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**Every true church under Jesus shares the same universal purpose, but then each has a distinct calling and purpose for their place in the Kingdom. 12Stone, we are a church that does more than gathers on the weekends, we are a church created to win a Kingdom war.**

PASTOR KEVIN MYERS

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**VISION** 2021



# Before God does a work through us, God desires to do a work in us.

The most compelling message we carry is the story of how God is transforming us personally. That personal transformation is born out of greater intimacy with God. He invites us daily to offer our time and hearts, and invest in an authentic relationship with Him.

Use these devotionals and prayer prompts as foundational thoughts as you build greater intimacy with God. Allow these thoughts to sink deeper in your soul and become permanent postures of your heart – a heart bent towards God and convinced that...

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives...”*

- ISAIAH 61



# Because of Jesus I have intimacy with God through prayer.

*“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that  
comes from the mouth of God.”*

MATTHEW 4:4

**We're all designed to know God, to talk to Him and to hear Him speak back to us. Not just once or twice, but throughout the course of our lives. In fact, let's go a step further and say that our intimacy with God is the releasing point of the Kingdom of Heaven over our life.**

**But how do we step into this kind of life? Prayer.**

Prayer is like a ladder. It has no real use except that it assists us in getting to a place that we could otherwise not reach. The ladder under your back deck or in your garage is a collection place for spiders when its lying on the ground. But when engaged according to its design, it becomes an indispensable tool – invaluable but simultaneously not the point. It's fully a means to an end. The clearer you are about this concerning prayer, the more appreciative you are of its holy power.

In Genesis 28 Jacob dreamed of a ladder whose top was leaned against Heaven. “He saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it”

Jacob's ladder is the perfect picture of prayer- anchored upon earth, leaning against heaven and God's presence over it!

Prayer is the ladder and the experienced presence of God is the destination. Not some pie in the sky and ill-defined target but the Kingdom of Heaven at hand. Prayer allows us to plant our ladder right on top of every earthly dilemma and find rest for our souls, as well as victory in our perspective.

But here is the risk. A ladder of prayer that's not leaned against intimacy with God becomes a discouraging duty. If we labor in prayer as an obligation, then we have missed the point entirely. Prayer must have its outcome understood (and achieved), or it becomes a tool of the Pharisee; the spiritually busy but completely ineffective.

Prayer is not a religious duty, it is the place where we unfurl the sails of our heart and achieve spiritual closeness with God. It's where we carry our yes and give it to God personally. When we do, we see God releasing His Kingdom presence and power like a sacred wind into the canvas of our lives.

# Pray:

*Plant your ladder of prayer on the honest ground of your life.*

*Talk to God about things that really matter to you. Be honest and honoring. Be as specific as possible.*

*Elevate your expectation to receive from God.*



# Because of Jesus I give God my “yes!”

**Most of us start our day with something in a cup. It’s not a conscious decision, it’s routine. We’re mostly on auto-pilot when we stumble to the coffee pot, or the juicer. However when we’re out at a restaurant, we typically have to make a choice.**

When you sit down to the table, you might notice the water glass or the coffee cup turned upside down. Turning the cup or glass over, so it can be filled, signals the server to fill it. Turning your cup is giving your “yes.”

“Yes” is an everyday word in our lives. However, “yes” invites the extraordinary when we make it our posture towards our Heavenly Father. It’s the place where heaven is activated on earth. “Yes” is already God’s unmovable disposition toward us. It’s our choice to give our unmovable disposition to Him.



Abraham said yes to God.

Moses said yes.

King David gave his yes; the apostle

Paul the same.

It is the only posture to take toward God and it is the required atmosphere of all of our prayers.

Our yes sits at the center of all of our spiritual advancements. In contrast, the absence of our yes is the cause of all of our breakdowns. Our consistent, well-aimed yes allows our cup to be filled with joy. But our no, our unwillingness to turn our cup over, keeps us empty. The sooner we embrace the spiritual potential of yes,

the sooner we will take responsibility to use its power to draw nearer to God.

Jesus said yes to God.

He modeled it perfectly when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane:

*“He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “Father” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”*

“Take this cup” was Jesus’ placing his hand over the cup. Jesus didn’t ignore his desire. He intentionally brought his desire before God— so should we. But in

the end Jesus bowed his will to the will of the Father. He agreed with God and adjusted his life to do God’s will. He took the cup and drank. This is how our yes to God works – it agrees with God and adjusts to God.

When we say yes (agree and adjust to God), our yes grows beyond a sacred moment and matures into a holy movement in our lives. Many make solemn promises to God in sacred moments; like response moments at church, crisis points in our lives or at church camp. But a complete yes to God carries past the moment of promise and develops into the defining movement of our life.

# Pray:

*In prayer, give a fresh yes to God designed just for today. Yield your will to His will remembering you belong to Him. Set your mind to agree with*

*Him and set your life to adjust to Him. Trust Him to take your yes and create the story of your life and your relationship with Him.*



# Because of Jesus I live in God's presence.

**The Apostle Paul gave the defining mark for followers of Jesus when he said, “All who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”**

The mark of the Christian life is the presence of God. Like a weather vane whose direction is determined by the force of the wind upon it, our lives are supposed to be directed by the unseen influence of the Spirit of God that resides within us. This is not an impersonal, distant influence coming from the universe. He lives inside us.

Jesus said, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” - John 14:18

The new covenant forged by his own blood was so that you and I could have a life with God – not just associated with, or living for, or making my life about – all of these fall short of His offer. We have been granted access to a life with the Living God – a life in His Presence. Furthermore, it is our opportunity and responsibility to lead others into encounters with God through His Spirit that works within us.

“At the heart of the Christian message is God himself waiting for His redeemed children to push in to conscious awareness of His Presence.” A.W Tozer

Prayer is how we push into a presence-centered life. Not only do we have the right (through Jesus) to come before God’s presence but also the presence of God is free to chase us, indwell our lives, influence our decisions and empower everything we do in His name.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God poured out into your life. And, His Presence is here and the time is now – perpetually now. When Jesus began his ministry, he made a declaration that hoovers over our lives to this day: “The time is now and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and Believe.”

The wind of His presence is blowing now. Sometimes gently, and sometimes

more forcefully in our lives. He desires to raise our awareness and our expectations of Him. He desires to be the wind we draft behind pulling us deeper and deeper into a relationship with Him. And He longs to be our tailwind pushing us out into a waiting world. Pointing the way of the wind, like the weather vane, will lead others to the love and power of God.

# Pray:

*Thank God for your access to Him and His presence with you right now. We are praying into an unseen Kingdom but don't let its invisibility cause you to doubt; God's presence is here now.*

*Ask God to increase your trusting faith to experience of His Presence.*

*Practice having a listening heart at this moment.*



Because of Jesus  
I put God first. I make  
Him my priority.

“Me first!” We hear the spirited declaration when kids are playing games or jockeying for spots in the front of a line. We chuckle because it seems so silly and immature. However, as we grow up, the desire doesn’t disappear. Teenagers walk towards the car and one calls, “shotgun!” And even adults will jump up, and nudge their way towards the front of the line to board a plane. You wouldn’t think that the question of position and “who goes first?” would be such a big deal but, as it turns out, it changes everything.

Who or what you put first in life is the defining question of your life.

It's actually a worship question and how you answer becomes the primary definer of who you are. Our thoughts and actions are shaped by the thing that we consistently put first. All other questions are ruled by how we answer the worship one.

Choosing what or who is first in your world isn't a game, but it does look like one; dominos. You may not know how to play the game of dominos, but you've probably seen that if you line up dominos and you push the first one down, the others will fall in response to the first one. This is what it's like to put God first – every other sector of our lives (like the dominos) bows in recognition of His presence.

In one of the most powerful moments from the life of Jesus he taught the crowds who were distracted with the concerns of life: (Matthew 6) *“Do not be anxious saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the king-*

*dom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

Seek first. See, there's a problem with God and second place – by definition they don't go together. It's true that we are free to put Him somewhere down the list of priorities in our life, but He is not diminished at all by this, we are. It is a secret law of the soul that when we put God first our lives tend to come into order, while when we allow something else to sneak into first place, we are unraveled by the monstrous substitution.

Prayer is the place where we re-set our first - the foundation. The inevitable drift of our souls has to be reclaimed and set right. In prayer we remember and re-up on God's first-ness; preeminently first in the universe but relationally first in the quiet of our heart.

Put that domino in place and push it against everything in your life.

In due time the issues of your life will bow to the presence of the Living God.

# Pray:

*Ask God to reveal to you, places where He is not first place in your life.*

*Ask Him to open your eyes to how you can reorder your priorities, worries, or responsibilities.*

*Recommit to God that He has first place in your life and ask Him to lead you by His Spirit to live His first-ness faithfully.*



Because of Jesus, I have  
**life with purpose.**

*“Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come  
from miles to watch you burn.”*

JOHN WESLEY

**Each of us are born with a box of matches in our soul unlit until the fire of God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell. In His dwelling we are set aflame with purpose.**

In the deepest part of our being we can feel that we were made for more than casual living. God has not left us in the dark on the matter. For all who would seek to know their purpose, here is God's answer – Himself.

**The Apostle Paul says it this way:**

<sup>18</sup> *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;* <sup>19</sup> *that is, in Christ God was reconciling<sup>[c]</sup> the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

We've been given the message of reconciliation. Like an Olympic runner carrying a sacred torch we carry the light of the gospel everywhere we go. This is not bumper sticker religion.

We can't put the name Jesus on our car and call it good. The message of the gospel is not for such casual engagement, it is meant to be a fire in the heart of the church impossible to resist. Forgiveness, redemption, justification are important works of God upon the heart but they are all preparatory for the indwelling fire of the Holy Spirit who fills us with purpose and power.

It must become personal.

Imagine your talents and gifts as unique attractors for the Kingdom. Imagine the souls out there who need the flame of your story, your style, your approach.

If this feels intimidating, or too much when you want to stay in the shadows, just remember, it was Jesus who invited you. And he will support you and the purpose he has given you with a promise found in Matthew 28. "Go and make disciples... and I am with you, even to the very end of the age."

# Pray:

*Give thanks for the gospel and what God has done for you personally.*

*Say yes to his invitation to carry message of the gospel into your world.*

*Invite the Holy Spirit fill you with his fire, with his love for the world, with the authority of the Kingdom of heaven at hand.*

*Ask Him to open your eyes to Kingdom opportunities that will happen today.*





Because of Jesus,  
**I grow in wisdom and  
understanding.**

God has scattered the Earth with clues not only pointing to who He is but also to how His Kingdom works. If you walk outside in the spring of the year you will see nature coming to life, and you will notice that where there is life there is growth and a process of maturity.

Who could ever look at a simple acorn and imagine that it contains a mighty oak tree? Yet all of our trips around the sun have taught us that time + growth will equal full maturity. This is equally beautiful and true in our spiritual life.

Our commitment to follow Jesus may happen in a single holy moment, but the prescription of God from that



moment forward is that we would grow and mature; that we would become perpetual learners – Kingdom Learners. Not just smarter in the stories of the Bible but transformed through repeated personal experiences with God.

The rescuing hand of Jesus comes as a great gift of salvation. But it's not a gift that we put on the shelf like a decoration from some Christmas past; it's a gift that we invest in day after day. In doing so we grow and mature.

Because of Jesus we have an open door of intimacy with God, the likes of which will take us a lifetime (and beyond) to enjoy. Through personal investment we develop spiritual closeness with God in private; that spiritual closeness goes public and trains us how to co-labor with God in the community where we live, work and play. It is a lifetime of learning: learning the scriptures, learning the

inner dialogue of prayer, experiencing the voice of God and learning to respond in obedience. It is learning to share the love of God and raising up other Kingdom Learners - learning to live in an awareness of His presence.

God's intent over your life is not passive, it is a spiritual overhaul, a divine conquest.

What starts as a small seed of salvation grows into a flourishing tree of life!

Paul prayed this same vision over the church when he said,

*“We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”*

# Pray:

*Teach me from the stories of the Bible. Speak to me when I pray.*

*Tell me how your Kingdom works so that I may walk faithfully in it.*

*Train me to co-labor with you in the places where I live, work and play.*

*Transform and re-new my mind so that I think more like you.*



Because of Jesus  
I have authority that  
leads to spiritual power.

**The Psalmist asked:**  
“What is mankind that you  
are mindful of him?”

**Good question.**

We all struggle from time to time with the thought, why would God listen to me?

We often pray small and weak prayers not because we think God can't deliver but because we see ourselves as small and weak. Yet, the invitation that Jesus extends to us is bold and full of powerful expectation. Like a police escort in Atlanta traffic, God's presence is with us giving us power and authority.

**Consider this: What Jesus never said:**

Don't expect to be able to do the things I've done, I'm Jesus! You can enjoy these stories about me once they get written down and remember how powerful I was when I was here.

**What Jesus actually said:**

*Believe what I'm telling you. But if you don't believe my words let the things I've done convince you. BTW, the things I've done, you are going to do also, actually even greater things! I'm not leaving you as orphans but I'm going to ask my Dad and He is going to send one exactly like me to live in you. In that day you can ask whatever you want that glorifies Him and it will be done.*

We read it. We know it in our minds, but powerless days wear us down and we just can't believe it. We've crafted an

internal dialogue about why God may not answer me today and rehearse that script rather than praying bold prayers.

However, one of the first things that Jesus taught us to pray is "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!"

But what does that mean? It's permission from heaven to pray with Kingdom authority that ushers in spiritual power. We are praying that Heaven's culture would invade our natural earthly one. Like, with the police escort, we

don't have to drive cautiously wondering if we are over stepping our permission. We can pull out into the bold lane and pass all of our doubts and questions about whether God will hear us. We can take on a confidence that we are praying consistent with God's heart.

Just before Jesus departed this earth, he said to his disciples, "As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you." And further, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples."

# Pray:

*Pray with bold authority and high expectation. The resources needed to accomplish our mission from Jesus are unlimited. Don't let a faulty internal dialog override God's truth!*

*Give thanks to God for his invitation to collaborate with you. Acknowledge the Holy Spirit and pray for his burning presence - ask Him to fill your life with presence, power and authority.*

*Cultivate a desire to see God move in power through you.*

*Ask for a new level of boldness and power to rise up in you.*



# Because of Jesus I pray in possibility.

The Smithsonian Institute currently houses the Presidential Portrait Gallery. If you can't make it to Washington you can look online at the portraits and information about each president and artist. Whether online or in person, we can “walk through halls of America's leaders learning from their stories and how the artists saw them.

Hebrews 11, known as the Hall of Faith, recounts how our Creator sees spiritual heroes – people willing to step out, act on, and live in the realm of possibility. Each one's story of seemingly surpassing the impossible begins with “By faith...”

God likes faith. Scripture states it a little more emphatically: “*Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.*” Hebrews 11:6

## What does it mean to paint our prayers “by faith?”

### PRAY SPECIFICALLY

Often we’re unsure how to pray so we take a broad brush and stroke it across the canvas. But being specific nurtures heaven-sized possibilities. Imagine God asking us to paint our requests like portraits with shadows, colors, tiny brushstrokes, and a glimmer-in-the-eye kind of detail. When Jesus encountered the blind beggar who was crying out for mercy and to be healed, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

God is asking the same of us. Pray specifically and you will receive specifically. When Jesus taught us to pray, “Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven” he was giving us heaven-sized resources for earth-sized dilemmas. Like when Elisha the prophet came to help the widow in 2 Kings 4, *He had a miracle in mind for her, but she was able to determine the size of the miracle. God provided oil equal to the number of jars she borrowed from her neighbors. “Don’t get a few!” encouraged Elisha.* Are you painting your prayers with possibility or scarcity?

### PRAY AGAIN

Faith is not the absence of doubt, it is the seed of a belief that’s growing daily. Jesus instructed his disciples that “They should always pray and never give up”. Jesus wasn’t prescribing a ritual of prayer, he was encouraging a journey of confident expectation.

### PRAY TOGETHER

We need each other. Corporate belief draws strong on heaven’s resources and leads us into breakthrough. It’s not as much about the number of people but more about the power of unity and agreement. Jesus said it so simply that it’s hard to take in, “If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.”

### PRAY NOW

Now is the only moment we truly possess. The good news is that God has made himself susceptible to our voice and our expectation in this moment. The listening heart in the present tense is full of possibility.

**Pray:** *Which “pray” is the most difficult for you? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you paint your prayers by faith.*



Because of Jesus  
I serve others.

## Everyone is on the move.

Every day is a list of destinations and directives that drive us toward a “productive” life.

Sometimes getting from point A to point B seems like the point. But, in the Jesus way of doing things, people are a destination; they are the checkered flag of every day.

Our daily routine is more like a race where we drive in circles on the track. But don't jump the track! Stay on the track because that's where God will drop down the checkered flag - a soul in need of help - a God-ordained encounter.

When we find ourselves standing in front of another person, we are in front of the one God loves more than all our accomplishments combined.

This sounds like an over-simplification, a conveniently packaged slogan, however it's not over-simplified, it is profoundly simple. People matter.

But people are trouble, they are costly, they are disruptive, and they are everywhere.

Nevertheless, Jesus stopped for people even though he was on his own journey from point A (the manger) to point B (the cross). He stopped because the cross wasn't the destination, the people are. He stopped because while we are messy, to God we are wonderfully made, beautifully broken, and eternally valued.

In fact, Jesus so values every person that he boiled down the new agreement from Heaven down into 2 simple directives: Love God. Love others.

Like all of us, the good Samaritan had somewhere to be. He was on his way to some important destination. He was running his own race. However, the difference between him and everyone else in the story is that when he saw the broken man on the side of the road, he had the wisdom to see that he was looking at the checkered flag. This broken person was his destination. Therefore, he endured the trouble, the cost, and the disruption because his eyes- his heart saw the man according to Heaven's value system.

When Jesus left the church, he left

with words of comfort and confidence, “I will be with you always”. When we stand in conversation with others, Jesus is in the conversation.

So let's adjust our filters and adopt a perspective that offers them an encounter with God. Sometimes that may be just a word of encouragement or a prayer. Other times may be a greater disruption and may require a greater investment.

## Pray:

*Yield your day, all the agendas, all the lists to God.*

*Agree to be led by the Holy Spirit, asking him to open your eyes to people around you.*

*Allow God to disrupt your day to the destination conversations He has prepared for you.*

*Pray that as you follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit, God's Kingdom and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.*





**12Stone**<sup>®</sup>  
CHURCH