

FROM MISSION TO VISION TO MOBILIZATION

PRAYER JOURNAL

PRAYING THE SPIRIT'S VISION TO
PENTECOST



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FOREWORD SLOWLY AND SUDDENLY



These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication . . .

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . .

. . . and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

—Acts 1:14a; 2:1–2, 4a, 41b (KJV)

Pentecost took fifty days to happen. It's interesting that it happened so slowly. On Easter, Jesus had already conquered death. After Easter, Jesus “commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4, KJV)—the gift of the Holy Spirit. Why the waiting? The believers obeyed, they waited, they prayed for days on end. Pentecost happened very slowly, over a long period of time, all of a sudden!

Over the next fifty days we are embarking on a journey, waiting for the day of Pentecost to fully come. We must wait for it. Just as the early disciples did, we prepare to become the Spirit-filled, soul-saving church by waiting and praying. This is the only way. Waiting and prayer lead to unity; unity prepares for Pentecost; Pentecost brings power; power begets saved souls; saved souls birth the church!

We slowly wait with prayer and prepare for the sudden and powerful work of the Spirit to break in. Can we move through these next few weeks with that sense of waiting, praying anticipation?

Throughout this journal, we have prepared a devotional reflection and prayer for every one of these fifty days. The contents will lead us to focus on praying through our mission, our vision, and mobilizing the major elements of work that God has called us into. We will be praying through this long process in faith, knowing that, after our time of waiting and prayer, the Holy Spirit will suddenly move—in my heart and in yours, among our leaders, across our beloved church, and ultimately in our world.

O Lord, over these next fifty days, would you slow us down to wait and pray so you can move suddenly in your church? Mighty God, mobilize us with a renewed, Spirit-filled, soul-saving ministry across the USA and Canada.

*—Stan Reeder
Director, USA/Canada Region*

PREFACE



Yes, the Church of the Nazarene is a church that prays! In 2022, starting in January and ending on Pentecost Sunday, the Church of the Nazarene in Canada and the United States came together in prayer like no other time in our history. A half-million Nazarenes were mobilized to pray for the protection, direction, and revelation of the church. We called this initiative the Half-Million Mobilization.

From May 1 to Pentecost Sunday in 2022, churches from across the United States and Canada followed along in a prayer journal with daily devotional reflections. When the pictures began to come in, they included pastors and congregations from churches large and small, gathering in prayer for their people and for the Church of the Nazarene. There has been a great move of the Spirit unifying the church in its most basic function—to pray.

In addition to the call to prayer, there was a call to speak, an opportunity for clergy and laypeople to fill in a prayer response survey and communicate what the Spirit was telling them regarding their time in prayer. Those prayer responses contained a remarkable consistency from the very first group of senior leaders praying in January to the laity praying through Pentecost. There emerged four imperatives for the Nazarene church in the USA/Canada Region:

- The importance of “**mobilizing** all Nazarenes in unity” in the midst of a polarized world.
- The calling of our churches to engage in “ **blessing** our communities;” to get out from behind our walls to be salt and light in our culture.
- A passion for “**bringing** people to Jesus,” especially younger generations.
- A longing for the transformation of the whole person, “**becoming** Christlike disciples” mobilized to make a holy, positive impact in our world.

As the work of discovering the future mission, vision, and strategies for the Church of the Nazarene in the USA/Canada Region continues, all of the work will be grounded in prayer. John Wesley wrote, “God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.” This idea is what guides this year’s Half-Million Mobilization *Prayer Journal*.

The vision statement for the Church of the Nazarene’s USA/Canada Region is as follows:

Mobilizing all Nazarenes in unity

Blessing our communities

Bringing people to Jesus

Becoming Christlike disciples

This prayer journal contains weekly themes related to the mission of the church and the elements of this vision statement. We will pray *From Mission to Vision to Mobilization* from Easter to Pentecost.

Come and join in! Read and pray daily following this *Prayer Journal*.

—Jeff Alexander
Director of Strategy, USA/Canada Region

DAY 1

Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023



Luke 24:49

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

Scripture Insights

Easter Sunday is not the end of God's great story! In many ways, it is only the beginning. The closing words of Luke's Gospel prepare the way for the book that follows, the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus's resurrection has made clear what God was revealing throughout the Law of Moses, the Writings of the prophets, and the Psalms. Now everything has been fulfilled in Christ, for he is without a doubt the Messiah.

In Jesus's post-resurrection appearance to the apostles, he instructs them to stay in Jerusalem. They will become witnesses to what they have never before experienced; they will wait for something new. Their minds have been opened by the risen Lord; they understand the mission more clearly than ever before.

Since the work of God has been accomplished in Christ, the disciples will now proclaim in power the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus to all nations. In his instructions, Jesus invokes the Father's promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The mission hasn't changed, nor has the promise of power. Even in a world that is pushing back, we are to proclaim the good news. The power comes not from us but from the Father. The church needs Spirit-empowered disciples to remain focused and on mission. We are not on our own!

Today's Prayer

Father, let us be mindful to wait for your power so we can boldly and confidently accomplish your mission in the world.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Carla D. Sunberg
General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene

DAY 2

Monday, April 10, 2023



Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Insights

The Great Commission is the prevailing purpose to which Jesus calls all his followers. It is the call for disciples to make disciples.

A disciple is a learner who becomes so relationally connected to the teacher that the teacher's character and conduct become the learner's very own. In the command to baptize, Jesus is not prescribing the logistics of proper sacramental order; rather, he is describing the process of continually immersing new disciples into the presence of the triune God, until God's character and conduct become the disciples' very own.

The core of the Great Commission is the radical inclusion into God's family of all ethnicities, languages, sociopolitical tribes, and people who are in any way different from the first disciples. More than inclusion, the disciples are called to go to them wherever they may be—across the ideological aisle, across the room, across the street, or across the ocean.

The Great Commission articulates Jesus's preferred future for humanity: people immersed in God's presence taking on God's character as their own and inviting others into the same relational process of transformation into the likeness of Jesus.

Today's Prayer

Lord, may we be what you desire all of us to become—disciples who are inseparably connected to and thoroughly immersed in your presence, until your character and conduct become our very own. By the power of your Holy Spirit, enable us today to be the visible expression of Jesus to someone who is different than we are.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Ryan Green
Lead Pastor, City First Church

DAY 3

Tuesday, April 11, 2023



1 Chronicles 12:32

From Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command.

Scripture Insights

What should we do? is a question often asked in challenging situations. In 1 Chronicles 12, we find a group of men who knew what to do. They are listed among a motley crew who have joined forces with the exiled David to stand with this future king. They are warriors and wise men. The chronicler states that these men could understand “the times.” Too often when we hear talk of “the times,” we find people falling into the trap of predicting the second coming of Christ. We know better than this. Rather than a prediction, we need wise men and women who can prayerfully read our current situation and hear from the Spirit what we should do.

Our situation is different from the context of today’s scripture, but there are some questions we can ask:

What would God do if we came together with people who are different from ourselves?

How might we read the current times so the Spirit can guide us in our mission to love God and neighbor?

Today’s Prayer

Gracious God, we find it easy to rely on our own wisdom and understanding. While we know they are gifts from you, we need you to sanctify them by your Spirit. Teach us what to do. We are yours. We trust you.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Olivia Metcalf
District Superintendent, Upstate New York

DAY 4

Wednesday, April 12, 2023



Isaiah 48:15

I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him. I will bring him, and he will succeed in his mission.

Scripture Insights

God speaks, calls, and brings. Everything begins with God! In this text, it becomes clear that God is calling us. We are made to participate in God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. God calls us to take part in his mission. How could we ever hope to be part of such a massive undertaking?

Mother Teresa says, "Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of himself." Too often, we mistake prayer as a way to change God's mind. We start having cramps of the imagination from going so long without flexing the muscle of dreaming with God about how we can participate in God's mission.

What if, instead, prayer gave us the capacity to embrace all that God is calling us to do? What if we talked to God, believing that prayer is the furnace that fuels our participation in God's mission? What if we prayed *believing* God would do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine?

Perhaps then, our hearts would be capable of succeeding in the mission God has called us to.

Today's Prayer

God, you have spoken to us. You have called us to you. Empower us to carry out your mission in the world. May people everywhere seek and find you. Pour out your Spirit on us.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Rick Harvey
Lead Pastor, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene

DAY 5

Thursday, April 13, 2023



Acts 13:2

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Scripture Insights

Prayer becomes powerful *not* when we use the correct words or the right inflection or tone of voice. Prayer becomes powerful when it is about finding the mind of Christ. What is Jesus saying through his Spirit? Spending time listening to God in our prayer life is where we find the mind of Christ.

It's interesting in today's scripture that the Holy Spirit speaks *while* the leaders of the church in Antioch are worshiping and fasting. These early church leaders have made room in their worship—and as they pray and fast—to listen to God. As a result of their listening and obedience, the apostle Paul is commissioned to what will be a life of mission, planting churches and writing what became a significant portion of the New Testament.

Could it be that God will use you in your context—home, neighborhood, community, church—as you listen to him? Finding the mind of Christ is the roadmap to joining him on mission. Let us be intentional listeners of God.

Today's Prayer

Lord, help us make space to listen to you in prayer. Help us be obedient to move in the direction you lead. Empower us to be effective as we join you in your mission of transforming lives, now and for eternity.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Steve Ottley
District Superintendent, Canada Central

DAY 6

Friday, April 14, 2023



John 17:18

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Scripture Insights

In this passage, Jesus prays for his disciples' protection and unity, sending them into the world to fulfill the mission of the kingdom of God. Jesus not only sends them but also promises the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission (see Acts 1:8).

The first followers of Jesus come from different professional and socioeconomic backgrounds. These men and women are not the best equipped or most qualified, but Jesus sees great potential in them for the advancement of the mission of the church.

These ordinary men and women do extraordinary things under the authority of the Master and under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. They succeed in spreading the gospel everywhere, and they come to be a force that no religious or political structure can stop.

These men and women understand the principle of prayer for unity: "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14).

Today's Prayer

Today, let us join Jesus's prayer for his followers:

Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.
(John 17:11b)

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Roberto Hodgson
Director, Multicultural Ministries

DAY 7

Saturday, April 15, 2023



Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Scripture Insights

At the beginning of Matthew 24, as Jesus is leaving the temple, he tells his disciples that the place will be ruined, and they ask him, “When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age [world]?” (v. 3).

Jesus responds with signs that they and we should pay attention to. I invite you to align those signs of the end with this present age and recognize that, in the midst of all this, those who stand firm will be saved.

The gospel will be preached in the whole world, to all nations (we have reached eight billion people), and then the end will come. This global condition demands the kingdom gospel, and the kingdom gospel will be preached by those who stand firm as saved and transformed people.

Our present age reflects all that Jesus described—therefore, let us focus on and fulfill our mission to clearly declare the gospel.

Today’s Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us understand the reality that one day the end will come and that your mission is to be fulfilled now. Give us eyes to see that today the fields are ready for harvest, and give us the courage to boldly go.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Ian Fitzpatrick
National Director, Church of the Nazarene, Canada

DAY 8

Sunday, April 16, 2023



Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Scripture Insights

Almost every follower of Jesus has heard or seen this verse in their lifetime. We quote it, we place it on plaques, post it on Instagram, and maybe we’ve even seen it embroidered on a pillow at Grandma’s house. It is our go-to verse for security and hope as we envision the future.

While this verse has become a spiritual security blanket, many don’t understand its context. These words are delivered by Jeremiah as he prophesies to the Israelites that they are going to be in captivity for seventy years. Jeremiah tells them to work, build, settle down, plant, eat, get married, have children, and increase in number. In other words, *prosper where you are planted*. Be a blessing to the people around you, even in captivity. Jeremiah gives the bad news then describes how they should live before he gives the good news of verse 11.

What if God wants us to flourish by asking us to bloom where we are planted? To become a blessing to our neighborhoods? What if the vision is less about personal prosperity and more about how we can be a blessing to those around us, even in hard times?

God has a plan for us. God has a vision for us in our new season as a church. Let’s fulfill that vision and become a blessing, regardless of our circumstances!

Today’s Prayer

God, give us a clear understanding of the hope and future you envision for us. Help us take our eyes off our circumstances in order to become the people you are inspiring us to become. Prosper us where we are planted so we can become a blessing to the people you have surrounded us with in our communities.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the vision of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Wynne Lankford
Lead Pastor, Southside Church

DAY 9

Monday, April 17, 2023



1 Samuel 3:1

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

Scripture Insights

“What’s wrong with the church today?” Many of us feel compelled to ask this question and seek answers. Self-proclaimed experts offer their opinions, and some predict worse things ahead. But take heart, people of God.

The story of young Samuel offers a profound, simple, hopeful way for the church to think about the mission of God in these days. Samuel’s mother, Hannah, couldn’t have imagined the results of her prayer. She prayed for a child and literally gave him to the Lord. Her act of earnest crying out and her costly obedience were the beginning of a powerful change in that generation and beyond.

What would happen if a generation of parents and grandparents today began to cry out to God, praying for the next generations? And not simply praying *for* them but *offering* them to God to be used for the work of the kingdom? Committing to raise them in the knowledge that the hopes and dreams of the fulfillment of God’s great mission are prayed over them, with the hope that they might go with our blessing to accomplish all God has in mind?

Simple. Profound. Show us the way!

Today’s Prayer

Lord give us the heart of Hannah, that we might not look for answers to the brokenness of our world through someone else’s child but through our own. Lord, prepare us to prepare them to go in your name.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *vision* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Rob Songer
District Superintendent, Central California

DAY 10

Tuesday, April 18, 2023



Habakkuk 2:3

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Scripture Insights

Without vision, the people perish. Without vision, the people throw off restraint. Without vision, we operate toward an unspecified destination like the Israelites wandering in the desert. Without vision we have effort without outcome, we lack alignment and unity, we spend our days focused on what is passing instead of what is eternal.

Why would we operate—why would we live—without vision? Because we have to wait for it. We have to wait for its appointed time. It feels like it lingers, so we become impatient to the revelation God is giving us and just want to do the work even if the appointed time has not yet come.

Ask God for calling. Pray for clarity, for revelation. And pray for patience to await the appointed time.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, we love you, and we trust you in all things. Make clear to us the path you are calling us to. Awaken a grasp of your commands that you have led us to follow, and let the next step become clear because you are the lamp to our feet and the light to our path. We trust you. Give us the faith that is needed to follow.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *vision* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Kevin Jack
Lead Pastor, Highland Park Church

DAY 11

Wednesday, April 19, 2023



Acts 9:10

*In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”
“Yes, Lord,” he answered.*

Scripture Insights

Over lunch, I was whining to a good friend about my leadership responsibility as a gatekeeper. He said something I’ve been thinking about ever since: “Why don’t you be a gate *opener* instead?”

We meet Ananias in Acts 9, and Ananias has one job: to open the gate for Saul of Tarsus. Instinctively, he knows that locking the gate is the prudent thing to do. Saul is on his way to Damascus to carry out his “murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples” (v. 1).

Ananias lives in Damascus and is a disciple! I would advise him to bar the door.

But when Jesus speaks to Ananias in a vision, Ananias answers, “Yes, Lord.”

To be obedient, he must close the door on his version of what is logical and safe, and open the door to the vision Jesus has for Saul.

I wonder how often, based on my preconceptions or fear, I’ve swung the gate closed on God’s vision for someone. Where did Ananias’s courage come from? He is well acquainted with the voice of Jesus.

Today’s Prayer

Lord Jesus, what vision of the good things you have in mind for those around us would we see if our ears were more tuned to your voice? We are listening. And, like Ananias, our answer is yes.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *vision* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Jerry Kester
District Superintendent, Washington Pacific

DAY 12

Thursday, April 20, 2023



Joel 2:28

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Scripture Insights

Over the years, I have heard Joel 2:28 quoted many times in various contexts. On these occasions, I remember learning a lot about God pouring out his Spirit and the resulting dreams and visions. I don't recall hearing much about the verse's two introductory words: *And afterward . . .*

And after . . . what?

Joel is a prophet who announces that God's judgment on a wayward people is close at hand. In the book that bears his name, Joel issues a stern warning and calls the community of Israel to repentance. He urges God's children to fast and pray with contrite hearts. Only when the Israelites posture themselves in humility before God, he explains, will deliverance and prosperity result.

And afterward . . . a faithful and loving God will pour out his Spirit. Anointed dreaming and clear vision require right thinking and right being.

May it be so in us today.

Today's Prayer

Thank you, Father, that you desire to give us vision for the future you have in mind. Purify our hearts, that we may have ears to hear and eyes to see your direction.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *vision* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Bonnie Perry
General Editor, Church of the Nazarene
Editorial Director, The Foundry Publishing

DAY 13

Friday, April 21, 2023



Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Scripture Insights

There is a lot Christians can learn from today's scripture. The two words that caught my attention are "vision" and "perish."

Most Bible translations and commentaries refer to "vision" as God's revelation, instruction, guidance, and prophecy, while "perish" means "deprived of moral restraints."

In that context, this verse could mean: where there is divine revelation and obedience to God's law, victorious life can be won and a transformative impact made in our communities.

As Nazarenes develop a greater understanding of the relevance of this verse, we must prayerfully mobilize in these three aspects:

1. Be guided by divine revelation.
2. Live a life of obedience to God's demands.
3. Faithfully and joyfully proclaim God's revelation (i.e., the gospel) to various people groups and communities around us.

Today's Prayer

Lord, we pray for our various ethnic churches across the United States and Canada, where finding a location to worship is a constant struggle. We pray for transformative ministries to take place among people groups in the United States and Canada.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *vision* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Pascal Permis
Haitian Strategic Readiness Team

DAY 14

Saturday, April 22, 2023



Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Scripture Insights

In today's scripture, Paul reminds the church in Ephesus that all they have accomplished and achieved is through God's power and strength, working in them for God's glory. He encourages them to allow God to multiply their dreams and plans beyond their own abilities for the kingdom.

A few keywords in this passage help us understand that God will continue to help as we look for strategies and vision for the USA/Canada Region.

The verb phrase "is able" is in present tense. God is continually able!

"To do" is an action word indicating an action that is not yet completed. God is still working!

The triple emphasis of the words "far more abundantly" intensifies what is possible through God's unlimited power.

Our dreams and visions for the region are not limited by our own imaginations, for God has a vision for us that is beyond anything we can think, dream, or do. We are relying on God to actively work in his unlimited power to bring the region where he wants it to be for his glory.

Today's Prayer

Father, we praise your name. Give us courage to dream kingdom-size dreams for our region and to trust that you will do more than we can ever imagine. May everything we do be for your glory alone.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the vision of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Debra Voelker
Northwest Regional Global NMI Representative

DAY 15

Sunday, April 23, 2023



Psalm 133:1

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

Scripture Insights

We often use the terms “God’s people” and “the family of God” interchangeably when we talk about Christ’s church. We talk about our brothers and sisters in Christ. As most of us know, getting biological siblings to live together in unity is challenging. There are disagreements about who gets the biggest room, what to have for dinner, and of course which child is the favorite. What’s especially concerning is that, as siblings age, they don’t always grow up. Experience has taught us that it’s possible to grow up physically without maturing relationally.

The good news is, as our faith matures, it’s possible to have unity without unanimity. John Wesley put it well when he wrote, “*Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?*” Unity, in the context of community, is the visible sign of a maturing faith and church. No wonder the psalmist declares, “how good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”

Today’s Prayer

Father, bless us with a truly maturing faith. May we be a visible sign of your inbreaking kingdom’s advancing. Unite our hearts together in an unbreakable bond of partnership and love as we serve together.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Dale Schaeffer
District Superintendent, Florida

DAY 16

Monday, April 24, 2023



Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Scripture Insights

I am always looking for two things when I engage Scripture: what the passage says about the heart of the Father, and how the Father's heart informs my behavior as a child of God. Truth transforms our minds—therefore, my mouth, mood, and attitude as his child should also be transformed.

Paul breaks down some truth for the believers in Galatia because religious people were trying to assimilate the behavior of the new Jewish and non-Jewish believers. Ministry gets messy when we focus on power dynamics and hierarchal structures instead of seeking the heart of the Father. Paul is crystal clear that uniformity and cheap diversity are not the heart of the Father but rather deep unity, solidarity, and mutuality among his children.

It is easy to say we believe all people are created equal. The challenge is to live in unity. We are called to demonstrate by the way we behave toward everyone we meet the same measure of mutuality, solidarity, and concern for the sake of unity in Christ.

Today's Prayer

As we seek you corporately and individually, reveal now your heart for your children, and helps us recognize anew that you have called us to unity because of Christ. Align our minds, mouths, moods, and attitudes.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Irene Lewis-Wimbley
Director, Southside Community Center

DAY 17

Tuesday, April 25, 2023



Philippians 2:2

Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Scripture Insights

A church sat next door to a strip club. The pastor and congregation prayed against it, but it flourished even more. One day, the pastor asked the Lord why the strip club continued to flourish when they prayed against it.

The Lord answered, *“Why would you curse the people I died for?”*

The church began to pray for the people. They repented of the sins of immorality, lust, and greed. They prayed that the strip club would be filled with the presence of God. The club closed two weeks later.

Peter is rebuked by Jesus for not being of one mind with the Lord (see Matthew 16:23). He has his own agenda, just like the pastor and congregation in this illustration.

Being of one mind is to think like Christ. The sanctified mind seeks the unity of the Holy Spirit. The sanctified mind sees every person as someone Jesus died for. Having the same love is consideration for others above ourselves.

May the love of Jesus abound in and through us to our hurting world.

Today’s Prayer

Lord, we ask that love and unity would abound in the Church of the Nazarene. Help us today to put your love into action to a soul in need of Jesus.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Kelli Westmark
Lead Pastor, Lincoln City Church of the Nazarene

DAY 18

Wednesday, April 26, 2023



1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Scripture Insights

Is there anything more damaging to the cause of Christ than division?

The word “appeal” that Paul uses in today’s scripture is important. It is as if Paul is *begging* the church to be unified, knowing how harmful it is for divisions to set in. It would be the same as a parent seeing the eventual downfall of a rebellious child and pleading with them to listen to their advice. That is the intensity that Paul brings to this call for unity.

The church is filled with people, and people like to have their own opinions. The enemy likes to keep us debating opinions instead of relying on the Truth. This appeal from Paul calls us to be perfectly united in mind and thought—a task that is only possible through truth.

It would be interesting to consider the amount of time we share opinions and the amount of time we share truth. Every time we are tempted to share our opinion, instead let us proclaim the truth we know in love, and unity will result.

The interesting thing is, when we rely on truth, our opinions don’t seem to matter as much anyway.

Today’s Prayer

Father, help us know truth and proclaim truth in our thoughts, words, and actions. May you enable us to live lives that lead to unity throughout the church and ensure that we love and value others the way you do. May every person we encounter today be drawn to your truth.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Wendell Brown
District Superintendent, North Central Ohio

DAY 19

Thursday, April 27, 2023



John 17:20-21

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Scripture Insights

I remember participating in a few group projects in school. One of the constant reminders teachers gave students was, “Everybody needs to contribute!” To accomplish the group project, everybody contributing meant we all had different small parts toward the same agreed goal. Usually, the best grades were given to groups where all participants excelled in their parts and worked together toward the clear and unified goal.

As I read the prayer of Jesus in John 17, I imagine Jesus thinking of you and me in the fulfillment of the kingdom’s big group project, God’s redemption plan, in these times of extreme focus on self-interest and self-desire that causes much disunity. To become one with the Father, Jesus humbled himself in obedience. Just like in a school project, where students humble themselves to listen to one another and submit themselves to their assigned tasks, God’s redemption plan requires from us a humble attitude and submission to one another in Jesus Christ.

By living this way, our selfish world will become a believing and restored one.

Today’s Prayer

Dear God, may the prayer of your Son, Jesus, be fulfilled in our lives and in your church today so that those around us may know who you are and believe in you.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Tabita Rothmann González
Ministerios Multiculturales, Plantacion de Iglesias
Iglesia del Nazareno, Distrito Kansas City

DAY 20

Friday, April 28, 2023



Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Scripture Insights

The focus of Jesus's last prayer for all his followers was for their unity. Paul signals here that the prayer of Jesus is answered. Unity is a present, established reality. It is not merely an aspirational idea, nor is it optional.

In view of the ugly divisions observed in the visible church today, this established unity is clearly not a reference to the structural or organizational unity found in doctrinal consensus, denominational agreement, and/or commitments to shared faith traditions. The basis of the unity of the church is profoundly spiritual. It is a Spirit-mediated induction into a global spiritual community that embraces together the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ—his exemplary life, atoning death, triumphant resurrection, and sovereign rule as King of the kingdom of God.

All members of God's family share this experience of spiritual unity across race, culture, and class. It is, therefore, a truly diagnostic mark identifying those who are really part of the invisible church and those who are not. Unity is the shared grace of being children of God the Father.

Today's Prayer

Father, deliver us from the evil one, who seeks to destroy our unity. Triune God, fill us with yourself so that your holy love will bind us together as a witness of your grace in a polarized world.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Sam Vassel
District Superintendent, Metro New York

DAY 21

Saturday, April 29, 2023



Colossians 3:14

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Scripture Insights

It is possible to have *union* without *unity*. Mark Twain reminds us of this truth when he humorously wrote: “You can take two cats and tie their tails together, and you will have union but not much unity.” Is it possible to have unity in the church with so many voices in our culture calling to divide?

Jesus sees this need as he prays for unity in John 17:21: “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.” Jesus wants unity for his church. So how do we get there?

The only way is the Christlike way—with forgiveness and loving others the way Christ loved us. He commands us to love as he has loved us, modeled on the cross. Paul, writing to the Colossian church, calls them to put on many virtues. *But, “over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”*

Today’s Prayer

Lord, put within our hearts a desire to learn your Word, your will, and your ways. May our actions and reactions always be in line and in step with your spirit.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *unity* of the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Jim Bond
District Superintendent, Kansas

DAY 22

Sunday, April 30, 2023



Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Scripture Insights

A critical objective of the Nazarene movement has always been the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the New Testament church. This focus lies at the heart of our Half-Million Mobilization call to pray. We want to do exactly what we see the apostle Paul and the early church doing.

What did they do? They practiced prayer! In a Philippi prison, “about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:25). They understand that spending time with Jesus is the key.

As we spend time with Jesus in prayer, his will, his Spirit, his values, and his heart begin to seep into our hearts. We begin to realize that what he says about the spiritual realm really is true: “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). We are never alone (see Matthew 28:20). He is with us (see Matthew 18:20) and will give us what we need when we pray.

We can do all this through him who gives us strength!

Today’s Prayer

Lord, we seek the courage of Peter, John, and the early church. They were just ordinary people, but everyone who met them took note that they had been with you (Acts 4:13). Unite us in spending time with you (Luke 11:1).

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Larry McKain
District Superintendent, Chicago Central

DAY 23

Monday, May 1, 2023



2 Chronicles 31:21

In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.

Scripture Insights

King Hezekiah determines that he will live his life wholly serving the one true God. Nothing is done without prayerful worship. Today's scripture describes him as seeking God first in everything he does, whether running a country or in his personal life. He is determined to influence his environment rather than have the environment influence him. The result is great success. He prospers!

As children of the most high God, we are carriers of his presence and can change the communities we find ourselves in. We can be a catalyst for Christ, or we can go with the flow. We must decide whether we will seek God in all things. We must desire to please God in our homes, workplaces, families, and communities. We must decide if we will be the change we want to see in our spheres of influence.

When we are sincere in wanting to bring glory to God, he will be the one to give us great success. Matthew 6:33 reminds us to seek first God's kingdom, and all other things will be added to us.

Today's Prayer

Father, we want to serve you. We desire to seek you in prayer, through your Word, and in our daily lives. We pray that you will give us the courage to live loudly for you in everything we do.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Alshandra Visagie
Director of Ministries, Cactus Ministries

DAY 24

Tuesday, May 2, 2023



1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Scripture Insights

As the son of a farmer, I had a front-row seat to watch Dad fix everything. When something needed a creative solution, he went to the barn, knew just where to go, grabbed the right tool, and then knew how to use that tool to accomplish the task. I was always amazed at how the barn contained everything needed for the moment.

I am not a farmer, but I am a pastor. I don't look in the barn, but I do look in the congregation. I continue to be amazed at how God has assembled all the gifts in his church needed to accomplish the task at hand. We each play a vital role in this beautiful picture of the church.

May we trust that God has given us what we need. May we be faithful stewards when called to do our part in serving those around us.

Today's Prayer

Father, may we be faithful to steward the gifts you have given us. With your creativity, please help us serve those around us, distributing grace as you graciously distributed to us.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Kevin Donoho
Lead Pastor, Olathe College Church of the Nazarene

DAY 25

Wednesday, May 3, 2023



Matthew 7:24

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Scripture Insights

The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was determined to one-up the famed Eiffel Tower and the French *Exposition Universelle* of 1889. American architects were desperate to measure up. However, their efforts were complicated by the fact that the soil in Chicago sits atop a sandy ooze that created leveling discrepancies as much as four inches over twenty-five feet!

Jesus knows something about building as a carpenter—but more profoundly as our Savior. Jesus knows that a life built on the shifting sands of fickle cultural whim is destined for destruction. Jesus—himself the cornerstone—provides the foundation upon which a life of grace and truth can be constructed. Such a life is winsome and attractive.

The remnants of the Chicago World's Fair are gone, but the people who name Jesus as Lord and so construct their lives continue to reach around the world and across the street with the transforming power of the gospel.

May the Solid Rock provide the footing that continues to launch God's people into ministry.

Today's Prayer

Jesus, forgive us when we choose the comforts of our homes and churches and forget our neighbors and the nations. By your Holy Spirit, set our hearts ablaze and compel our feet to move toward the lost and hurting.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Sam Barber
District Superintendent, South Central Ohio

DAY 26

Thursday, May 4, 2023



James 1:25

But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Scripture Insights

The other day my wife said to me, “You haven’t heard a single word I’ve said.” I said, “That’s a strange way to start a conversation.”

That joke is not original to me, but I have always found it funny. What’s not funny is how often we fail to truly listen, remember, and follow through on what the Lord Jesus has clearly called us to do.

And just what has he called us to do? Follow him. Follow his example to love the Father and love others. Do what his Word and Spirit (which are always in harmony) instruct and lead us to do. As my brother likes to say, “This isn’t rocket surgery.”

We pretty much know what the Lord has required of us (Micah 6:8, anybody?). So let’s not forget to listen and continue to lean into the freedom that only comes through surrender to the One who knows us best, loves us the most, and gives us the power to live as those who are blessed to be his people.

Today’s Prayer

Lord, we pray that today will be a day when we read your Word and allow it to sink into our souls. We pray that today will be a day that we hear your voice and take the steps to go where you want us to go. We pray today would be a day when we see you and remember what God looks like and that, as we go through this day, others would see a reflection of you in us.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Jeffrey Johnson
District Superintendent, South Texas

DAY 27

Friday, May 5, 2023



Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Scripture Insights

The principle of doing everything we do in the name of the Lord reflects the idea that we are called to act as representatives of Jesus in everything we do. This is a powerful challenge because, when we begin living our daily lives with this level of intentionality, everything we do becomes significant. There is no word too little. There is no deed too small. Our lives point people to Jesus!

In a culture filled with people who are desperate for hope, do we dare to dream what it would look like if five hundred thousand people were intentionally mobilized to act as representatives of Jesus? This movement would reverberate through eternity! It would transform families, spark revival, and change the world.

The challenge we have been given to live as representatives of Jesus is especially powerful because, when we apply this principle to our lives, we will begin to realize that this is a movement that begins with us!

So let the movement begin.

Today's Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for your many blessings in our lives. Give us the power today to represent you well. May all our words and all our actions bring you glory, and may our lives point others toward you.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Tim Fisher
Lead Pastor, Crossroads Community Church

DAY 28

Saturday, May 6, 2023



John 13:17

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Scripture Insights

In the verses prior to today's scripture, Jesus just finished doing something extraordinary—he washed his disciples' feet, including Judas. The Son of God got down on his knees and washed their feet.

A few years ago, I had the privilege of officiating a foot-washing service, where I washed the feet of our church board and staff members. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I will never forget the powerful presence of the holy as I splashed water and dried their feet. It was silent, but we could see the tears welling up in our eyes, and we could hear our muffled cries as we were truly blessed by *doing*.

We are called to follow the example of Jesus. Sometimes we get it wrong; other times, we are witnesses of God's presence as we humbly serve one another. I want to encourage us to tie a towel around our waist, roll up our sleeves, and serve—even the Judases in our lives, those we think do not deserve it. Jesus promises that, when we serve, we will be blessed.

Today's Prayer

Lord, we thank you for your example. May we serve others with the same humble spirit. May we be Jesus to others, and may we see Jesus in others as we serve them.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *mobilizing all Nazarenes* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Isamel Flores
Lead Pastor, Rio Valley Church of the Nazarene

DAY 29

Sunday, May 7, 2023



Matthew 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Scripture Insights

Christians are often judgmental toward others and critical of worldly culture. This tendency stems from the way we see people: Are they sinners in need of correction? Are they threats to our values and way of life?

When Jesus sees the crowds, he sees people who were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” He responds not with criticism but with compassion. He tells his disciples to ask the Lord to send workers into the harvest field, and then he sends them out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom, drive out impure spirits, and heal the sick.

This is the call of the church: to be the ones Jesus sends into a broken and suffering world, to people who feel harassed and helpless, who need hope and guidance in a time of great confusion and change. Our neighbors don’t need our criticism; they need our compassion. Our energies should not be spent casting blame but sowing blessing.

When you look at your community, what do you see?

Today’s Prayer

Lord, give us eyes to see and ears to hear the needs of our communities. The world groans under the weight of sin and suffering. Nevertheless, help us not to respond with criticism but with compassion, as you did, and still do.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Albert Hung
District Superintendent, Northern California

DAY 30

Monday, May 8, 2023



Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Scripture Insights

Some days it can seem we are existing but not really *living*. Today is another Monday, the start of the work week. Are we going through the motions, or are we living for the purpose that God created us?

God created us to be like LEGOs—for connection. We are all different sizes and different colors yet made to connect with one another. A single LEGO brick can do very little. But when you connect it to others, you can build amazing things. LEGOs connect on the top and on the bottom—just like us. We were created to connect on the top to God and on the bottom to others. We truly are God's masterpiece. God's design for us is to connect to others, in order to bless others. We cannot do this in our own strength. God created us *in Christ Jesus* for this work. It is the work of God through us. This has always been God's plan and design.

Ask yourself today, *Am I living in the simple calling to connect?*

Slow down and live life at three miles an hour today—the speed at which Christ walked through his life of ministry.

Today's Prayer

Father, today, slow us down. May we live into what you created us for. Just as Christ came to connect and bless us, may we live today connecting and blessing. May we see that you created us to live this life connected to others, not alone. May we allow you, Father, to connect us so we can build beautiful things with others.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Jay Height
Executive Director, Shepherd Community Center

DAY 31

Tuesday, May 9, 2023



Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Scripture Insights

Let us remember that we are to be a shining example of what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ. We must strive every day to make sure our words and actions reflect his character.

Have you ever taken a tour through a cave system? Often, when you get to the deepest and lowest part of the cave, the guides will turn off all the lights. The darkness you suddenly experience is consuming and overwhelming. But in all that blackness, the slightest glimmer of even the faintest light of illumination will begin to push back the darkness.

We are called to be a reflection of God's light and glory by demonstrating God's love, mercy, and grace to the world around us. We are to share our faith with others through our words and actions. In the same way that light shines brightly in the darkness, believers should strive to be a beacon of hope and truth in their communities. Blessing others and offering hope for the lost come through the light of Christ.

Today's Prayer

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the light that pushes out the darkness. You are the light in the world. Help us to share our faith, and help others to see the hope within us.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Rob Beckett
Lead Pastor, Shepherdsville First Church of the Nazarene

DAY 32

Wednesday, May 10, 2023



Matthew 25:40

The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Scripture Insights

Sometimes it’s hard for me to see things that are right in front of me. I open the fridge looking for the ketchup, and no matter how hard I look, I can’t seem to find it. I finally resort to my all-knowing wife, who walks over, reaches in, moves over the pickle jar, and suddenly—there is the ketchup.

In today’s reading, Jesus shares what our role in the kingdom of God may look like as we expect the coming of Jesus. Jesus talks about how the kingdom of God isn’t about knowing the exact timing of Jesus’s coming but about the way we live in our time on earth. In the passage that our verse is in, Jesus describes how the sheep will rejoice with the Father and the goats will wonder why they are left out because they don’t recall ever seeing or ignoring Jesus.

It turns out that a lot of times we don’t look for Jesus in the right places. We learn that Jesus can be found in some places where we wouldn’t expect to find him—especially as we encounter the “least of these.” We ultimately are confronted with a question for ourselves: *how are we serving the least of these?*

If we are bold enough to look beyond what we see at first glance and really dig deep, we may find Jesus in some unexpected places.

Today’s Prayer

Lord, help us encounter your love today, for we cannot show love to others unless we first receive your love. Help us, we pray, to have eyes to see and ears to hear the least of these in our communities.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Yhoshua Ticum
Connections Pastor, The Naz Church

DAY 33

Thursday, May 11, 2023



Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Scripture Insights

Located between warnings about judging others and coming down with plank-eye syndrome is today's verse of encouragement. It is a verse without limits, motivating us to give liberally. But give what?

Forgiveness is an easy answer from the passage. *Forgive, and you will be forgiven*, advises the prior verse. A hard thing to learn—but what if there's more?

What if we are to be giving people? Givers of forgiveness, to be sure, but also givers of grace; givers of the benefit of the doubt; givers of tangible gifts; and givers of service. What if we are to give the gift of helping someone overcome their weaknesses—without criticizing them?

What if we truly believed that giving is measured and rewarded accordingly? Perhaps we might be more generous in all we do. Perhaps we would be better stewards and better givers. Perhaps we would be known as giving people.

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, today we give you all we are, all we need, and all we have. Teach us to give liberally without judging or criticizing. Prepare us to see giving moments, respond generously, and practice generosity in good measure.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Julie Cheney
Lead Pastor, Tulare Church of the Nazarene

DAY 34

Friday, May 12, 2023



Galatians 5:14

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Scripture Insights

Many of us grew up knowing the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. It seemed much easier said than done, and whenever I did do it, the "doing" back to me usually was not as good as I thought it should be. Looking back, I'm discovering how selfish I was because all I did was think about what I wanted in return and not how I should truly be treating the other person.

Today's scripture assumes we already love ourselves in the sense that we know how we want to be treated. Paul instructs the Galatians to take the focus off themselves and turn it toward others. He emphasizes that they need to know that loving neighbor as self can only be done when we have and follow the Holy Spirit. Having the Holy Spirit allows us to do what we can't do on our own and changes our focus from ourselves to others.

Today's Prayer

Lord, our desire is to honor you—not only in how we treat ourselves but in how we treat others. Help us to be so aware of your Holy Spirit that it becomes second nature for us to love our neighbors just as easily as we love ourselves.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Cassandra Trotman
Local Minister, Orlando Metro West Church of the Nazarene

DAY 35

Saturday, May 13, 2023



Jeremiah 29:7

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Scripture Insights

The exiles of God's people who are forcibly removed to Babylon must be surprised by this word from the Lord. Most have probably settled into fear and bitterness due to the uncomfortable changes their new circumstances have provided, surrounded by a pagan culture that is dismissive of their faith and hostile to their values. They are a long way from the "good ol' days" of Jerusalem, where their values shaped the culture.

It would have been easy for God's people to resent their marginalization and disengage from their new community, no doubt believing God would encourage such action. Instead, through the prophet's letter, the Lord says to look outward instead of turning inward—to seek Babylon's peace and prosperity, to pray for the city, without succumbing to its values and sins.

Like Jesus praying for God's people living in the midst of the hostile Roman Empire, perhaps Jeremiah is calling the people of God to be in the world but not of the world (see John 17:15–16), blessing neighbors and bringing kingdom-of-God values to bear on our community.

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, do not take us out of the world, but protect us from the evil one. Sanctify us so we can remain in the world without becoming of the world, enabling others to believe in you through our message and unity.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *blessing our communities* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Mark Lindstrom
District Superintendent, North Arkansas

DAY 36

Sunday, May 14, 2023



Acts 18:9

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.”

Scripture Insights

Have you ever left conversations asking yourself, *Why didn't I mention Jesus?* We all probably have.

Many Christians have Arctic River Syndrome—frozen at the mouth. We are tempted to waver, in a pivotal situation, when the Spirit wants us to speak. Our tendency may be to retreat rather than share the good news. The Lord gives Paul three admonitions to help when Paul is tempted to take the easy way.

1. **Do not be afraid.** Fear can paralyze us to retreat and say nothing. Paul testifies that he is not ashamed of the gospel (see Romans 1:16). We can learn from his example.
2. **Keep on speaking.** Paul could respond, as we may be tempted to do, *But Lord, people are becoming abusive!* (See Acts 18:6.) The Word of the Lord is clear: keep on speaking!
3. **Do not be silent.** Evil wins when good people say and do nothing. Billy Graham said that courage is contagious and that when a brave person takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened. Today, be courageous in those pivotal moments. Trust God with the results.

Today's Prayer

Forgive us for retreating when we should speak. Give us your courage, grace, and wisdom as we seek to bless our communities with your love and the truth that offers the greatest community impact—the good news of Jesus.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Mark Bane
Director, Evangelism and New Church Development

DAY 37

Monday, May 15, 2023



Matthew 4:19

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Scripture Insights

Growing up, my dad liked to take me fishing occasionally, and although we weren't very good at it, I got the basics down. After I got married, I took it up with a friend and got serious. We fished every chance we got, and I learned there is a whole lot more to fishing than just putting a hook in the water and hoping a fish will bite.

The call of Jesus to fish for people is intriguing. He's giving all of us a challenge as well as an opportunity for joy. It may be easy to read past this verse, since in the past some have been accused of manipulating the fish into the boat for the wrong reasons. Fishing for people, it has been claimed, is too pushy and isn't fit for modern vocation in today's church. But Jesus says it's the first thing on the agenda. *I want you to go and get people in the boat who are missing it.* Following Jesus means carrying a cross *and* a net.

Today's Prayer

Father, may we hear these words afresh today for those who are far from you. Help us understand it as your first call to your first disciples. Keep it in the front of our minds today, and keep our excuses far away.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Brett Rickey
District Superintendent, Oregon Pacific

DAY 38

Tuesday, May 16, 2023



2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Scripture Insights

Your job in God's family is to invite others to join the family. In fact, you are an ambassador of Christ. That means that , everywhere you go, you represent Jesus. You may be thinking, *I am way underqualified for this role; it's not my gift*, or perhaps you struggle to find the confidence you need to tell people about the hope we have in Jesus.

Would it encourage you to know that we *all* have similar questions and struggles? Most people have a hard time knowing—and an even harder time articulating—what they really believe. These are great opportunities to truly help. Listen and pray for the key that will open someone's heart to Jesus.

You are not alone when you tell other people about God's plan of salvation through Jesus. God is with you, and God is also working in the other person's heart while the Holy Spirit uses you.

I am so glad someone was willing to step out for me, and what an honor it is to do the same for others.

Today's Prayer

God, we thank you ahead of time for the divine appointments you put in our path. For the people you have placed in our lives who are looking for long-term answers, give us the boldness and confidence to share your truth with love and grace.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Brian Wiesinger
Lead Pastor, The Crossing Church

DAY 39

Wednesday, May 17, 2023



Matthew 9:38

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Scripture Insights

Jesus's concern is not for programmatic efficiency or envied success. This is not a boss pressuring his employees to fulfill their quotas. The instruction in today's scripture comes from a reservoir of love bigger than the universe itself. The gut-wrenching compassion of Jesus compels him to enlist his followers in praying for the harvest.

Jesus does not see the crowds as potential customers or a market demographic. Jesus sees *people*. He truly sees them—just like Jesus truly sees, knows, and loves you. Out of Jesus's compassion for people, he teaches his disciples to pray for the fruit of the kingdom to be manifest in human lives.

The harvest is plentiful! The grace of God is already at work in the hearts of all! Do you believe this? Jesus's heart aches for the hurting and lost. He wants you to get a taste of it too.

Today's Prayer

Lord, you alone know us yet love us fully. Even in our sinful state, you have given us grace upon grace. May we have eyes to see the stirrings of your grace in the lives of all. Raise up your harvest workers.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—David Goodwin
Youth Pastor, Central Church of the Nazarene

DAY 40

Thursday, May 18, 2023



Romans 1:16

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.

Scripture Insights

“Hello, Brad!” I say, after reading the grocery carrier’s nametag. “I always pray for the people who load my groceries, and I’m going to pray for you today.”

“Thank you so much!” Brad responds.

I replicate this conversation every time I go to curbside pickup or walk with a cart clerk as they push my cart to my car after an in-store purchase. I have never received one rejection.

Instead, they often say something like, “I really need prayer right now,” so I ask for a specific request.

Once they share, I say, “May I pray for you now?”

I always receive a grateful yes, which results in a brief parking lot prayer meeting in the name of Jesus.

When we truly believe that the power of God brings salvation to all who believe, we will view everyone we encounter as a precious soul who needs Christ. We will then take every opportunity to share Christ, even if it means an impromptu prayer meeting in the grocery store parking lot.

Today’s Prayer

Dear Lord, remind us that we are the church and that, when we do a better job of bringing people to Jesus, the church will do a better job.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Debra White Smith
The Wesleyan Woman

DAY 41

Friday, May 19, 2023



1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Scripture Insights

Perhaps you've heard it said that some people listen to understand while others listen to respond. When talking with people who may see the world differently, it is essential to be prepared with words that inspire and affirm the hope we have in Christ, but it is equally important to treat them as humans made in the image of God whom Christ dearly loves. Our words are seldom as persuasive as our kind, caring, hope-filled hearts.

Gentleness and respect cannot be overrated. If Christ is allowed to flow through us, others will be drawn to his heart. Persons who once believed or who have never believed in the saving grace of Christ need to know they are loved beyond measure. We can take strong stands on matters of importance while also honoring the dignity of people for whom Christ died.

Today's Prayer

Lord, make us instruments of your gentleness and respect toward humanity. Make us conduits of the grace that only comes from the sacrificial love you have shown us.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Michael Johnson
President's Aide, Trevecca Nazarene University

DAY 42

Saturday, May 20, 2023



Mark 16:15

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

Scripture Insights

In this echo of the Great Commission, Jesus makes it clear to his disciples that the mission is quite simple—yet wildly expansive.

There is a sent-ness to this call that Jesus modeled through the incarnation when he came to all humanity. Now he calls us to take the gospel into the world (the Greek word for "world" is *kosmos*)—all of our spaces, places, spheres of influences; in essence, everywhere we go.

You may have heard it said, "Live your life and share your faith." But the implication from today's scripture is to live your faith and share your life. There is a real sense that we are to show *and* tell as we share the gospel with our words and lives in the present tense.

It reminds me of some advice given by a seasoned pastor: "Whether preaching from a pulpit or sharing the good news with a neighbor, the best thing you can do is find ways to give 'em Jesus and give 'em you."

Today's Prayer

Lord, open our eyes to the world all around us. Give us the love and courage to engage as ambassadors of your grace, hope, and peace through our lives and words today.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *bringing people to Jesus* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Justin Pickard
Youth Coordinator, USA/Canada NYI

DAY 43

Sunday, May 21, 2023



Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Scripture Insights

The Great Commission, Jesus's final recorded words by the Gospel writer Matthew, describes the desired outcome of disciple-making: followers who obey everything Jesus commands. We might call such followers "Christlike disciples," and the reaching, establishing, and developing of these kinds of disciples is the task of the church.

Since we are called to develop Christlike disciples, it is fair to ask, "What is a Christlike disciple?"

I remember being asked by a workshop speaker, "What is the fruit of an apple tree?"

I am glad I answered the question in my head. I thought, *An apple, of course.*

After many people shouted my silent answer, the speaker said, "No, the fruit of an apple tree is another apple tree. If it is just an apple, apples would cease to exist when that tree died."

So what is the fruit of a Christlike disciple who obeys everything Jesus commands? In the end, our disciple-making efforts should not be just disciples but other disciple *makers* because a disciple maker is a Christlike disciple!

Today's Prayer

Lord, you are the great Disciple Maker. Thank you for making disciples of us. Help us to always follow you and never try to lead you. Empower us to make disciples who make disciples who look like you.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Scott Rainey
Global Director, Nazarene Discipleship International

DAY 44

Monday, May 22, 2023



John 8: 31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Scripture Insights

A disciple's life purpose is to learn. We follow Jesus, learn from him, and gain intimate knowledge of the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To know Christ is to have a close, personal relationship with him, which is more than having information about him.

But discipleship also calls us to unlearn some things. The Jews respond to Jesus's offer by saying they are already free because they are Abraham's descendants. They foolishly believe that their heritage gives them liberty. They are deceiving themselves because they were once enslaved in Egypt, and the Roman Empire oppresses them. Jesus—the Truth—was there, but they feel more comfortable deceiving themselves than accepting his offer of liberation from the power of sin.

True disciples release all other forms of security and cling to Jesus, the only way to the Father. In this information age, it is easy to need clarification about which truth to focus on. Therefore, we must decide to focus on Jesus—the Truth.

Today's Prayer

Lord, teach us your ways, that we may walk with you. Help us to release all forms of self-deception and allow the truth of your word to liberate us from the power of sin.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Samantha Chambo
Regional Educational Coordinator, USA/Canada

DAY 45

Tuesday, May 23, 2023



John 13:35

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Scripture Insights

Doctrines and creeds are important, even as we imagine them as prayers. Yet the true fruit from doctrines and creeds is that the love of Christ is being shed abroad in all of our lives.

We are evangelizing all the time. The question is not *if* but *what* are we evangelizing. It is daunting to imagine people first seeing and imagining Jesus as they encounter Christians. By the grace of God, the sweet aroma of Christians should be our love for fellow believers and all nations and tribes of the world.

While Christians are not uniform in belief, practice, or political position, people will know we truly are Christians by how we love one another—especially in our places of diversity. We must be vigilant that, in all we do, the love of God has an odor that is so powerful none can miss it.

Disciples of Jesus are known first by how well we love.

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, may your children draw upon your Spirit to love one another well within the great diversity of your creation. May your love infill your church as it overflow into all creation.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Brent Peterson

*Dean, College of Theology, Northwest Nazarene University
Pastor of Liturgical Formation, Nampa College Church of the Nazarene*

DAY 46

Wednesday, May 24, 2023



Luke 9:23

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Scripture Insights

Once I asked a two-year-old I was babysitting to please brush her teeth before bed. She looked up at me with big, sad eyes and said, "I just did that yesterday!"

I couldn't help but laugh as I explained that, while it was good that she brushed her teeth yesterday, she's got to do it today too!

As I consider the words of Jesus, I think of this sweet little two-year-old, who was flabbergasted that brushing her teeth was something to be done so often. Little did she know, tomorrow I would ask her to do it again. Likewise, Jesus asks us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus *every single day*. Following Jesus is not something we do every once in a while or only when we feel like it. Following Jesus is something we do daily.

The Christian practices of serving, forgiving, seeking justice, and giving grace are not optional, once-every-few-weeks types of practices; they are *every-single-day* practices. Just like brushing our teeth.

Today's Prayer

Holy God, shape us and mold us to be people who follow after you every single day. Remind us daily of your presence, and give us the strength to devote our lives to looking more and more like you.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Bethany Vierow Acre
Middle School Pastor, Central Church of the Nazarene

DAY 47

Thursday, May 25, 2023



Luke 6:40

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Scripture Insights

The goal of teaching is to promote learning. For the most part, learning takes place in many different circumstances and contexts. Although everyone is *capable* of learning, a student's *desire* to learn is vital to mastering new concepts, ideas, and skills. Often, the desire to learn is directly related to the teacher. It is difficult to learn from an instructor one does not like or respect. The classes and subjects I enjoyed most in my education were those taught by people I wanted to emulate.

In today's scripture, you and I are the students. Jesus, the perfect teacher, says we are not fully trained until we begin to live like him. Just when I am tempted to think I'm doing a good job, I catch a glimpse of what he teaches earlier in Luke 6: *love your enemies, turn the other cheek, pray for those who persecute you*. I can't do this on my own. He must become more, and I must become less.

Today's Prayer

Lord, put within our hearts a desire to learn your Word, your will, and your ways. May our actions and reactions always be in line and in step with your Spirit.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Daryl Blank
Lead Pastor, Springdale Nazarene Church

DAY 48

Friday, May 26, 2023



2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Scripture Insights

In, 2,3,4.

Hold, 2,3,4.

Out, 2,3,4.

Hold, 2,3,4.

Again.

The rhythmic pattern of breathing is often used to draw focus for people during medical procedures, times of feeling overwhelmed, and many other challenges we face.

In today's scripture, Paul is encouraging Timothy to take courage in defending the truth of the gospel. In verse 16, the literal translation is, "All Scripture is breathed into by God." The very essence of God is poured into his words.

Rev. Bryan Chapell reminds us that the Scriptures were *life* to Moses (Deuteronomy 32:46, 47; cf. 31:9–13; 21:1–43) and *food* to Jesus (Matthew 4:4; cf. Luke 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3)—as essential as breathing. How can God's Word be any less for us?

Oh, disciple, may you bring focus to your life through the very words inspired by God! They are essential for your spiritual well-being!

Today's Prayer

Father, may we long for your Word like we long for our next breath! Holy Spirit, use the Scriptures to bring life and focus to our very being. And may our own words breathed out be life-giving for others.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Rose Brower-Young
District Superintendent, Canada West

DAY 49

Saturday, May 27, 2023



2 Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Scripture Insights

Have you ever watched a runner in a relay race drop the baton? It is a heartbreaking letdown, no matter the level of the competition. It is one thing to fail in an individual event, and that is disappointing enough. In a team event, the heartbreak is multiplied. The runner who drops the baton feels the weight of wasting the effort of the runners who went before as well as depriving those running after of their opportunity.

In today's scripture, Paul is stressing to his protégé Timothy that he has been entrusted with a message and charged to hand it off to others who will not fumble it. In the *New Beacon Bible Commentary 1 & 2 Timothy/Titus*, David A. Ackerman describes Timothy's privilege and predicament well: "Timothy is the vital link in a chain from past to future" (309).

You are too. So am I. All who have received the gospel are.

By God's grace, may we prove to be reliable people, not only by having the faith to receive the gospel but also by faithfully passing it on.

Today's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, our souls long for your kingdom to come, for your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. May we have the faith to receive this gospel and the faithfulness to pass it on.

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on *becoming Christlike disciples* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Scott Sherwood
President, Nazarene Bible College

DAY 50

Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023



Acts 2:4

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Scripture Insights

It is well known that Pentecost reverses Babel. The people who built the tower of Babel sought to make a name, and a unity, for themselves. At Pentecost, God builds his temple, uniting people in Christ and spreading the good news of the gospel to all nations (see Kevin J. Vanhoozer's *Biblical Authority after Babel*, 2016). Although onlookers think that the believers who receive the Spirit at Pentecost are babbling incoherently or drunkenly (see Acts 2:13), in fact they are speaking intelligibly about the gospel in many languages that they themselves do not know (see vv. 8–11). It takes a thousand tongues to say and sing our great Redeemer's praise. And it takes the infilling of the Spirit to set hearts ablaze, give a holy boldness, and provide a message to which people from any culture will respond.

Wesleyan Methodist pastor and scholar Samuel Chadwick wrote, "I owe everything to the gift of Pentecost. For fifty days the facts of the gospel were complete, but no conversions were recorded. Pentecost registered three thousand souls. . . . Truth without enthusiasm, morality without emotion, ritual without soul, make of a church without power. Destitute of the fire of God, nothing else counts; possessing fire, nothing else matters."

Today's Prayer

O Lord, on this Pentecost, would you renew a holy passion in your church through a fresh infilling of your Spirit? As we have sought you in one accord these past fifty days, would you send your fire to rekindle our hearts to live with your passion?

Prayer Journal Reflections

Reflect on the *mission* in the church in Canada and the United States.

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—Stan Reeder
Director, USA/Canada Region

NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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NOTES AND PRAYERS



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