of Life

Read: John 6:22-71

Reflection:

These are some of my favorite verses in the Gospel of John and they are also some of the hardest to hear. Jesus is telling a crowd of his followers the truth about his nature and what it means for them. That he is the source of our fulfillment. His grace is sufficient for us because it is the only way for us to experience eternal life with him. He is also declaring his love and willingness to suffer on our behalf. It's a beautiful picture of the Gospel but it also forces us to look at our own priorities and what we are turning to for fulfillment.

This has been particularly difficult over the past year. The economic ups and downs, the lack of social companionship, losing loved ones to Covid and other illnesses, and an extremely divisive political season have seen a massive rise in depression, divorce, child abuse, drug addiction, etc... People are constantly looking for fulfillment and if we don't turn to Christ for that fulfillment then we risk turning to other things that ultimately just leave us feeling empty. Is this season driving us closer to Christ then ever before or pushing us farther away? Please let what's happening around us turn you closer to the Lord and remember God's words in 2nd Corinthians 12:9 - "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What do you feel it would cost you to go deeper in your relationship with God? What are some things that you have tried to find fulfillment in that has left you with a deeper hunger? What area of your life do you need to surrender to experience the fulfillment that only the Bread of Life can give?

Corporate Prayer:

- Pray over those who are suffering and grieving the loss of a loved one over the last year
- Pray for those suffering through addiction and/or economic hardship

Day 16 Count the Cost

Read: Luke 14:25-35

Reflection:

Many people have huge dreams that they hope to accomplish during their life. One of my dreams is to hike Mount Everest. This dream was sparked after watching a few Netflix documentaries on this feat. In these films I saw the preparation, training, pain and lifelong investment in order to experience the triumph and victory of summiting the highest point on earth. After several years of dreaming and pondering on this challenge, I have concluded that I will likely never feel the triumph and victory of hiking Everest. It's not because I don't want to, it's because *when I consider the cost*, I don't feel like this journey is worth my life. In our text we see that when we decide to follow Jesus, we need to consider what it costs. As our text clearly states, following Jesus will not be easy but it is worth our lives.

We see that the call to follow Jesus is a costly one. It is a reminder that we need to constantly surrender of our personal sin and to nail it to the cross of grace and love. We simply do not get to cling to our sin while we profess that we cling to God. There is a cost, but it is so worth the sacrifice. Following Jesus is burdensome, difficult and hard at times, but we need to remember that God cares more for our joy than we do. We shouldn't settle for less. Sin holds us captive, Christ set us free. This freedom should remind us of his endless love and the provision of grace given to us through his sacrifice for us. So, in your walk with the Lord, know that it will be costly, but any time God asks us to surrender something, it is because he has something far greater to give us.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

When you consider your walk with Jesus, have you surrendered all to this relationship? Do you feel like God might be calling you to lay down something that is consuming your affection for him? How are you reminding yourself daily of the love of Christ?

Corporate Prayer:

- Teachers and administration for our local schools
- For the social tensions and struggles the students in our community face

Day 17 Dangers of Comfort

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Reflection:

Living as Christians in the 21st century makes it very tempting and very easy to worship the idol of comfort. We are privileged in the West which ultimately leads to certain expectations in our day to day life. If we want food, we want it fast. If we need to shop for something, we don't need to leave the comfort of our house, or even the comfort of our couch to buy and have whatever we want delivered to our front door step. This includes shopping for a new car! So although these are blessings from the time and place in which we live, they can also present spiritual dangers. Comfort can be a beautiful gift but can also become a god that we worship.

We can learn a lot about Zaccheaus from our reading today. Even though Zaccheaus was "rich" and could pursue a life of comfort, he laid it all down after having an encounter with Jesus. Zaccheaus was so radically changed by this encounter that he cried out, "if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." Here is a man that, who all in a moment, went from being rich in the world, to being wealthy in the contentment found only in Christ. His response to meeting Jesus is radical generosity. We too should experience a radical change after having an encounter with the love of Jesus. Our expectations should shift from receiving comfort, to sacrificing for the sake of others. Simply put, to follow Jesus is to leave the table of comfort to serve others. Don't settle for the comfort of this world. Rather, pour out your comfort so that others might see and experience the love of Christ.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What areas in your life do you feel like you are pursuing comfort over your walk with God? What comforts in your life do you feel like are lulling you into a spiritual sleepiness? In what ways can you sacrifice personal comfort for the sake of those around you?

Corporate Prayer:

- Pray for the physical health of our church and community
- Pray that our country would experience a peace and unity that can only be brought by God

Day 18 Our Highest Calling

Read: Luke 9:57-62

Reflection:

One perk of living in the South is being in the company of others who appreciate the importance of football. Even though this year was different in many ways, there was still discussion of our favorite teams, supremacy of the SEC, recruiting and who is playing who on Saturdays (barring any issues with team sickness). This isn't just isolated to the South either, it's all over the country. Football is beloved by people all over the country. In 2017, Americans spent a whopping 56 billion dollars on sporting events. Needless to say, people are willing to invest in this sport. And the investment that people make isn't just monetary.

They require time, commitment, practice, and of course, money. Sports are, for the most part, full-time obligations. Being a part of an organized sport, or any other type of hobby, can be time well spent and can act as a healthy activity for families. Sometimes though, these obligations can hinder our spiritual growth. They can even become idols. Things like church, small groups, or our devotional lives can often infringe on obligations to sports. Our text today shows that in order to faithfully follow Jesus, he must be our highest priority. If we let lesser things distract us from our God-given purpose, we will fail in our highest calling. To be a disciple of Christ. This call to "go and proclaim the kingdom of God" means that we have to leave lesser things behind in order that we might fulfill our greatest purpose on earth. The best thing you can do for yourself and your family is to ensure that the highest priority and greatest "obligation" in your life is to be a disciple of Jesus.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Are there obligations in your life that are hindering you or your families' spiritual growth? What are some things you might need to say "no" to so that you can say "yes" to following Jesus?

Corporate Prayer:

- For the future of Crosspoint City Church
- For godly leaders to be developed and sent out to invest in the next generation of God's church

Day 19 Your True Love

Read: Mark 10:17-31

Reflection:

What do you love the most? When wrestling with this question, I think it's easy to say the things we *should* say. The reality is, what we should say is not necessarily the truth. I want you to deeply consider this question. What do you *truly* love? Some things that can help bring the objects of our affections into the light are our bank accounts, schedules and hobbies. These are the areas that will lay bare the things that we truly love.

This self- inventory is critical because there is a war waging for your affection and your love. Things like billboards, TV commercials, magazines and social media are constantly fighting for your heart. These things aim to form and shape your deepest desires. Yet, we see in our reading today that Jesus wants to be our greatest love. As Jesus talks to the rich young ruler, He knew that there was no greater love for this man than his money.

The same just might be true with us. However, money might not be our greatest desire. Maybe it's something like influence, approval, power, the list goes on and on. The call is clear, do not let these idols take the rightful place of God. Wage war on the things in your heart that rival your love of Christ. Those things will come, they will go, and ultimately, they will carry no eternal value. It is only through Christ capturing our highest love that we experience the joy and freedom that comes from loving Christ above all else.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

What things in your life are competing with your love of Jesus? Are you being intentional with your time and energy to fall deeper in love with Christ? What are some rhythms you could introduce in your life that would stir your affections for Him above all else?

Corporate Prayer:

- Worship and Creative team at Crosspoint
- For God to grow a greater passion for worship

Day 20 Salt and Light

Read: Matthew 5:13-16

Reflection:

There are few things in this world that I like more than salt. I feel like salt is the friend and companion of all delicious food. A world that only has bland, unsalted food is the world of my deepest and darkest nightmares. Many times my wife, who is a nurse, reminds me of the health consequences of overusing this mineral but I just can't seem to shake my love of it. We are fortunate that this resource is nearly always found around us and seems to be no farther than a reach away at most dinner tables. Salt is one of the cheapest and most easy to come by food additives in this day and age. However, this wasn't always the case.

Salt, in biblical times, was considered a highly valuable resource that was even used to pay Roman soldiers. In fact, the word "salary" comes from the Latin word *salarium*, which was the name given to salt when it functioned as currency. All of that to say, salt was an incredibly costly and important resource. And it wasn't just used as currency, but as a *preservative*.

This is critical for understanding the passage we read today. Our purpose as Christians on this earth preserve against the damaging and corrosive properties of sin. In a world that is desperate for purpose, meaning and value, our call is to be that preserving agent and a light that shines Hope and Love into the darkness. Remember the hope you have as a believer is invaluable to those who don't know the Lord. It is a hope that rings out into all eternity. Don't keep this hope hidden but share it with a lost and needy world.

Questions for Personal Prayer:

Would you say that your life acts as a light to others who don't yet know the Lord? Do you feel that the way you invest your time, energy and finances acts a preserving agent to a decaying world?

Corporate Prayer:

- For the people in our church to continue to live on mission and pursue those far from God
- That God would continue to draw those people who have been living in isolation into Christian community

Day 21 What's My Move?

Read: Matthew 5:13-16

Reflection:

As our 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting comes to end, we recognize that we are strongest when we admit our weakness and cling to an all powerful Father. The growth and maturation of a Christian is a divine act of God. No act of human intelligence, planning, preparation, or teaching will be enough to radically shift the direction of our hearts or our church to fulfill the mission God has given us. This has to be an act of God and we need his help.

In today's reading we see that Jesus looked out over the crowds and he had compassion on them "because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." The reality is, we interact with people like this every day in our community. Constantly people come to our church broken, hurting, depressed, abused, addicted and all of these people are ultimately searching for a deeper purpose than what the world has to offer. There is a deep pain and brokenness that exists right in our own backyard.

Our call as Christ followers is to engage with these people to share the hope, love and mercy of God with our entire community. This desire is what gave birth to our MOVE initiative. We believe that through MOVE, we will ultimately be better equipped to engage, love, and serve the community around us. Remember though, this transformation only happens if we are willing to sacrifice so that we can meet other people's greatest need. As you are praying for the future of our church, pray about what you need to surrender and sacrifice to make this God-given dream a reality. Our prayer is that after these 21 days, you would be wrestling with the question, *what's my move?*

Questions for Personal Prayer:

How can you specifically be praying for our efforts in community transformation, church multiplication and campus renovation? How are you going to engage in MOVE so that others might come to know the love of Christ?

Corporate Prayer:

- Thank God for His faithfulness and goodness towards us as a church
- Praise God for using these 21 days to draw us closer to him
- Ask God to help us continue to grow in our dependence upon him this year