



prayer

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

TRANSFORMING THE HEART OF THE CITY



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

GREENVILLE, SC

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

TRANSFORMING THE HEART OF THE CITY

This devotional guide has been provided to assist you in your spiritual journey over the next 40 days. Each weekly devotion focuses on a key theme. You will note that our journey begins on Ash Wednesday, and will take us through Holy Saturday. Sundays have been omitted to reflect the liturgical Lenten calendar, in which the fast is broken on Sunday in celebration of the Resurrection that is to come.

Take time to reflect upon the key thought for the week. Read it daily, along with the specific verses that are included for each day of this 40-day spiritual journey, which will lead us toward the Cross and the Resurrection of our Lord.

Listen for the voice of God. In the blank space, journal and think about what God is saying to you personally. As we celebrate this Season of Lent, let us reflect upon the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the transforming work He is doing among us—in our hearts and in our city.

INVESTING IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 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."

Jeremiah 29:4-7

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

God's people had been taken into captivity. Their lives had been turned upside down. The city they loved was in ruins and they were living as exiles in the land of Babylon. Surely they were discouraged, overwhelmed, and disappointed. Yet God came to them in their distress and gave them instructions. Read the passage from Jeremiah 29:4-7.

- What did God say to His people as they were living in a culture that was pagan, secular, and hostile to their faith?
- What particular command did God give them concerning their responsibility to the city in which they were living?
- How can you apply this to our context today? How can we seek the welfare of our city?

PRAYER:

Lord Almighty, You have placed us in the heart of this city for a reason. We desire to be faithful to You as we seek to impact Greenville with the glorious gospel of our Savior. We pray for our city and for her leaders. You have called us to seek the peace and prosperity of our city here where we are planted. May we be steadfast citizens who live out our faith in the midst of a culture that often appears to be in rapid moral and spiritual decline. As we move forward with the desire to have a significant presence in the heart of our city, grant us wisdom and grace to engage and impact our city with the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Amen.

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

DAY 2 – THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

DAY 3 – FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Jonah 4:11

But the LORD said... “Should I not be concerned about that great city?”

DAY 4 – SATURDAY, MARCH 9

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

DAY 5 – MONDAY, MARCH 11

Psalms 127:1

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

DAY 6 – TUESDAY, MARCH 12

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.

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:1-2

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Spiritual impact on a community begins with individuals who are experiencing gospel transformation themselves. The gospel demands a response. When we consider the mercy and grace of God which have been directed toward us, our hearts will overflow with thanksgiving and love. Then we are willing to put our lives on God's altar—to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. This will not happen until we have experienced the inward work of God upon our lives. This radical change comes from the work of the Holy Spirit who changes us from the inside out. This inward work of the Holy Spirit produces a change in our affections (what we love) and in our thinking (how we think). If we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit, we will love Jesus more than we love ourselves and we will begin to think like He thinks—we will have His mindset (Philippians 2:5). We will desire to pursue Christ with all our hearts as we read and meditate upon the Scriptures. And we will be willing to make our lives an offering to Him.

- What motivates us to offer our bodies (our entire lives) as living sacrifices to God?
- What does it mean to be transformed?
- How can we be transformed?

PRAYER:

Merciful and gracious God, we acknowledge our sin, selfishness, and self-righteousness. We know that You do not give us what we rightly deserve—Your wrath and displeasure. Instead we receive Your rich compassion, tender mercies, gracious acceptance, and unending love. In response to the love You have lavished upon us in Your Son, we present ourselves to You as living sacrifices. Bring Your transforming power upon us. Change us from the inside out. Enable us to have the mind of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

DAY 7 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

Ephesians 1:17-20

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

DAY 8 – THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

DAY 9 – FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Philippians 3:7-9

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

DAY 10 – SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Jeremiah 24:7

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

DAY 11 – MONDAY, MARCH 18

Romans 8:9-10

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

DAY 12 – TUESDAY, MARCH 19

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good pleasure.

DAY 13 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

SABBATH AND FASTING

“Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

Ezekiel 20:20

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: “O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against you.”

Nehemiah 1:4-6

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

When Nehemiah received disturbing news about the exiles who had returned to Jerusalem, he mourned, fasted and prayed. The people who returned to Jerusalem were in trouble and disgrace, and the walls of the city were in ruin (Nehemiah 1:3). Nehemiah faced major challenges, difficulties, and opportunities. His first actions were to fast and to pray. Nehemiah owned up to the sins of God’s people, including his own. Then he confessed these sins before God and pleaded for His mercy.

As we experience this season of Lent, let us take time to fast and to pray. We too have major challenges, difficulties, and opportunities facing us. Let’s begin with ourselves. Spend this week reflecting upon our sins, failures, and regrets. Confess them to God. Fast and pray. Fasting can be any period of time (as health allows) in which we intentionally feast and meditate on God’s Word as our spiritual nourishment. During the time that we would normally consume actual food, instead let us allow our hearts and minds to be fully focused on Jesus and His desires for us, and then claim God’s gracious provision of His Son who brings forgiveness, healing, and grace.

- How can fasting and keeping the Sabbath help us grow spiritually?
- What major challenges, difficulties, and opportunities are facing you?
- What sins in your life do you need to confess?

Make a plan to fast and pray this week.

PRAYER:

Loving, gracious, and forgiving God, we come to You confessing our sins and failures. We admit that we have not loved You as we ought and we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not sought first Your kingdom and its righteousness (Matthew 6:33). We have failed to honor Your Sabbath and we have too often neglected the means of grace You have given us. Forgive us, O Lord. Cleanse us through the blood of Your Son Jesus. Renew us and restore to us the joy of our salvation. Amen.

DAY 14 – THURSDAY, MARCH 21

Psalm 51:1-3

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

DAY 15 – FRIDAY, MARCH 22

Isaiah 56:6b-7a (The Message)

All who keep Sabbath and don't defile it, holding fast to my covenant—I'll bring them to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.

DAY 16 – SATURDAY, MARCH 23

Isaiah 58:6-9a

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

DAY 17 – MONDAY, MARCH 25

Isaiah 58:9b-10

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

DAY 18 – TUESDAY, MARCH 26

Isaiah 66:2b

These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.

DAY 19 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

Psalms 130:5

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

DAY 20 – THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Psalms 51:10-12

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

PRAYERFULLY LISTENING TO THE LORD

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”

Isaiah 55:6-7

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

Psalms 46:10-11

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

This week we want to focus on listening for the voice of God. It is hard for us to be quiet and still for periods of time. We fail to build margins in our lives, times of rest and reflection. God invites us to seek Him and to call upon Him. Plan a few minutes each day to reflect upon the Scripture passages, to be still and to listen for the voice of God to speak to us. Remember that we are never alone. The Lord Almighty is with us!

- Why is it so hard for us to be still and quiet?
- What changes can I make in my schedule to give me increased margin for rest and reflection?
- What has God been saying to you?

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, as I set time apart this week to spend with You, let me hear Your voice. Enable me to be still and to know that You are God. As I read and meditate upon the Scriptures, speak to me. Show me Your will and Your way. Let me experience Your presence in the quiet moments I reflect upon Your Word. Let me find renewed joy and peace as I commune with You. Amen.

DAY 21 – FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Jeremiah 29:11-13

“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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

DAY 22 – SATURDAY, MARCH 30

Psalms 25:4-5

Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

DAY 23 – MONDAY, APRIL 1

Psalms 27:14

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

DAY 24 – TUESDAY, APRIL 2

Psalm 16:8

I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

DAY 25 – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

Psalm 145:18

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

DAY 26 – THURSDAY, APRIL 4

Psalm 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

DAY 27 – FRIDAY, APRIL 5

Isaiah 40:31 (New American Standard Bible)

...those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4-6

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

This week we will focus on the core of the message of the gospel—“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). It is humanly impossible for us to comprehend the suffering our Savior experienced so that we can have forgiveness, reconciliation, and hope. Jesus bore the very pain and penalty of hell for us. He suffered in our place and paid the price we rightly owe God. Jesus suffered humiliation, rejection, pain, and death. He became separated from His Father when He became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). Why did He do this for us? The answer is simple but profound—because He loves us.

- Reflect upon the sufferings of Jesus. Picture His sufferings. What emotions are you experiencing as you consider what Jesus experienced?
- How can you respond to the suffering Jesus experienced on your behalf?
- Take time to thank Him for what He has done for you.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, how can I ever thank You enough for what You have done for me? You gave everything for me. You purchased me with Your precious blood. You saved me from my sin and guilt. May I never forget the sacrifice You made so that I could be at peace with God. Never let me take for granted what You suffered on my behalf. Amen.

DAY 28 – SATURDAY, APRIL 6

1 Peter 1:18-19

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

DAY 29 – MONDAY, APRIL 8

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

DAY 30 – TUESDAY, APRIL 9

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

DAY 31 – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

DAY 32 – THURSDAY, APRIL 11

Hebrews 12:2-3

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

DAY 33 – FRIDAY, APRIL 12

Romans 8:31-32

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

THE RESURRECTION

*But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ...
I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.*

Philippians 3:7, 10

KEY THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

The Apostle Paul had an unquenchable passion to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. He said, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). The very power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us. But we must first know Christ. This week we will focus on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Pay attention to the importance of the resurrection of Jesus in the passages we will read and meditate upon this week. As we come to the end of our spiritual journey, it is fitting that we find rest and hope because Jesus was raised from the dead.

- Why is the resurrection of Jesus so essential to our faith?
- What hope does the resurrection give you?
- How can you appropriate the power of the resurrection in your life?

PRAYER:

O Christ, living Savior and holy God, how thankful I am for Your resurrection from the dead. What joy it brings to my soul to know that You are alive and that You live in me. Grant me the grace to know You in deeper ways. Show me Your resurrected power, and enable me to experience Your victorious life living in me. Amen.

DAY 34 – SATURDAY, APRIL 13

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

DAY 35 – MONDAY, APRIL 15

1 Corinthians 15:17-19

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

DAY 36 – TUESDAY, APRIL 16

1 Corinthians 15:56-57

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

DAY 37 – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

Ephesians 2:4-6

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

DAY 38 – THURSDAY, APRIL 18

Romans 6:4-5

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

DAY 39 – FRIDAY, APRIL 19

John 11:25-26

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?

DAY 40 – SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Revelation 1:17-18

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!”

OPPORTUNITIES TO RECEIVE PRAYER

Prayer Room—Intercessors on the Prayer Room Team spend one to two hours a week praying for our congregation, our staff, and our missionaries. All requests are kept confidential.

Prayer Cards—Prayer cards are mailed to the congregation throughout the year to let them know that they are being prayed for and to give them an opportunity to write down any requests and mail them back to the church to be prayed for by the Prayer Room Team.

Prayer Following Worship—First Presbyterian's Elders and Deacons are available to pray with anyone following Sunday morning services. Members of the Healing Prayer Team are available to pray in Harper Prayer Chapel from 9:30–10:00am.

Prayer & Praise—This service, held every Tuesday evening at 7:00pm in Harper Chapel, includes praise and worship, the sacrament of communion, and an invitation to receive God's love, peace, hope, and healing through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Requests—Prayer requests may be made using the cards found in the pews or by calling the following prayer lines.

- Call 672.1838 to leave a message for the Prayer Room Team.
- Call 672.1848 to schedule a Prayer Appointment.
- Call Congregational Care Director Tammy Burkhalter at 672.0327 to place a name on the Prayer List published weekly in the *GrapeVine* newsletter and Sunday bulletin.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer Card Team

Contact Alison Quarles (alisonquarles@gmail.com) or
Emilie Simpson (emilie29605@bellsouth.net)

Prayer Room Team

Contact Linda Whitley (lbw8285@gmail.com) or
Miriam Brice (miriambrice@charter.net)

Healing Prayer Team

Contact Wendy Gaillard (emgail@aol.com)

*First Presbyterian is a House of Prayer where
we love and pray diligently, fervently, and expectantly
for one another, our visitors, the downtown community,
and missions locally and around the world.*



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