



Journey
THE RESURRECTION STORY

21 days of
prayer &
fasting
March 26 - April 15



New Mercies Christian Church
4000 Five Forks Trickum Rd.
Lilburn, Georgia 30047

Prayer & Fasting Guide



Sr. Pastor Jesse Curney, III

The 2022 ministry theme for New Mercies Christian Church is "Sustained: Celebrating 20 Years of God's Goodness, Grace and Glory." This year, we are celebrating our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for sustaining us throughout the years and each and every day!

The vision of New Mercies Christian Church is to communicate the gospel of Christ to the world, disciple the members of His body wholly, and to develop and

serve the community. In order to fulfill this vision, we must develop a closer relationship with Jesus. This Resurrection devotional was developed with that purpose in mind.

As a corporate body, I am asking all New Mercies members to participate in twenty-one days of prayer and a Daniel fast from Friday, March 26th at 6:00pm until Friday, April 15th at 6:00pm.

It is my desire that we pray together daily and meditate on the words and sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ during this time of consecration. My prayer is that these daily devotionals minister to your spirit, bring a fresh revelation of the Resurrection story, help you to realize how God is working in your life to sustain you, and develop a stronger relationship with Him.

I am honored to be your Pastor, and I look forward to celebrating our Risen Savior with you and your family during Holy Week.

Forever Christ's,

Jesse Curney, III
Senior Pastor, New Mercies Christian Church

THIRST NO MORE

Elder James Walker

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
- Matthew 5:6

Since the creation of mankind, Jesus addresses the personal void of humanity and brings us face-to-face with our lifelong and deepest needs. To hunger and thirst is to have a strong desire, eagerness, longing, yearning, passion or aridity for something. To be righteous is to accept Jesus' payment for our sins so that we can be in right relationship with God. Matthew 5:6 is a promise whereby Jesus implies that He can satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Mankind is born in sin and void of righteousness due to our sinful nature, which followed the fall of Adam. Throughout the Bible, God addressed the void of humanity. The void in our hearts and souls is caused by the need to be filled by a right relationship and fellowship with God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. There is no substance, activity, possession, achievement or person that can fill our void and replace the need for a relationship with God.

Jesus is the Living Water and the Well that Never Runs Dry! Before you seek to be filled by anything else, spend time in prayer, worship and reading the Word of God. Jesus is calling us daily to "come drink of His eternal well and thirst no more."

TODAY'S PRAYER...

SALVATION FOR THE LEAST OF THESE

Elder Corey Whisenant

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. - Romans 1:16

God's grace is seen in His divine plan to redeem mankind through the death, burial and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ. His redemptive plan was prepared before creation and the fall of man. Grace is God's proactive, unmerited favor towards man. It is God's self-initiated supply towards man's spiritual account without regard for his ability to earn or deserve it. The Bible asserts, "Christ died for the ungodly." The gospel is "good news" because salvation is available to the wealthy and poor without partiality, not based on nationality, social, political or economic status; it is for everyone who calls upon the name of the Jesus.

Like Jesus, we must value everyone. The undocumented Hispanic day laborer, the homeless under the bridge, the orphan and the widow are all worth dying for. Do you recognize the least of these and make it a habit to be kind to them daily? When we embrace the downtrodden and the outcast, we are walking in God's love and discipleship. The age old adage states, "the best things in life are free." The most priceless gift given to mankind is love. Give love freely to all as it has freely been given to you, without partiality and hypocrisy.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THE DANIEL FAST & 21 DAYS OF PRAYER

Prayer Line: (605) 475-4700 | Access Code: 298253#
Conference Call: Monday – Friday: 6:00 – 6:30am, Saturday: 7:30 – 8:30am
Main sanctuary: Sunday: 7:30 – 8:00am

The Daniel Fast is a method of spiritual fasting based upon the prophet Daniel's fasting experience in the book of Daniel in the Bible. There are two passages in specific that the Daniel Fast is based on:

Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. - Daniel 1:12 (NKJV)

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. - Daniel 10: 2 – 3 (NKJV)

From this experience Daniel was said to gain knowledge, wisdom, spiritual understanding, favor and an even better appearance (*Daniel 1:15-20*) in addition to answered prayer and spiritual insight (*Daniel 10: 11-12*).

The idea behind the Daniel fast is that you would set aside meat, sugar, bread, alcohol and sweets as an act of worship and sacrifice and spend time in prayer and Bible reading.

Prayer Day Topics:

Day 1: Salvation & Evangelism	Day 8: Faith & Wisdom	Day 15: Sanctification
Day 2: Discipleship	Day 9: Healing	Day 16: Forgiveness & Repentance
Day 3: God's Will in Leadership	Day 10: Mental Health	Day 17: Deliverance & Spiritual Warfare
Day 4: Marriage	Day 11: Singles	Day 18: Family
Day 5: Youth	Day 12: Marriage	Day 19: Employment, Debt, Lack & Poverty
Day 6: Finances & Business	Day 13: Seniors	Day 20: The Government & Affairs of the United States
Day 7: Crime & Law Enforcement	Day 14: Young Adults & Purpose	Day 21: The Body of Christ

Fasting is a personal decision that should be made at the discretion of the individual. If you have health conditions or concerns or are under the care of a physician, we encourage you to consult with your medical professional prior to committing to the Daniel fast.

ARRESTING THE FLESH

Sister Shelia Humphrey

Then Jesus said to His disciples, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* - Matthew 16:24

Being placed under arrest is not always a bad thing. A proper arrest establishes order and brings behavior and attitudes under control. When we seek to arrest, or deny the flesh, we are referring to bringing our nature and desires that oppose God and seek sinful gratification under the control of the Holy Spirit.

We live in a time when many are self-seeking, self-centered and consumed with what they think, feel, need and want which leaves our spirit man held captive by the desires of our flesh. These desires are only meant to bring us pleasure, fame or fortune and cause us to live a life without considering and honoring God.

Jesus did not only die on the cross so we would not have to, but He died as an example that we would also deny our fleshly desires as He did. Every day in every action, thought and attitude, we are subpoenaed to choose between denying our flesh or walking in the spirit. Christ charges us to not be carnal minded, but instead to crucify our flesh. If we choose to walk in the Spirit, Christ declares a mistrial, and we are released from captivity, declared victorious over our flesh and fully pleasing our God.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

A HOLY CALLING

Deacon Karl Humphrey

who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, - 2 Timothy 1:9

In 1 Peter 1:15 – 16, we find God's command, "Be holy, for I am holy"; This is His requirement in all our conduct. There is no greater calling than to be set apart for the purpose which God, the Creator of all things, has established. God's calling is holy, no matter the specific call, because God is holy and all that comes from Him is therefore holy.

Daniel fulfilled a holy calling and demonstrated uncompromised faithfulness to God in the most challenging of circumstances. In Daniel 1:8, He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies" despite the King of Babylon's command. Just as God called Daniel for His holy purpose, He has also called us with a holy call to do His will in the earth so that all mankind will have an opportunity to know and accept Him through Jesus Christ.

Lord, as we fast, we desire to grow closer to You. Enable us to be holy as You are, so that we will be more useful to the kingdom of God and glorify Your name. Thank you for calling us for Your purpose and by your grace. Amen.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

SUFFERING & GLORY

Elder Tony Miles

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” - Romans 8:18

We don't have to look far to find instances of suffering. We can turn on our television, mobile device or computer and instantly be bombarded with images of those suffering. For some, we don't have to look any further than our own neighborhoods, families, households or own lives.

The life and passion of Jesus Christ offers us clues and perspective on how to view suffering. John 11:4 gives us great insight into the ultimate purpose of suffering. *4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

The suffering we experience as believers is ultimately for God's glory that Christ may be glorified through it. This was not just a theory to Jesus; He had first-hand experience with suffering. As He suffered, bled and died for us, He remained faithful to God's call and fully trusted in the power of God to vindicate Him. His resurrection is proof of God's sustaining power!

May Christ's example serve as encouragement to keep our focus on Christ. Hang in there! Keep fighting, believing and trusting! Know that GLORY awaits us on the other side of suffering!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

SUFFERING & SUBMISSION

Elder Marjorie Conner

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." - Matthew 26:36 - 39

We've heard the saying "self-preservation is the first law of nature", but for those that have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, God's original design of submitting to His plan is greater.

When we read of Jesus praying, "let this cup pass from me" in the garden, we are experiencing Him speak in His humanity, for the scripture states that He was sorrowful and deeply distressed. Hours before he was arrested and crucified, Jesus pleaded to God three times to let the suffering pass Him by and prayed, "Yet not as I will, but Your will be done". Just as Jesus submitted to God in spite of what His flesh was feeling and wanting, man must submit in the same manner.

In this passage, Jesus models for us how to suffer. We learn that any prayer that asks God to take away our source of suffering must also include the prayer to accept God's will. It is not always the prayer that we want to utter, but in putting God's will first, we are pleasing and honoring the Father.

Lord, help us to submit to Your will and put the needs of others ahead of our own. In Jesus name, Amen.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

TOTAL TRUST!

Elder Deborah Patterson

⁴¹ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." - Luke 22:41 – 42

What a day! As Jesus Christ went to the Mount of Olives as He often did, He came to a place to pray. Here He cried out saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." This "nevertheless" prayer was Jesus putting His total trust in God. Jesus laid aside His will to trust the Father totally and completely. We must reflect on the fact that if Jesus put His total trust in the Father, how much more should we as followers of Christ do the same! Jesus was facing life changing fate, ultimate betrayal, unjust arrest and His own impending death!

As believers, we too must develop "nevertheless" trust, reliance, hope and confidence in our Savior. Jesus' death on the cross wasn't permanent. Hallelujah, there is more to His story, and the resurrection of our Savior is how it ends! Beloved, when you're having a tough day or week, remember to pray and ask the Father to help you as you put your total trust in Him and His will and then be confident that your story will also end in victory!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

POWER, PROOF & PROMISE

Elder Wayne Tyus

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. - Corinthians 15:3 – 4, 54 – 57

The fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians beautifully depicts the power, proof and promise of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In this chapter, Paul declares that the Gospel is comprised of the death, burial and Resurrection of Christ.

This is that same Paul who declared in Romans 1:16 that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. Then Paul goes on in verses 5 – 8 to identify the many witnesses who saw and spent time with the risen Savior as proof of the Resurrection.

Lastly, and most importantly, in verses 54 – 55, Paul reminds the believer of the promise that death will surely be swallowed up in victory! At our appointed time, as believers, we will be able to ask those victorious questions, "O Death where is your sting? O Grave, where your victory?"

Lord, thank you for the power, proof and promise of your glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Sister Theresa Wilson

And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.
- Romans 8:11

As Christians, we believe Jesus died, was buried and resurrected; it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that He rose from the dead. This same Holy Spirit that resurrected Jesus comes to live inside of us the moment that we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Therefore, as Christians, we can experience His power working in and through us every day.

We are empowered by His Spirit to overcome sin, live a victorious life, transform our weaknesses into strengths and recover from any situation that we face. The Spirit not only gives life to our mortal bodies, but He also helps in our daily walk. I have endured unemployment and the untimely death of loved ones that caused much grief, sadness, loneliness and hopelessness. It was only by the resurrection power of God that I was able to recover, overcome, and be restored and revived. The good news is that through it all, as I drew close to God and relied on His Spirit, He gave me His strength, power, joy and peace, and enabled me to rise up from it all.

Take a few moments today to ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to overcome your life challenges.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

FULLY COMMITTED

Elder Dr. Sam Sanders

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.'" - Hebrews 5:5 - 7

Jesus faced trepidation over the upcoming suffering He would endure on the cross by praying for strength to do His Father's will. Instead of letting fear and despair overwhelm Him, Jesus dropped to His knees and prayed, "Father, not My will, but Yours be done."

You see, Jesus was about to undergo the most difficult struggle of His life and face death by the cruelest method - crucifixion. His sole purpose was to do the will of God, and everything about Him and His life lined up with that.

In agony, Jesus prayed more earnestly, and Luke 22: 43 - 44 says, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground". Those who desire to be in the nucleus of God's will, must draw strength from the Holy Spirit and understand that obeying God and being committed to His will is not always easy; However, Jesus' example teaches that it is always worth it! For it was because of His obedience that we are saved and have eternal life.

On today, pray that God will strengthen you to totally commit to His will. May you find comfort in knowing that He will provide the strength that you need to be totally committed!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

GIVING THANKS FOR GOD'S GRACE

Elder John Patterson

²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."²⁸ For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. - Matthew 26: 26 – 28

It was on the eve of His crucifixion that Jesus and His disciples were celebrating God's deliverance of the Nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage by sharing in the Passover feast. This feast was to be faithfully observed annually. During this feast there would be the sacrifice of an innocent unblemished lamb and the shedding of its blood to cover the sins of the people. However, at this feast Jesus was preparing His disciples for His imminent death. What was most significant on this night was how Jesus took the most sacred of Jewish feasts and simplified it so that His disciples would have some food for thought about God's grace and His redemptive work of blessing, breaking and giving thanks using the two symbols, bread and wine. Jesus would institute the New Covenant and would "once and for all take away the sin of the world".

As believers, each time we take and eat the Lord's Supper we embrace this simple truth and remember His sacrifice. We give thanks for God's salvation, the forgiveness of sin, His anticipated second coming and our fellowship with others as one Body in Christ.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

RESURRECTION POWER

Elder Janell Barganier

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. - Philippians 3: 10

As Christians, we believe in the resurrection power that enables us to walk in victory daily because the sins of mankind were redeemed when Christ was crucified and resurrected with all power. Jesus defeated Satan, and he has no power over us. The finished work of Jesus sealed Satan's defeat.

The Holy Spirit lives inside of every believer, so we already have the resurrection power within; we are overcomers that have the ability to walk and live in victory! Every yoke is destroyed under the resurrection power of Christ, and every God given blessing is released. Believing in the resurrection power is what activates it in our lives. To activate the resurrection power of Christ, we apply the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and God's power to every situation in our lives. When sickness tries comes, we can pray for healing in Jesus' name. If we are in financial need, we can pray and apply the blood of Jesus; then the enemy is defeated, and we can claim the triumph Jesus won.

Jesus paid a high price for us to be able to claim victory daily. Let's believe in faith, declare His promises and His will that victory may come forth daily!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

DESTINY FULFILLED

Elder Shawn Foster

⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." - Matthew 28: 5 – 7

God has ordained destiny for our lives. However, our established plans may be thwarted, challenged, delayed and disrupted. It's at those times that we are inclined to become fearful, anxious, worried and even depressed, instead of having faith in God's plan, nature and promises.

According to scripture, women visited Jesus' tomb to anoint His body with spices. Joseph and Nicodemus did not have time to properly prepare His body for burial, so the women planned to pour spices over His body to counteract any decaying odor. They were surprised and fearful when He wasn't there. An angel comforted and reminded them that Jesus had risen just as He said, so the women left to tell His disciples.

Remember that when your plans to even complete a task for the Lord, do not happen as expected, do not be dismayed. God's ultimate plan was to validate women. He wanted them to find the tomb empty and be the first to witness His resurrection; this strengthened the fact that He had risen because skeptics would never have chosen them. It's important to remember that when our plans go awry, God has a greater purpose, His ultimate plans will prevail, and His promises will not fail.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Elder Conner Johnson

...do this in remembrance of Me." - Luke 22:19^b

To be commanded to remember the body and blood of Jesus by partaking of the sacred elements on a regular basis is a simple request that carries much weight.

Participation in the Lord's Supper is how we remember and honor our Lord and Savior. We remember the unwarranted mistreatment and lashes Jesus endured. We remember the mocking and crown of thorns that was placed on His head. We remember Him feeling forsaken by the Father. We remember the horrible death Jesus suffered on the cross, and we remember His victory over death, sin and the grave because of His resurrection from the dead. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are reminded to celebrate His sacrifice, suffering, resurrection and deity.

Jesus became our blood sacrifice so that we could have access to God and eternal life. Because of His sacrifice, we are adopted into the household of faith and receive all the rights and privileges as His children.

Father, each time that we partake of the Lord's Supper, help us to never forget or take for granted all that Jesus endured that we may receive the gift of salvation. May we always remember His body that was broken and blood that was shed for us.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THE CROSS

Elder Michelle A. Smith

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, - Galatians 6:14^a

Many years ago, I experienced a home burglary, and my favorite cross necklace was stolen. It was a precious beautiful gift from my father. Nevertheless, I'm grateful that the meaning of the cross can never be taken away. For me, the cross represents the place where Jesus paid the price for every bad, wrong, sinful, degrading, embarrassing and humiliating thing that I had done and ever will do. The cross is where Jesus took away the shame, guilt, weight, stain, torment and condemnation of all of them. The cross is where He totally forgave me and removed all of my sins as far as the east is from the west to never remember them again. I can now rejoice every day at the symbol of the cross because it represents my freedom. Freedom from many of the consequences and memories of my sins. It symbolizes His steadfast love, total acceptance and new life in Him as a woman whose sins have all been nailed to the cross. It symbolizes what my earthly father could never give me and no one can ever steal from me.

On today, reflect on what the cross means to you and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

PAID IN FULL

Elder Leo Hudson

²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. - Matthew 11:29

Acquiring debt is the way of society for companies, countries and individuals. Anyone with debt is a slave to the debtor, and the debtor becomes his master. Having debt creates restlessness, stress and weight upon your shoulders. According to the scriptures, you become like an ox with a yoke around your neck driven by your master. However, Jesus asks that we take His yoke upon us to find rest for our souls. You may ask, "how can I have a yoke and rest at the same time?" Well, there was debt owed by mankind as payment for our sins because of Adam's disobedience to God, but Jesus, who was sinless, paid for our sins with His precious blood by dying on the cross. To those of us that believed in Jesus and received His payment, the debt of our sins was and is still satisfied; Jesus then became our Master, and we are forever yoked, or joined, with Him. Now we are fully able to experience true rest, freedom, love, peace, joy and forgiveness that Jesus provided when the debt of our sins has been paid in full!

On today, reflect on the truth that your sins have been fully paid for and experience joy and freedom in Christ.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

TODAY'S PRAYER...

A GREAT GOOD FRIDAY!

Elder John Patterson

...For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. - Romans 5:15^b

Many times we become consumed with grief, overwhelmed with sorrows, find difficulty in working through our transgressions and sin, struggle to find peace, or experience physical or mental illness. In those moments, it is important to remember that Jesus overcame all of those things when he uttered the words "It is finished". This phrase changed our lives forever because Jesus had finished paying the price for our physical healing, salvation and liberation.

His powerful statement meant complete and total restoration is now available to us all forever. He had paid a debt that we owed and offered His own blood as full payment for our sins. Praise God, that our debt has been paid in full, and we have been redeemed by his blood! The Old Covenant had ended and a new one began. So the next time you feel the difficulties of life are defeating you, remember Jesus was wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities, chastised for your peace, wounded for your healing and carried your grief and sorrow on the cross. My challenge for us all is to receive and rest in the finished work of Jesus and know that it really is finished!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THIS BLOOD'S FOR YOU

Elder Dr. Lawrence Williams, Sr.

¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? - Hebrews 9:13 - 14

Leviticus 17:11 affirms that blood gives life to the physical body. Without blood, no person could live. As blood has major significance for the physical body, it also has great importance for the spiritual being. Many things discussed in the Old Testament pointed to a truth on a spiritual level in the New Testament. Throughout history, God has made provision for His children to be cleansed from their sins. In the Old Testament, the blood of animals was shed on altars as an atonement for the sins of one individual. The blood of the slaughtered animal provided forgiveness of the sins of one person. Biblical history indicates that this had to be done annually. The blood of one unblemished animal was used as a sacrifice and substitute for one human being to be cleansed from sin.

However, because God loves you and I so much, He sent a more perfect sacrifice, His Son, Jesus. Rather than the blood of bullocks, rams and lambs, Jesus' death on the cross became the lasting and only sacrifice needed for the remission of sins for all mankind. Rejoice knowing that God had you in mind when He sent Jesus to die and shed his blood on Calvary! His blood was for you!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

FORGIVE THEM

Elder Vaughan Sanders

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." - Luke 23:24

The ability to forgive often causes us to be challenged in our emotions and feelings. For many, it is a natural reaction to hold people accountable for their trespasses, become angry or bitter, and desire or seek revenge. The act of forgiveness unifies the mind, mouth, and the heart. However, the foundation of our Christian faith is forgiveness.

In His conversation with God, Jesus begins with "Father, forgive them". By doing this, He demonstrates that forgiveness opens up the lines for effective communication with God and others. The following words "for they do not know what they do" denotes the fact that Jesus understood that those who were responsible for Him being nailed to the cross did not fully understand who He was or recognize that He was sent by God to fulfill His purpose. Here Jesus shows us that forgiveness is not optional, but that it is essential in fulfilling our God given purpose. When we are able to forgive, it allows us to pursue our purpose, think clearly, speak life and love others unconditionally.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help You to forgive those that misunderstand, mistreat, and disregard you and your purpose. If Jesus prayed this for them, so should we.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

THE CELEBRATION BEGINS AT THE BURIAL

Minister Eric Hill

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Burials are often viewed as sad events or a constant reminder of loss and sadness; however, that is not the case in the burial of Christ. His was the beginning of and preparation for the celebration of His resurrection.

The burial of Christ confirms two essential facts. First, the burial of Jesus confirms that the resurrection of Jesus did indeed take place. His burial is similar to ours in that Jesus had to first be buried in order to be resurrected, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we become a new creation in Christ and must bury our old ways of thinking and behaving. Secondly, the burial of Jesus fulfilled the words of prophecy concerning the details of how it would take place in Isaiah 53:9. Had Jesus not been buried, the scriptures would have included false prophecy, and Jesus would be considered a liar.

God's plan of redemption was to purchase our salvation with the blood of Jesus. His burial was an essential step on the journey towards God's purpose being fulfilled in providing mankind with eternal life. Therefore, we can fully celebrate Jesus' burial today as the catalyst for the celebration of His resurrection and our salvation! Let the celebration begin!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

IT REALLY IS FINISHED!

Elder Roshonda Boone

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. - John 19:30

Many times we become consumed with grief, overwhelmed with sorrows, find difficulty in working through our transgressions and sin, struggle to find peace, or experience physical or mental illness. In those moments, it is important to remember that Jesus overcame all of those things when he uttered the words "It is finished". This phrase changed our lives forever because Jesus had finished paying the price for our physical healing, salvation and liberation.

His powerful statement meant complete and total restoration is now available to us all forever. He had paid a debt that we owed and offered His own blood as full payment for our sins. Praise God, that our debt has been paid in full, and we have been redeemed by his blood! The Old Covenant had ended and a new one began. So the next time you feel the difficulties of life are defeating you, remember Jesus was wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities, chastised for your peace, wounded for your healing and carried your grief and sorrow on the cross. My challenge for us all is to receive and rest in the finished work of Jesus and know that it really is finished!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

IN PARADISE

Sister Margaret Justice

⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." - Luke 23:42 - 43

As Jesus was hanging on the cross, paying our penalty for sin, He made a promise to a dying, repentant thief. By the grace of God and the power of Christ, that promise was kept. The thief's sins were forgiven and washed away, and his death that day was his entrance to paradise. To the natural man, paradise is pictured as a place of delight and happiness. Spiritually speaking, paradise is so much more. Paradise is a synonym for "heaven", the place where God is and the place of blessing where Christians live after death.

To be in paradise would mean to be with Jesus forever. There would be no more sin, pain, worries, disappointment, sickness, diets, financial worries, depression, holiday blues, unemployment, COVID-19, or the death of loved ones. In paradise all these things will be no more. Just like Jesus promised the thief that he would be with Him in paradise, because we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we will also be with Him in paradise. God is no respecter of persons and a Promise Keeper. We can rest and rejoice in knowing that His solemn promise will be kept. Hallelujah!

Pray and thank God that your place in paradise is secure because you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

TODAY'S PRAYER...

LOVE NEVER FAILS!

Elder Deborah Patterson

²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, *"Woman, behold your son!"* ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, *"Behold your mother!"* And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. - John 19: 26 - 27

God is love, and His love is evident in Him giving the world the greatest gift ever, His only Son, Jesus Christ. As we reflect on the life of Christ, and specifically His last days before His death, burial and resurrection, we are reminded that the Father's pure and consistent love draws us to Him.

In John 19: 26 - 27, we read, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" As the Lamb of God hung on the cross, He lovingly looked at His mother and the disciple with a faithful, enduring love. Although Jesus was facing death on the cross, His compassionate and merciful nature caused Him to show love, give love, and with love assure that the disciple and His mother were taken care of.

In 1st Corinthians 13:13, we read "And now abide faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The love of our God never fails! Never! Ever! Beloved, remember this, God is compassionate and concerned about His children, and He loves all of us fully and completely!

TODAY'S PRAYER...

NEVER FORSAKEN

Elder Chequita Carter

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? - Psalm 22:1

When Jesus was on the Cross and the sins of the world were on His shoulders, the weight of humanity was pressing on His physical being. One might think that God had abandoned and forsaken Him.

However, God allowed Christ to experience death on the cross so that we could have eternal life. Just like God did not forsake Jesus on the cross, we too are never forsaken. We may feel hard pressed on every side, perplexed and persecuted, but we are not crushed, in despair or forsaken." Although that's how we may feel, the opposite is true because God was demonstrating His love toward us while we were sinners and Christ died for us.

During this pandemic season, we may feel that God has forgotten or forsaken us, but we cannot allow what we see, feel or experience to cause us to forget that Jesus is with us now and forever to help us; We are never forsaken! The reality is that Christ hears our cries and is near to us. His mercies are new every morning. His love for us will never fail, and His promise is that He will give us a future and a hope.

TODAY'S PRAYER...
