

WEEK FOUR

prayers OF hope

monday - PRAY FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

isaiah 40: 28-31

I am still amazed by those individuals who willingly put themselves in harm's way in order to help others in their time of need. Not only are our first responders dealing with illness and injury, they are meeting with people when they are in crisis; they are calming fears, easing anxiety, and are the first voice people encounter when they call out in distress. Even in "normal" circumstances that can start to take a toll on a first responder's mental and spiritual health. Let's spend some time at the feet of Jesus today, interceding for our first responders! Pray that God would renew their strength and fortify their resolve. Pray that God would show up in mighty ways in their days this week!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for first responders. Pray for strength and rest. If you know a first responder, pray for them by name and let them know that you did so. Send a note or a text of encouragement to a first responder or to a local fire house or police station.

tuesday - PRAY FOR HEALING

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!

psalm 103: 2-5

The coronavirus may be new to human understanding, but it is NOT new to God. God is still the great Physician and He is still in the healing business! We are in a time with a unique opportunity for God to display His mighty healing powers. Let's spend time in prayer today petitioning God to show up in our nation, and our world. Let's pray that all human wisdom will be overshadowed by the miraculous power of God! Let's pray for models to be wrong and for infection rates to be inexplicably lower than projected.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for medical miracles. Pray for the great Physician to show up! If you know someone who is ill (whether it's COVID-19, cancer, or anything else) pray for them by name. If you scroll through a social media post about someone who is sick, stop what you're doing and pray for them.

wednesday - PRAY FOR CHILDREN + PARENTS

And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

deuteronomy 6: 6-7

But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.

matthew 19: 14-15

Depending on the ages of children, they most likely won't remember all the fear or the uncertainty of these times. However, they will remember how home felt and how the extra time with family shaped them. We find ourselves with a unique opportunity to teach and model to children what it looks like to put our trust in God. May this extended family time be life-giving to our children. May we speak truth into their hearts about who God is and who He says they are. I'm not going to pretend that this season is easy for kids, and especially for parents. Kids are bored and missing friends. Parents are stressed, and forced into new roles. Let's pray for God to invade our homes with His hope, His peace, and His contentment!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

If you are a parent with kids at home, spend time praying WITH and FOR your kids. Open the Bible together and talk about God's faithfulness. Pray for children all over the world. Pray for their education both intellectual and spiritual. Pray for the vulnerable children, pray that God would reveal Himself to them with His supernatural protection. Pray for the stressed out and overwhelmed parents. Pray specifically for single parents who aren't able to get a break.

thursday - PRAY FOR PROTECTION

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with

his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection. Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

psalm 91: 1-6

If you find yourself, like a lot of us, wrestling with thoughts of fear and anxiety, let's take some time to reflect on the truth of the character and power of God. Maybe close your eyes and imagine God still seated on His throne, which is above every illness and above every fear. Allow yourself to feel His wings of protection over you. Spend some time reminding yourself of His promises that still stand true and can be your armor and protection during this season.

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for God's protection over your life and the lives of your loved ones.

Meditate on God's promises and allow them to fill you with hope.

Pray for those who need a little extra protection, like our senior population, our healthcare workers, our grocery industry, and vulnerable children.

***friday* - PRAY WITH LAMENT**

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

psalm 22: 1-2

You are not alone in feeling like God is far away. We all go through times where we struggle to feel God's presence. Even King David, a man after God's own heart, who wrote the psalm above went through seasons of lament. And here we are on Good Friday, remembering a time when

Jesus himself uttered the words, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" We have the gift of hindsight to know how Holy Week ends, but it is good to spend time lamenting before God, pouring out our sadness, anxiety, and frustrations. We can grieve at the same time we have hope. For the same reason we call today "Good Friday", we can cry out to God, while holding steadfastly to the hope that He is going to show up!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Open yourself up to God. Acknowledge the darkness you feel and give it over to Him. Reflect on the sacrifice of Christ with reverence. Watch a Good Friday service online. Take communion with your family, or by yourself, knowing you are joining with believers in solidarity all over the world.

saturday - PRAY IN THE WAITING

I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken. Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him.

psalm 62: 1-2, 5

Holy Saturday, and we find ourselves in the tension. The tension between the promise and the fulfillment, between the call for help and the rescue. The word "Hosanna" originally meant "save me please", but that cry was so quick to be answered that over the years it came to mean, "salvation is here". In one word we can express this tension we feel. It is both the call for help and also the hope that help is on the way. On this Holy Saturday, perhaps more than other years, we can identify more clearly with those followers of Jesus on the original Holy Saturday when the silence from the tomb was deafening. We are in a season of waiting, no doubt. It feels like our lives have quite literally been put on pause. So many things feel beyond our control, and all we can do is wait. Wait for the all clear. Wait for the rescue. Wait for God to show up. However we can say, "Hosanna", with confidence because we know God is on the move!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Pray for patience and renewed strength. Pray in faith for God to show up.
Take heart. Sunday is coming.

sunday - PRAY FOR GOD TO BRING GOOD

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory.

isaiah 61: 1-3

HE IS RISEN! God has done what only He can do; He brings LIFE out of places where before there was only death. What the enemy meant for evil, God has brought GOOD. He did it 2,000 years ago and He's doing it still today! The enemy is trying to use this situation to cause anxiety, fear, and discord. However, because of Easter Sunday, we know that NOTHING can stand in the way of the Kingdom of God invading the earth with hope, love, and His unfailing goodness!

TODAY'S ACTION STEPS

Share the hope you have with your friends and neighbors. Use any tools you have to share this Good News: social media, sidewalk chalk, window paint, phone calls!

Reflect on these words from "Graves into Gardens" by Elevation Worship. "You turn mourning to dancing. You give beauty for ashes. You turn shame into glory. You're the only one who can. You turn graves into gardens. You turn bones into armies. You turn seas into highways. You're the only one who can!"